

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 is the author of *The Girl in Glass: Love Poems* (Brooks & Co.) and *The Spectra Hoax* (Story Line Press).

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