

# When the Grape Became Purple: The Aged Genii Recalls the War of His Kind Against The Moisture Duchess

“ . . . Then the mother genii’s belly opened;  
Then, disgorging their arrows and their armor,  
Her babies, slithering like cobras, were siphoned  
Into the light; The Duchess began her war;  
Her clouds arced over us, like dinner plates,  
Exploded , and the shards massed into black skeletons;  
They climbed towards us over the walls of burial plots;  
Then her hot rain burst into our scalded bones,  
And we climbed onto wolves and rode away, cowards;  
It was autumn when finally we felt safe;  
The grapes were shiny and ripe, unbled, uncolored  
Still by their shame of us; we slid their soft  
Skins back, like the shut eyelids of dreamers, and in  
We curled, stunned, waiting . . . for the world to be naïve again . . . ”

Originally published in *Mudlark* No. 16 (2001).