

The New Criterion

Poems

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Reading David Ferry's poems

by [Rachel Hadas](#)

The words run clear like water in these poems.
The fluency feels generous and easy,
naturally eloquent, carrying in its current
grains of incident and meditation.
Many tiny facets briefly flash
before they are carried downstream.
Lives shine and pass out of our sight, but whose
lives? The people of whom the poet writes
or ours, the readers'? These, yes; but also
the poet's. He is not immune to his
own fluency. Having set the process going,
having loosed the stream, he too is caught
up in it and carried
along in the clear lulling
flow of his own words,
even as it preserves him on the page,
the language sweeping him beyond our reach.

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