

**“Transformation and Time” by C.M. Rivers is
the Winner of
the Judd’s Hill 2020 Poetry Contest**

Judge Leza Lowitz (visit her at www.lezalowitz.com) commented:

We received so many interesting poems this time. It’s clear that during Covid-19, many people are finding solace, healing and even entertainment in wine. There was a lot of creativity and experimentation with form and content in the submissions: we received some haiku, sonnets and even Ghazals.

The winning poem is "Transformation and Time" by C.M. Rivers. We appreciated the poet’s imagery, creativity, rhythmic sense and empathy with the wine itself. The subtle sense of humor was also most welcome, as was the surprising alchemy of the union of wine with drinker at the end of the poem.

Congratulations!

Transformation and Time by C.M. Rivers

Call it what you will – daring, expressive, full-bodied, ripe, remarkable,
with notes of secret longing, lovers crouching, nestled in their affairs –
it doesn't matter.

This is the veil swept tenderly aside, the bottle you tiptoe your way into.
Like the Tao, the wine that can be known is not the wine,
eluding all forceful seekers.

Like these grapes, you are adaptable, and thrive
under marginal conditions of stress. Sometimes you are tasted,
saved for a memorable occasion,
used nightly or paid special attention to.
You have been cheap, and joked about,
but you have also been top-shelf, vintage, unaffordable.

What is called the finest vintage is already no longer the finest.
Too much attention corrupts its desirability.
Push past the mirrors and the smoke, find yourself climbing
up glittering vines to meet the maker,
beyond work and weather, beyond transformation and time.

Here you will find both gods and men, art and science, green and gold.
Here you will find myth and legend, geography, music, alchemy,
farm hand, aristocrat and nymph.

Here you find the unexpected, tastes and smells you never knew existed.
Here you find choices made by those who lived long ago,
the work of many hands, the aching of many backs,
cramping of legs, sweat gathering on sunburned chests,
attention, patience, knowledge, starshine, sunlight, fog and mist,
sandy clay and newborn leaf.

So much absorbed in the mirror's distant reflection,
broken beams of history gliding forward across the surface
of years, only to shatter in the bloodstream
like skipping stones on the water.

Oh! by Kate Marshall Flaherty

I had a hard time today
trying to write words for a song—
even red wine didn't help.

I kept thinking of O's—
zero, nothing, nada,
dial tone, dead air.

I saw the shape of mouthing surprise,
an operatic whole note,
the base of a snowman sketch,
goose egg.

I let out a groan of desperation,
but still no lyrics. None.

I doodled on my napkin,
loops of ink like coils on a combine,
and even there I noted cursive vowels: *ooooo*
but no song.
Only holes in three-ring paper.

I had another round,
lifted the glass,
marvelous Malbec, *mmm*—
made in the Nappa valley—
the wine stem stain
a mulberry eclipse on linen.

I orbited my finger on the rim—

Oh the sound:
One long note
suspended like a halo.

Bubble Bath by Kate Marshall Flaherty

The best place *not* to think is a hot bath
where you soak in the fragrant marinade
and soften until poisons leach out.

You sip a fine wine, the glint
from the candle on the glass.

The earth and cherry shiraz
or red velvet cab save
slips down your throat,
warmth and glow going in
as troubles from the day go out.

They float outside your body
then swirl down the drain—
thoughts attaching to bubbles
like little round horses
charging out of you—
racing down the slippery tunnel,
while you sip your sweet shiraz,
to pop somewhere under the earth!

In vino veritas
a liberated haiku by Kate Marshall Flaherty

my child asks what did
the grape say, squashed underfoot—
just let out a whine (wine:)

My Front Porch, Late September by Katharyn Howd Machan

Wine from California fills my glass.
This Friday all my autumn leaves
gather sun—their last!—before they fall.
New York, the part of lakes and lakes:
our governor has worked hard to protect
against the deadly virus spread.
I teach online, bring students fairy tales
to deepen what we live and dream.
Today I celebrate where I can reach:
denied sky's wings, still I can sip.

