

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Angele Ellis: “Self-Portrait as Wineglass”

Angele Ellis · Monday, November 1st, 2021

*Angele Ellis, “Self-Portrait as Wineglass,” 2021 Jack Grapes Poetry Prize Finalist selected by Judge Clare MacQueen*

Speaking of lyrical writing, “Self-Portrait as Wine Glass” is simply luscious in the mouth, and to the ear when read aloud. With exquisite imagery, this poem engages all the senses. While it’s a sensuous piece, it also speaks to the intellect and the spirit. (And is that a playful nod to Dorothy Parker in Line 5?) For me, the final image is both splendid and surprising, making this work of art even more unforgettable.

— Clare MacQueen

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## Self-Portrait as Wine Glass

“It even comes...to the wine glass, weary of holding wine.” ~ Jane Kenyon, “Happiness”

What am I but bones of sand and heat, blown breath for cooling.

Hardened bubble cut and soldered to stem. Outline of tulip

durable, fearing accident or storm more than change of season.

Shiver of music—clink of shell to shell, vibrating rim.

What am I but liquor quicker than form’s imperceptible trickle.

Pale wheatgold, whetted garnet, stain of pink rosé. Warmed by

hands that clutch and claim, ghost prints and smeared caresses.

Still-life with echoes after guests desert a littered table.

What am I but graceful shadow on a book cleft to spine,  
shading words we loved so much that years after parting  
they twined us in ether, skywriting across the distant blue.  
Hoping happiness has come to you too  
What am I but begging bowl, inebriated merely by being  
as juices fill me to the brim. Once holding an ice-chip ring,  
promise fished like scrap to feed a hollow thirsting heart.  
Be your own light, a dying Buddha told the tear-dimmed crowd.  
What am I but shimmer of celebration and concupiscence,  
consecrated by daybreak and candle, bar glow and sunset,  
icebox bulb and hotel transom. Mouthfuls of downed stars.  
From weariness, joy rises, froth of unexpected prisms.

*Photo credit: Jen Gallagher*

This entry was posted on Monday, November 1st, 2021 at 9:05 pm and is filed under [Poetry](#), [Literature](#), [PoetryPrize](#)

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