



POETRY 2018 OBJECT

'Distilled by Light' by Joy
Teacher
Gippsland Grammar

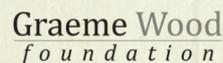
Those grapes come back to me –
arbour'd over the red brick path
channelling green-glow.

Each lozenge
long and thick as my thumb
was tight with juice, molten with light.
Who?
Who would not stretch up?
Who would not
ache
for a burst of sun-gold on tongue?

Those grapes from a time when vines
had not yet hardened into arthritic knobs
but soft-loin-clothed in sinuousness,
tendrils coiled in Farsi mimicry
and leaves had not yet leathered,
but curved, protective, enwombing jade pearls.

What wonderment, then,
following endless years of agonising
drought to uncover five capsules stealing light
late in the afternoon,
late in the season –

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five cartouches swollen though scored... scarred...
for wind had beaten fruit against lattice
till skin had hardened into glint.

How they glowed
heavy amber globes, honey ant-engorged,
living larders, plum-tight with promise,
sky lanterns ascending yellow-wards.

Who?

Who would not stretch up?

Who would not ache for a caress of sun's largesse at autumn's end?

This poem was awarded First Place Teacher for Poetry Object 2018

Judge's notes:

'Distilled by Light' is a poem that revels in the sensual qualities of language. The poet elegantly employs prosodic elements such as alliteration and assonance ('Each lozenge / long'; 'heavy amber globes, honey ant-engorged'), and anaphora (see, for instance, the repeated refrain 'Who? / Who would not stretch up? / Who would not...') to draw the reader into a landscape where light, distilled into grapes, takes on a physical dimension and becomes a thing to be tasted, 'a burst of sun-gold on the tongue'. There is a pleasing attention to form, with the varied ranging of lines showing an appreciation for space, breath and pacing.

~ Bella Li, Judge, Poetry Object 2018

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