Weaving Again, She Dreams of Wine by Katharyn Howd Machan

How he offers her the goblet.
How she holds it, sips, full

harvest heat upon her tongue,
dark as dragon's blood. How

she takes him by the hand
and leads him to the spiral

staircase, small birds in wrought
dark iron, sixty-six worn steps

to where her bed has fresh white
sheets, pillows brushed with lavender,

a single quilt her sister stitched
purple, turquoise, green. How long

night's candle flares and steadies,
its smooth clay dish, its honeyed wax:

perfect vines flow from her fingers,
round grapes gleam in crimson silk.

moonlight as we share by Katharyn Howd Machan

moonlight as we share
a single candle glowing:

pour me more white wine

How It's Done by William Heath

Glance at the label
for age, locale, style.
Touch the bottle
for a temperature
not warm or cold,
gently swirl a dollop
in its shapely glass,
nose for aromas
of fruits, flowers,
herbs and spices,
lift the sample
by the thin stem
to the best light,
inspect for color
body, texture,
smile with a nod,
no need to taste
until the vintage
is properly poured.
Yet no matter
how skillful
the somélier
a tear slides
down the bottle,
now the wine
begins to breathe.

Quarantine in Maine by Marian Shapiro

A foreign country for us transplanted city people. Choirs of birds sing three chirps and a squawk a conversation a concert a set of marriage vows....A distant singer adds a sweet soprano trill and one alto burst. Bronx cheers from across the lake. All invisible in the multi-story living brownbeigegreenskyscrapers old friends of pine and oak, columns of aging spotted birch leaning against them.

A foreign country. Curbside pickup. Three o'clock-ish. This morning you've emailed your list - nice tomatoes, some kind of hard cheese about half a pound, some grapes doesn't matter green or purple, a bottle of red wine about \$20 or so - a burgundy? a Cabernet? You've prepaid on line, parked in the pickup zone. The shopkeeper, mask up, rolls out the cart, sets your bags in the trunk. A satisfying bang. She waves. You imagine her smile. You wave. Your sealed-off rolling safe house, your pandemic prison, ready to roll.

Cellphone startles you, its ridiculous relentless happy dance tune.

Hi, It's Cheryl from the IGA. We had all kindsa grapes, but I went with the green ones they'll look so pretty with the cheese and wine, maybe you're having a little party? And thought you'd wanna know, that red wine, it's from Robin Williams' vineyard! Isn't that something! See you soon, have a good day!

A foreign country. Far away. Long ago. People still speak of it, a land where strangers wished you a good day, and tried to make it so. Was there really such a place? I remember it right now! Yes! Tell your friends! Tell everybody!

Wine Tasting by Marian Shapiro

bee cake-walking from clover
to
clover

Cabernet? Beaujolais? Pinot Noir?

Feeling Well

is more than not feeling ill
It's light on the leaves it's ice cream
It's coffee it's red wine
It's an interesting story, a Chopin
étude, a joke that makes you laugh
loudly! A poem poking you - write!
You feel *well!* - remember that next time
you're too sick to get out of bed. Alas,
that learning will not last -
it too shall pass.

by Marian Shapiro

Bread Dipped in Wine by Yvonne Postelle

Coming home from the fields,
a young boy in Spain,
Sebastian learned to savor
bread dipped in wine.

His mother's wine-drenched
bread pressed against his tongue,
he waited patiently for the
blessing of her mid-day meal.

Grown and raising his own family
in San Francisco's Bernal Heights,
he outmaneuvered prohibition
by making wine in a bathtub.

Then, with wine again legal,
he returned to savoring
his favorite California reds
and taught his children

to love wine-soaked bread,
Nature's reward for
faithfully performing
life's requisite labor.

It's never too early for a glass of wine by R. D. Skaff

It's only three, could be time for tea,
but from my fridge I hear Violet Viognier
calling my name. How can I refuse
that racy apricot and vanilla-cream voice?

Should I invite Penelope Pinot to join us?
Her dry wit would add complexity to our afternoon.
And will elegant Simon Syrah feel hurt
if I tell him there's no smoking at my table?

And what about King Cabernet with his
expensive dinner jacket and expected bowing.
Will there be enough room to social distance him
from earthy Mary Merlot in her off-the-rack dress?

Zinny Zinfandel will bring too much alcohol,
coax me to get drunk like last time in his company.
I'll include his cousin from Italy, San-Giovese,
for despite his boldness and acidity, he can be sweet.

Much to refreshing Savi Blanc's dismay,
although she has more of the commoners' vote,
Charles Chardonnay, in his aged oak crown,
has won the title of ruler of the gossamer whites.

With his smooth-talking Spanish accent,
I'll add Tomaso Tempranillo to my list
of yummy guests I will entertain,
or rather...who will entertain me.

