

A CONCORD HYMN

Jim Barton

Peeking out from blankets green,
the bulbous heads in clusters hung;
on arbor's frame they'd tightly cling,
bruised purple by the beating sun.
Granddad's babies, trained from birth,
coddled, groomed, and gently raised,
sweetest fruit of bounteous earth,
bathed in beauty, draped in praise.
He'd guard them, guide them, goad them on
'til autumn rain cooled summer sun
and growing time was finally done.
Then, bearing baskets full, he'd come

to Granny, manning stainless pan.
Stationed by the stove, she'd bend,
with wooden spoon and reddened hands.
She'd stir and cook for hours on end
the extract from the clusters drawn;
canning juice and jelly sweet,
(though she'd soured, truth be known,
from years upon her tired feet).
The vines had wrapped their tendriled arms
around the kitchen, where she stood
in autumn sunlight soft and warm,
drawing forth the Concord blood.

When finally the vines were bare,
and all the juice was stored;
when chill of winter filled the air,
they'd rest from harvest's chores.
We'd cluster 'round the table, spread
with labor's myriad gifts.
Holding hands, we'd bow our heads
as Granddad's voice would lift
in humble thanks for family
and love that knows no bound.
Then, beaming ever-joyfully,
he'd pass the nectar 'round.

The richness of the earth was there,
the warmth of summer sun,

the rain, the toil, the love we'd share,
and celebrate as one.

We'd raise our voices loud and long,
fill goblets to the brim,
and sing the ancient harvest song,
proud farmer's Concord hymn.

The years have fallen from the vine
and, though they conquered him,
we cluster 'round at harvest time
to raise our Concord hymn.

"A Concord Hymn" © 2006 by Jim Barton

Contemporary Rhyme Vol. 3 No. 4 2006