September's Grapes
Sheila A. Murphy

Abstract
There’s grief from harvest early, or too late: bitter, hard, or over-ripened fruit.
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There’s grief from harvest early, or too late:
bitter, hard, or over-ripened fruit.
The time is now. September’s grapes won’t wait.

Behind the barn, Grandpa would cultivate
vines whose clusters we would loot,
oblivious of harvests early, or too late.

Then, tag or hide-and-seek would dictate
our hours, weeks, and days, excused by youth
from labor when September’s grapes won’t wait.

Now, we watch weather’s moods dictate
crops, but age and wisdom don’t dilute
the grief from harvest early, or too late.

Some years the clusters wither, touched by blight,
but when abundance blesses our pursuit,
our arms reach out—September’s grapes await.

This week, in baking sun, we celebrate
with purple brimming baskets that will mute
the grief that comes from harvest early, or too late.
The time is now. September’s grapes won’t wait.