Drinking From Home by John Pearson

The clock on the wall has just chimed in noon
And, since I am working from home today
And don't expect any meetings on Zoom
Might as well enjoy a splash of Rose'

I strive to maintain a limit of two
Though nobody's here and nowhere to go
The day is young and there are tasks to do
So, only a taste of Pinot Grigio

A productive morning deserves a rest
Just one more glass and that is it, I swear
To round out my mood, I think I'll ingest
The delicate flavor of Pinot Noir

I am feeling great, but don't get me wrong
There's work to do and I am far from done
But just cannot help breaking out in song
My vocal cords deserve Cab Sauvignon

Home working equals productivity!
Were my goals achieved? I am guessing so!
There's no harm in quitting early today
Now, how about a full bodied Merlot

A limit of two is the dumbest rule!
Waiting for my wife on this glorious day
And, planning to skinny dip in the pool
We'll toast our love with a fine Chardonnay.

Madame Mourvedre by John Pearson

Madame has legs
Long and sexy
Everyone who knows her
Agrees with pleasure

Her primal scent
A complex mix
Innocence spent
A slap of leather

Blackberry blossoms sprinkled
On the curve of her hips
French perfume behind
The delicate coiled ear

She kisses with heat
The bite of tobacco
She takes what she pleases
And never shows fear

You always wanted more
Of what she could offer
In fact, after that first taste
Desire dripped from your...

But, she beat you up
On those steamy nights
When, in your thirst, you took
Her in gulps, not sips

All of your love
Couldn't change her wicked history
Which was best defined
By the redness of your lips

Such was your affair
None of us blamed you.

First Sips by Susan Notar

Ease the cork out gently
smell its earthiness
pour a splash into your favorite glass and swirl
see how the garnet red licks the sides and lingers
inhale the herby aroma of bright lit fall days
leaves burning in your childhood memory
sip and close your eyes
think of rosemary and oregano
a slight peppery finish
stories the grapes knew and will know again
troubadours singing by firelight
laughter over a shared repast
open your eyes
sip deeply.

If I splash some on my lips
will you kiss it off?

Tasting Notes: Flight of Nine by Donna Henderson

1. *Too Small a vase, too many flowers*
2. *They sent that fruit basket last year without all the toasted nuts*
3. *Will of steel, heart of gold*
4. *Wandered away from its jelly jar*
5. *Lost in the woods*
6. *Elegant suit, but a size too large*
7. *Overslept the alarm, had to run for the bus*
8. *The thread count alone is worth the price.*
9. *Now there's a tune you could slow-dance to!*

Sexy Little Napa by Ariadne Prieto

Oh, Napa Valley
You sexy little being
So hot, so sensual as always
You seduce me with your colors
With your landscape
With your wine
What a view
What a land
What a taste

Oh, Napa Valley
Kiss me with your aging wine
Touch me with your vines
And hold me in the summer night

Oh, Napa Valley
Keep flirting with me
Make me fall in love with you
Every time I have a glass of your wine

California by Ariadne Prieto

Don't drink any more wine, they suggest to me
Yet, I ignored their bold advice
California red wine tastes like your lips
Those who decided not to kiss me anymore
Those who hold a light touch of sea salt
Those who will remain in my memory forever
Give me more red wine (I utter)
The California one that tastes just like him

SPRING IN HER BONES by Alan Basting

Cool as Lucinda
And her cousin

Bill, roaming the hallways
Naked

Killing spiders
Iris, the heroine

Opened her purple eyes:
I've got the world

By the armpits
She murmured...

And I want to dance.
Light the orchards

With blossoms
And hearts of cardinals.

Bring that Lazarus boy
To me. I have

Some questions
And a jar of my finest

Spring wine. I can't wait
To hear his story.

EVENING PASTORAL by Alan Basting

A violin tucked below
Her face, my loved one appears

Under moonlit eaves
And slanted shadows...

A table with glass and silver
Is set, solo on an empty terrace.

Before us, an empire of meadows
Stretches out, rumpled sheets

Of moon-soaked earth
Flecked with blackberry bushes.

Southern accents mingle
With red wine and softened

Conversation, hours of gossip
For eavesdropping stars.

*

Stumbling home
Is never easy

When the love I lean on
Turns to mist.

