

2001 POEMS

A Matter of Taste

John Dooley

Tell me, she asked him
What do you taste?

Taste?
I taste a fragile beauty
Akin to a city of coral honeysuckle

Hummingbird song and country-stroll whistle
Jarring uncertain memories of return
Shared with magnificent migratory beasts

A detectable nuance
The joys and tears of generations
Wading barefoot through cotton blossoms
Calm seas of hibiscus & cherry petals
Dignity of character, the easeful gravity of incoming quail

I taste tradition, security, a religious complexity
Significant swirl of universal resonance
I taste the laughter of stars
Unbridled cunning of maturity
The buttery breath of newborn innocence
Fires of destiny charring crystal limbs of familial oak
Resins of cradle-wood

First crush
Chrysalis, pupa and Monarch
Uncertain ghosts of melancholy whimsy
Jasmine emotions and crimson lily musk
Vanilla passion, sweet pepper, pine
A rapturous feast of perception

I taste earth
Where animal Gods have stepped with the lightness of stewardship
Oceanic voyages and the ancient compassion of hills to a valley
Silken clusters of sentient vintages

An involuntary elation, I taste lunar cycles
Mysterious fruit of the sun's favorite child
Reciprocating counteraction of collective senses

Glacial nectar and rainforest collision
Cleopatra's pomegranate sugar smile
It's you
He whispered
I taste you...the wine on your lips

Beauty is Really Skin Deep

Chuck Cantoni

My life began in '94s spring
The bud set was gorgeous to see.
It was clear that the crop would be one of the best
The fact was just fine with me.

That spring it was cold, but not too much so
And I thought it would be a good year.
You need a good set, but not too many grapes
Or you'll wash out the taste that's so dear.

Come summer the weather was as mild as could be
And the evenings were just a delight.
We were growing as fast as we could it would seem,
It turned out that conditions were just right.

In the fall it got hot, as they hoped that it would
And my grape got so full and so sweet.
We were ripening so fast with the weather so hot
That I feared we would burst in defeat.

But the pickers came in with their strong gentle hands
And plucked us from under the vine.
We were hauled to the stemmer, and then to the crush
And fermented to make the fine wine.

At just the right time, I was yanked from the tank
Did my part to create red with skins on.
I hated to leave, but you know how it goes
When you're creating cabernet sauvignon.

My life was almost over as the skin of a grape,
In this great valley called Napa.
But I had one last chance in the process you see
I was squeezed and fermented to make grappa.

Cabernet Franc

Rob Hampton

Oh, you garnet elixir, regally enthroned
in your crystal palace. Sensuous color and
heavenly fragrances tempting me with whiffs
of chocolate and wild cherry. You beg to be
kissed with parted lips, seducing as you
stimulate my senses. I will give into
your alluring ways and carry you
off to darken chambers and
slowly caress you

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very last drop.

Ode to Fab Cab

Leza Lowitz

I once drank a glass of Judd's Hill cabernet
& before I knew it, I was on the way
to here and there and everywhere
but the wine drank me, I should say.
No wine before its time was written in air
but when the cork struck twelve
the bottles came down from the shelves
and the feast (by master Art and masterful
Bunnie) began.

I once drank a glass of Judd's Hill cabernet
& this is what I want to say:
it was pure liberation
it was pure celebration
& what more
could you possibly ask for
in a libation
than
that?

Untitled

David Perry

Twas three hours before dinner
as I dashed 'round my home.
Doing last minute chores,
When then rang the phone.

It was my wife, in the car
She said, "I'll be home in no time.

But dearest, I must ask,
Did you remember the wine?"

"The wine!" I exclaimed
as loud as could be-
"How absolutely, positively
forgetful of me!"

She said, "Calm down, dear
Everything will be fine.
Just pop in the cellar
For some fruit of the vine."

The Cellar? THE CELLAR!
I screamed, "That won't do.
Not a bottle that's in there
Drinks well before 2002."

"My sweet," I said, "All those wines,
they need time.
To drink one right now
Would be a frivolous crime."

"So what," my wife asked,
"are you trying to say?
I thought all those wines
Were for some 'special day'."

"Well they are," I whimpered
"But no day too soon...
Maybe something will be ready
One weekend next June."

Then out in the driveway,
I heard a slam then a shout.
I knew as my wife came in,
My time had run out.

"Alright" she said, "Just go get red wine.
Or I'll go to your cellar and see what I find.
You know that I'll just go down there and grab.
So pair something with steak, like merlot or cab."

So quick as a wink, out the door I did fly.
Of all things, it was wine that she sent me to buy.
Like a driver on race day, I drove across town
To Prima Vini, that wine show of universal renowned.

They all looked at me
As I breezed through the door.
"My cellar's under siege!
I need something to pour."

Someone said, "Dude, relax. You'll be fine.
We see this kind of thing happen all the time.
But first, you must tell me on what you will dine.
If I am to help you pick just the right wine."

"That's easy, we're gonna throw steaks on the 'Cue.
Tossed salad, grilled veggies, those things we will do.
Personally I'd drink a shiraz or pinot.
But to keep my wife happy, it's cabernet or merlot."

"I have just what you need to keep your cellar intact.
From Napa it comes, cabernet and merlot, in fact.
It's an awesome food wine, and it's not too much money.
It's made at Judd's Hill, by our friends Art and Bunnie."

"I'll warn you right now, just one bottle won't do.
Their wines are so good, you had better take two.
Try them both, one of each, I know you'll save face.
And you'll be back next week to buy a mixed case."

So, to sum it all up, the dinner went fine.
All the food was just great, and then there was the wine.
The wine really rocked, it went well with all.

But now I do wonder if my cellar's too small.

You see, I went back for more,
Like he said I would do.
But instead of a mixed case,
I had to buy two...