

# The New Criterion

## Poems

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### The hunt

by [William Jay Smith](#)

Each vowel black and white with silver sound,  
each consonant, a coil of golden fleece  
that's hunted over russet-colored ground—  
chorale by Bach and painting by Matisse—  
this language, life... . Those hunting horns resound  
so high up there you'd think they would release  
the very sun itself the mountains round,  
and penetrate deep valleys till they cease.

These words, this world; and all one sees and hears.  
Think how, as if through time, the hunters ride  
above the curling clouds while morning clears  
and brings them breathless down the mountainside:  
think how the dark divides to take their spears,  
how in each poem life is justified.

—*William Jay Smith*

William Jay Smith

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