

2003 POEMS

A Year in the Vineyard

Lushell Curt

Foggy spring morning.
Look close to observe pale buds
barely emerging.

Thirsty in the heat,
summer's work hangs heavy from
leaf shaded shoulders.

Harvest moon reminds
morning will bring perfection.
We must rise early!

Sleeping naked vines
for years I will be waiting
to drink of your fruit.

For Li Po

David Hallstrom

The moon
The wine,
Myself;
These are not
Three different
Things.

In Ordinary Time

Joan Maiers

Larch needles stitch
tawny in October
when vineyards turn
green to bronze.
Coils of pinot stagger
the ground with musky braids.

Fermentation devices
measure the indoor yields
while random tasters
grow light around brooding barrels.
Mounds of mash push ochre and mauve
currents in wave roadbends.

Pungency invades
inner geographies
sets up a marker
upon the tourists who browse
unfettered and anonymous among
the country wayside stands.

Joy's Grape

Sally Ashton

I pick ripe grape globes
stuffed full of juice, sun sugared
swollen and warm. Bunches hang
from my hands sticky between fingers
which grope under leave layers
of fine lobed green just veining gold.
Snip the thick stem that curls down
from the cane, disappears among

tight bundled berries. Cabernet grapes
dusted blue-black. A fine foxy flavor
heightened to heady smell.

I come to slip soft skin in my mouth
and crush bursted flesh on a tongue
thirsty for all autumn ripeness, this
sour-bitten sweet and tannin of seed.
Like the rising spring or round days
of summer I want this never to end.

Judd's Hill Perfection

Theodosia Zeleznik

Just a drop passes my lips
A voyeuristic prelude to magic
Teasing me, beguiling me.
I imagine each ruby crystal
Coalescing with its mate
Dancing across the palate
On its journey to ecstasy.

Justice

Eileen Tabios

I was wrong
to believe

the sun is impartial
Among the fields

undulating
within wine country

the sun lingers

on the slopes

then peaks
of hills and knolls.

It traverses
lightly

and quickly
upon the flatlands.

Is this not justice
at work-

that gnarled vines
working harder

on steep terrain
amid gravel

receive more attention
than placid recipients

of earth fertile
with natural nutrients

and easily accessible
to water?

Thus, a glass of wine
answers many questions:

What are the taste
and bouquet

of an embrace
between crushed rocks and sun?

How might one feel
a sunbeam

wink against
a stone?

Perhaps gods
exist

and are not indifferent?
Perhaps gods

after all
are not always cruel?

Ode

Larry Kelts

At arbor shade I begin
the delicate concatenations
twisting up the terrace paths

rushing down, a man
with cloven feet & fast
mad hands on the women of
coupling and generic

only so much one thinks
before the ground wobbles
and the edge rushes to
splash their naked bodies
casting for an anchor

Thesis: Wine & Poetry
work similar effects
upon the brain

Antithesis: out of Control
consumption of wine or
poetry ends in Dionysic
madness and frenzy

Stand: Both Drinker and Writer
committed to narrowness
end with a world blossoming -
their lips aglint, their hands
covered with inky stains.

Ode to the Grape

Daniel O'Connell

I first knew you as a child,
Tasted your tiny shriveled body
In mother's oatmeal, sugared and milky,
As if a presentiment of the age
That would wrack my teeth and bone.

Next, I drank the pink Chablis
Like water and just as cheap, wild
With backseat love and never home.
I had much to learn from the grape
As life's ledger filled blank page to page.

Skipping the route and sordid detail
From guzzling soul to connoisseur
I retire finally with a full, full glass
And, on an evening reflective and red, drink
To you, vino, wine, le vin, great sage.

Pungent Journey

Erline D. Goodell

Wondering how these dull dry twigs
standing sterile-gray in winter mist
trimmed, stubby, gnarled
can possibly produce orbs of stimulating flavor by fall.
Where will they pull juices and sugar from
in time to burst full and fragrant by September?

Amazed by the bulk of heavy fruit dumped in gondolas
dripping, squashed together
traveling to the crush
those precious individual grapes
lost in the dark,
pungent mass
bouncing along toward
vats that will turn them into liquid pleasure.

From vines, dark stained hands, bins and casks
the grape's journey to the glass is arduous
but rewarding.
Aged oaken barrels, the winemaker's gifted touch
and time
create heartwarming nectars

An Estate Cabernet
A Juliana Merlot
Judd Pinot Noir or Syrah

Ahhhh

Sweet Juice

Myrna Baldwin

Sweet juice trickles down
A strong arm lifting hope to
Daydreams - a stemmed glass
cabernet sparkle, breathing clear.

Thrill of a vintage prime source
Cask to barrel to bottle, then rest
A test; thirty-four years aging
Neck down, subtly reclined

So alive in stillness, best full body
he has anticipated the celebration
with her among shaded valley oaks.
Where did the years go to wait away
from wild thoughts and restless youth?

Now the aroma, bouquet, graceful
Swizzle, then the airy sip
Tiny explosions of the fine
Prize wine on their tongue.

WINE DANCE

Pearl Stein Selinsky

A day without wine
is a thirst-hole
in the calendar...

So bring the cup,
sweet Ganymede
who serves the gods...

Let us sip the nectar-
spell
tripping on the tongue
traveling down
through lightened breast,
pathed
through carefree limbs
to dance
the dark of night
to dazzle-day.