

ISSN 0976-8165

*The Criterion*



# The Criterion

An International Journal in English

Quarterly Refereed & Indexed Open Access Journal

April 2013 Vol. 4 Issue- II

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## PASTORALE

Mrs. Ranjani Neriya  
USA

the open window listens  
to the rowlock's roulade,  
yawn of crows in the guava tree,

the muscled plank across the stream  
yawping moodily  
to early feet;

I hear the windlass purr  
a kittenish wheel, coir hiss  
a pot gurgle well-deep,

the women who dawn busy  
hanging out the wash  
on long rejoicing clotheslines, then

to upturn the cantilevered scythe  
moored on a board of teak  
scrape fresh coconut and cut greens

a fizz of bees coming in  
from the sugarcane field  
slathers the honeysuckled porch

as I sip the wood-fire brewed  
muslin-strained coffee  
sweetened light with jaggery

it happens, this sudden emptying  
of a life I never lived  
the only one I had. .