

2002 POEMS

Daughter of the Vine

Jan Lee Ande

Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed, And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse. -- Omar Khayyam

I plant my tongue in the dark tender
ground of your mouth.

My fingers are rickety branches,
knocking at the surface of your face.

Newly opened wine may taste untamed,
a heathen among the believers.

Your face leans to one side or the other.
Will one of us turn?

Swirl the wine. Lift the glinting glass
by the stem and tilt it.

Color bleeds, fevered, to reveal age.
Breathe in evenly.

Your skin tells of flowering dogwood,
a bird caught among brambles.

I lick the jagged white ridges
of your teeth.

Taste the wine for texture, finish,
the holy body.

Cab

Jordan Y. Santos

Give me direction
find me asleep
or awake.

Drink my destiny
my passion
my possession,
find me fit
to share a drop.

Speak my language
I will not comprehend,
laugh at my laughter,
spilling me on the ground
with gestures off amusement.
I will not comprehend,
not at all.

Cheers
to you who drink deep.
There is love
for discovery.
Blink, breathe,
push through
place your cups together
tilted,
ready for drink, or
nothing at all.
Parched or wet
there is love for discovery.

Cabernet Nouveau

Phail Owens

Feet planted firmly in wild mustard,
I lift my glass to vineyards as fog
drifts softly over hills
And creeps into my mind.
I taste the weather of Napa Valley and wonder that it can be contained.

Credo

Alice Elizabeth Rogoff

I am wine oriented,
With a delicate pattern
Wrapped round cut glass
And winding through life
Like the street streams
Of a summer rain.
I am a cup and a mother,
Protecting red fancy,
In a reservoir
Of sand's final shape.
My prayers celebrate
The grape's rebirth
Into a wheeling river.

Life

Patti Gerhardt

Life,
Its beauty and its ugliness
So obviously apparent.
Yet in one brief inadvertent moment
As I stared into a luxurious ruby-red glass

of wine
I imagined a song unsung.
A mystery to be solved as it danced upon my
tongue.
It is the elixir of magicians.
it can mesmerize the eye with color
And enchant the human soul with the
complexity of its diverse sensations.
It embodies the aromas of romance and
Memories long gone
but not forgotten,
Forever captured in the sensation of
One
Glorious
Taste.

Passage

Jodie Appell

We are all ancient mariners
on Homer's wine-dark sea,
following the flight of birds
to reach our destinations.
Who is really sure of his own path?
So we salute each passage
with a toast, a promise of safety,
ruby liquid warming us like sun
swallowing our sails at dusk.

We have been patient waiting
for ripening, worked hard
for the harvest, these grapes
drenched in the blue-glazed sky
hoping for just the right moment
to be plucked.

And now, when the wind calls you
from your harbor, let us drink—
before your mast reaches
into the night. Let us wish you
courage and delight.

When our glasses touch, may you be
protected by Venus, goddess of love
and beauty, the brightest star
who reigns over all others.
May you sip from the jeweled cup
that will guide you to your distant shore.

Red Wine in the Evening

Judy Fishman

Red wine in the evening disengages my gears
Red wine in the evening modulates my fears
Red wine in the evening transitions my day
Red wine in the evening allows me to say

Things that I think about all the day long
Things that I think about that may be wrong
Things that I think about but never speak
Things that I think about when I'm feeling weak

Too weak to lift myself up from that place
Too weak to fashion a smile on my face
Too weak to remember how to be strong
Too weak to sing an old favorite song

An old favorite song that makes me smile
An old favorite song I haven't heard for a while
An old favorite song that makes me feel fine
An old favorite song like an old favorite wine

Reincarnation

Jay Crouse

Clusters gather on hillsides
Scattered throughout the world
Extended families
Basking in summer embers
Arms strain to drink
While fingers claw
To extract nourishment
From our mother's breast
Soon,
Plucked
Crushed
Aged
Distilling life forces
Returning as
Burgundian splendor
Chardonian warmth
Champagned sparkles
Zinfandelian spirit
Yet
It is magic scarce begin
For in this incarnation
Wine transforms life itself
The simplest of evenings
Now a romantic journey
Absorbing our burdens as a sponge
Whilst we recharge the spirit
Depleted by challenge
It celebrates our joy
As it moderates our sadness
Freeing the poet to sing with the birds
Connecting us
Once again
With the rain
The sun
The earth