The Bridge Thrown Over the Stream of Wine by Zev Levinson

It has let us pass unburdened,
it has yawned our promises with purpose.
Faster than a trot, who would think
another way lay bare, this one
falls underfoot, it is soft
and sings of leaves trodden gone now.
Round stones litter one's strict aesthetic,
they multiply and place a traveler
smack in the middle, the stream
cackling sweet, you and me,
the very air whispers
a chocolate alchemy, heady, now
swift flowing, rising to meet you,
but sea-bound, ever move to mouth,
gradually
 widening,
 waking to wine,

melt in this most common rush
of sea-foam, distinct bubbles seen
by drinkers, who, drinking —

— distend

and then burst in circumference Atlantean,
pouring together with Triton into the universal
kingdom of perpetual, elemental, Dionysia.

The Tasting by Elya Braden

Outside my window, the grapes are laboring
on the vine, hoarding sun and water until,
skin taut with exaltation, they sigh into the pluck
and crush—their end and their beginning.

They don't regret the rocky soil,
the spider mite, the morning chill.
Nor do I, as I taste the peach and pear,
oak and velvet of this chardonnay.

I'd no more kick a jagged stone
from the path that led me to this place
than spit this nectar from my mouth.

The Consummation by Laura Allen-Simpson

I quiet ringing crystal bells
Take a bottle by its neck,
Drag it toward my beating heart
Slit its foil with coiled fang,
Twist that tooth into pulp long-lodged
Within its throat, and
Pluck!

I am not evil.
I give it life! It breathes!
You see? It flows like a satin gown glides off
The shoulders of a film star slim as six o'clock.

I hold the wobbling Alizarin pool, spy pale violet at its edge,
Make it race 'round my slippery sphere, and
Watch it lean to dodge my dipping nose
Lowered close to gain its heady scent:
The blood of black cherry, spice, and cedar,
Of sun and earth and heat and rain that
Rushed through roots and entered fruit to be here
Full knowing that a crush would come.

I am grateful for the sacrifice
And the long blindness lasting after,
Spent entombed in monk-bodied coffins.

I breathe in the years, the complex marriage, the slightly tannic tears
And then, at long last, I
Sip.

Opulence.
The velvet of the roses staked at each row's end.
The sirens' songs made liquid or
God's divine flood touched by the wood of Noah's ark.
The resonance of chanted tones lingering in a cool, stone abbey.

I cannot name all the mysteries that mingle
Just know I want to drink them in
Until my tongue lies helpless as a sated lover
Behind my once-white teeth become
A ghoulish troop of little blue ghosts.

Sonnet 29 Revised for 2020 by Laura Allen-Simpson

When, in despair of meeting my deadlines,
I all alone bemoan my freelance state,
And rail again at my client's guidelines,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing my job were a salaried one,
With health benefits and camaraderie,
Time spent sufficient to call my day done
So that I might lounge with my conscience free—
Wound in such thoughts my life almost despising,
Haply then I think on thee, and then my state,
(Like to the soul at end of day arising
From lonely work) sips wine and feels a chill abate
For Cabernet slipped from crystal such wealth bestows
That then I scorn to change my state with CEOs.

The Juice of Scarlet by Diya Mehta

we start at a dawn of
innocent kisses from
the blood of one fruit to the brunt of
another; a caveat of sin without a doubt
it caresses the scarlet of your toes with
mine, lingering with uncertainty, because like everything
the clock ticks free from fear
of the future
Tannin is it? That of spindling leaves cower under you,
seeping of that savor, pruning and snipping
at small grazes of insecurity pondering when
at last you can sip what you waited for;
blushes of more grapes
pair with Pinot and my other charlatan,
Chardonnay
Similar to that of a circle
the love ends where it begins
harboring the oyster of beauty
coloring
the rich lines we so casually
call home.

August 8th by Cooper Young

Poets of antiquity
drank themselves silly
on nights like these.
Fireflies glow,
and crickets sing
under a quarter moon—
a perfect excuse
for another drink.

One for the Road by Cooper Young

I cannot think
of a death scarier
than a sober one.

Aged Wine by Cooper Young

My neighbors pour
full glasses of wine,
and talk about sports,
new restaurants,
and the weather.
They don't realize
that nights like these
were dreamt of by poets,
and enjoyed by kings.
They pour another glass,
and say their kids
will have it good.
Someday surely,
their children
will say the same.

The Swim by Laurel Maxwell

Slow, lazy laps I would swim in a bathtub of wine.

Watching as sighs of air escape from my nose,

rise to the surface and pop in surprise at air's greeting.

Bathe in the sticky scent of oak, lavender, cloves, leather.

