

The New Criterion

Poems October 2017

Old friend

by J. T. Barbarese

That much-too-pregnant neighbor is being
pulled down Cresheim by her Lab,
being dog-walked, and I hear only
your saying over mussels and clams,
You know, I may never come east again.
Nothing's here. Long pause. *How's the family?*
Again, the dog-walked staggers past.
Your mother is dead, sister "settled,"
and you are single again. Somewhere too close
another neighbor wades into flying
sycamore trash with a blower,
rips into it and through the words
never come again. The leaves fly up,
past your beautiful face, over a split of wine.

J. T. Barbarese's latest book of poetry is *True Does Nothing* (Plume).

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