

# Ode to Wine

by Pablo Neruda

Wine the color of day,  
wine the color of night,  
wine with purple feet  
or topaz blood,  
wine,  
starry son  
of the earth,  
wine, smooth  
like a saber of gold,  
suave  
like a decadent velvet feel,  
wine decanted in a spiral seashell  
and suspended,  
amorous,  
marine,  
you've never belonged in one cup,  
in one song, in one man,  
chorus-like, gregarious are you,  
and at least, feeling's mutual.  
Sometimes  
you feed on our memories  
of fatalistic melancholy,  
sloshed in your wave  
tumbling in tomb dead drunk we go,  
you mason of this stone-cold sepulcher,  
and we cry  
passing tears,  
but  
to be in your handsome  
picnic suit  
is a different scene,  
the heart rises to the treetops,  
the rustling breeze keeps the day going,  
nothing is left unmoved  
within your immovable soul.  
The vintage  
puts in motion the springtime bustle,  
the joy of winemaking grows like a plant,  
derelict walls are felled,  
vineyard-laden cliffs are beheld,  
the steep drops are closed,  
the song is born.  
Oh thou, jug of wine, in the desert  
with the tasty woman whom I adore,  
songfully recited the old bard.  
Now that be the pitcher of wine  
whose kiss complements the kiss of love.

My love, instantly  
your hip  
is the full curve  
of the wine cup,  
your bosom is the bunched fruit of the vine,  
the bright teardrop lines of the alcohol your hair,  
the grapes your nipples,  
your navel the vintner's genuine seal  
stamped on your wine vessel womb,  
and your love the cascade  
of wine inextinguishable,  
the clarity that illuminates my senses,  
the earthly splendor of life.

Yet no true love,  
burning kiss  
or heart consumed with fire  
are you, wine of life,  
but for  
the friendship of others, in the open,  
in the conducted chorus of song,  
in the abundant flowering of conviviality.  
I love having on a table,  
when engaged in conversation,  
the light of a bottle  
of intelligent wine.  
That in drinking it,  
I remember in every  
drop of gold  
or cup of topaz  
or spoon of purple  
that job that is the autumn harvest  
all the way to the filling of wine in the vessels  
and the man who seeks illumination learns,  
in the ritual celebration of his business,  
to remember the land and his duties,  
to propagate the sacred song of the fruit.

*Translated by Alex Sawit*  
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