Skin encased in a chardonnay glow as I savor the

tingle of bubbles tangling my hair as grape vines grapple trellises.

Contemplating sage advice as each stroke pulls me deeper into contentment of
unknowing.

Forget the dishes on the counter, unfolded laundry, the warming climate. Imagine myself
surrounded by

the reflective orb of a wine glass. Life's sharp edges mellowed to their fuzzy outlines.

A swimmer grounded in the meditative back and forth of prayer.

Sipping the last drop slowly as a sunset.

Celebrate With Wine by Cindy Pontbriand

Evening approaches
Alone, me, my mask and I
Celebrate with wine

Weekend comes again
Alone, me, my mask and I
Celebrate with wine

Awake again safe
Alone, me, my mask and I
Celebrate with wine

Covid defeated
Alone, me, my mask and I
Celebrate with wine

In the Vale by Lucia Haase

Beneath the mountains
thrives future fountains,
cabernet and chardonnay.

The valley's floor,
the vineyards' core-
a kind of pinot noir.

Those blended wines
from nurtured times
seem to fulfill

as though the sip
of nature's grip-
those surrounding hills.

The Napa River-
gifts for the giver...
wineries flow.

Found-Poem on a Bottle by Ellaraine Lockie

The bottle of Menage á Trois at the bachelor party
breathes heavily into the men's ears
Asks them *Do you know what happens*
when three attractive, sexy
young California grapes get together

That Zinfandel fulfills fantasizes
for buttery fun and pepper hot passion
Merlot caresses with cassia and soft tannin
And Cabernet is a rich bitch with dark red berries
that have been picked a time or two

Dry but not for long
Their desire to deliver a shared experience
of flavors outside single life
Suggests there will be a dance
of varietal expressions

And if you don't feel like dancing
You can take a walk on the wild side
Where you will surrender to their seduction
Explore the pleasures that promise
a lush lingering finish
that'll leave you wishing for more

You can join the online club
Get a membership with discount
and tastings with lodging partners
You have to be twenty-one to open the website
But everyone knows that's just a curled finger
A come-on to the bachelor urge in all of us

Thirteen Ways to Enjoy a Glass of Cabernet by Lon Wartman

On a Blanket
In a park
On a sunny spring day

In a Restaurant
In a candle lit corner
Your mistress of course

A Prime Rib
Medium rare
For two to share

On a Winter's Day
Locked inside
Watching it snow

In Front of a Fireplace
On a bear skinned rug
With nothing on

On a Rainy Spring Day
On a wood planked porch
In a chair for two

On a Star Lit Night
Holding hands
Watching fire flies flutter about

In a Hot Tub
After a day of sport
Mending the pain of a fantastic fall

In a Jacuzzi
With your lover
Facing each other

Lying in Bed

Having enjoyed
A ravenous affair

At a Table for Two
In Paris of course
With cracker and cheese

Two Girls Chatting
With sun bonnets on
Passing the time

Two Boys Smiling
At Two PM
As girls stroll by

A Monumental Task
Finished at last
Two glasses held high

On Valentine's Day
Cherries in chocolate
Caresses the Palate

Is There Anytime
Not right
To share a decanter of Cabernet Sauvignon?

I'll bring The Wine
If you'll bring the chocolate
And Please,
Don't forget the cheese.

I Know There's More
Than what's been written here
I leave it for you to
Fill in the blanks
"Cheers"

Pesky Little Pest by Lon Wartman

Running around the
Rim of my glass
A pesky little creature stalked.
First his toe tested the heat
Then his snout took a sip
Then he jumped right in
And there he floated for most of an hour
Paddling and stroking, flipping and flopping
Round and round as if he were the
Happiest little creature in the world

Can you imagine what that little feller
Thought when he saw my big white teeth
And my lips on the rim of that glass
Ready to devour him with just one gulp?

It is my solemn belief that you
Treat all creatures with equal respect.
So I decided to give him a reprieve
I just took a sip
And then another and another
Until there was but a puddle left

As he squirmed and twisted
In what remained I decided it was time
To release this pesky little pest
From this tiny puddle of wine

I could have smacked him with my hand
Or just tossed him to the wind
However, I decided to spill
Him on the table top
Wondering what he would do.

Once free of the puddle
And much to my astonishment
He rose and staggered about.
And off the table, he stumbled.

Drunk little bastard
He had been so much fun to watch
I hope he can find his way home
Or another lass with a glass
Of Cabernet Sauvignon