Sonnet for a Sour Grape

Mary Langer Thompson

For centuries snobs scorned you, stomped on you,
banned you as inferior, unworthy,
unpalatable to more than a few.
They tried to kill you, refusing to see
you would not be crushed; you would rise above
your origins to make your announcement:
"I am the mother of royals you love -

Chardonnay, the Queen of the Whites, I sent
to you--with sixteen more noble children."
We learned you pressed against the prized Pinot.
Now they will lift you up with all your kin.
Now the entire world is in the know.
Little Gouais blanc, I lift my glass to you.
You have risen in sweet revenge. Mon Dieu!

The Grape Tree

- Kevin M. Keith

I grew up in a great neighborhood.
I loved that old house on Woods Drive.
I loved each and every season that roared up and down our street,
As the pears grew outside my bedroom windows,
And the grapes swelled to the size of grapefruits
Each and every spring,
Born from my old grape tree.

I watched the sun sitting high in the sky,
And I would lie beneath that grape tree
Dreaming of being Luke Skywalker,

playing baseball,
And writing short stories.
I dreamt of warm summer days,
And lazy afternoons
As I fell into a gentle malaise of eating grapes by the handful
And letting day turn into night.

I used to hide old KISS records in a box out there,
Because my mom thought they (the band) were gross,
And I used to talk to the robins
That had a home they came back to each spring
Nestled at the very top.

I'd climb that grape tree whenever I had the energy,
But for climbers it wasn't much of a challenge.
It was better to just lie there
Languishing with an innocent indulgence,
Leaving troubles and turmoil far behind.

My mother would make grape jelly that was ambrosia
For my sister and me.
It helped create the ultimate peanut butter and jelly sandwich,
And fueled numerous dreams of endless adventures
And happy visions.

Sadly, we moved away when I was twelve,
The grape tree hung low in the neighbor's yard,
And the kids up and down the block
Came and plundered its wondrous bounty.
Its limbs and leaves would no longer shade my dreaming head
And wondering eyes,
And its nectar would no longer serve to instigate my imagination.

Timeless Wine

Donald A. Yates

Jove and Bacchus knew the purple grace.
Under ancient boughs they lay content,
Discussing human fates,
Decreeing mortal dates,
Softly held in wine's benign embrace.

Hence from Olympus flowed the liquid joy,
Into abbeys, taverns, earthward sent,
Lest we forget its charm.
Lo, how it does disarm
What troubles us, and does its spell employ.

In plentitude, this valley yields its part
Napa's glory carries forth the art—
Eternal, so it seems,
Root of time and dreams.
Yet always here and now in every heart.

Vine to Glass

Bill Albright

1

Awakened vines
hunger for terroir
fertile for fruit

2

Virginal buds
conceive classic vintage
berried treasures

3

Ripened sirens
rehearse for classic harvest
top 100 wanna be's

4 Human element
instinctual skill, lab guesses
blend vintaged ideals

5

Oak nurtured
dreams, hopes, aspirations
bottled images

6

Freed of closure
breathe, enhance, savor
destined pleasure

7

Consumed moment and more
eternal sensations linger
transcend synthesis

Wine and We

Iris Litt

Wine-like, this liquid life called We
cannot be pushed, cajoled, segmented
encapsulated, constructed, or reconstructed.

It will not go.

It simply is.

Is simple sipping moments that flow
into years of co-intoxication.

"Friends" remind me it "goes" nowhere,
does not build a life.

I don't know what "A Life" is
but Life is something else:

anything without which I am less alive
and cannot argue with

as I do not argue with tadpole creatures kicking inside me,
gestating poems, dying, the intoxication of wine, hair growing,
blood, rivers, time, tears,
or any flowings other than We.

