

# The New Criterion

Poems June 2013

## Neverness

by Christian Wiman

Solitary as a mast on a mountaintop,  
some ocean of knowing long withdrawn,

she dittied the days, grew fluent in cat,  
felt, she said, each seed surreptitiously split

the adamantine dark, believing green.  
It was the town's torpor washed me to her door,

it was the itch existence stranded me on that shore  
of big-lipped shells pinked with altogether other suns,

random wall-blobs impastoed with jewels and jowls  
sometimes a citizen seemed to peek through,

inward and inward all the space and spice  
of her edible heavens.

O to feel again within the molded dough  
wet pottery, buttery cosmos, brain that has not cooled;

to bring to being an instant  
sculpture garden: five flashlit rabbits locked in black.

From her I learned the earthworm's exemplary open-mindedness,  
its engine of discriminate shit.

From her I learned all the nuances of neverness  
that link the gladiola to God.

How gone she must be, graveless maybe,  
who felt the best death would be for friends to eat you,  
  
whose last name I never even knew:  
dirt-rich mouse-proud lady who Rubied me  
  
into a life so starred and laughed there was no need  
for after.

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**Christian Wiman's** new book, *Survival Is a Style* (Macmillan), is out in February.

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