

Fino

I was born of heat and sand. Heated to a strength that you, when you who moisten my dry side with your lips, cannot imagine. The desert turned to running gold, I bulged and burnt like a tear on fire, I swelled in agony, I longed for cool. It came first in the gentle breath that pressed my shape into the image of a tulip. Then the plunge into water, the sudden joy of cooling, the slice across my head - and the air settled around my newly shaped interior. A disc added to my squat little stalk, and there I was - to be touched, polished and placed on a plinth with others of my kind.

What were these? Like me, but larger, taller, their bulge so much greater than mine. What fine fellows you are, and I so short and stumpy! Oh, don't mind us, we are wine glasses. We are placed on the table and sit throughout the meal, to be replenished and ignored. You come first, little glass. You are a sherry glass. You are taken before us, and the lipped creatures will sip from you while we sit empty and wait. You will be filled to your little brim with Fino from Jerez. You will be kept cool to await your charge, and your charge will itself be cold, fresh from the cabinet where only the coldest things are stored. To chill again! Once more to know that precious cooling! To receive the precious Fino! I looked forward to that.

We were taken from our plinth and boxed, I with just three others of my kind, now in darkness. We were going, I learnt, to the land of England. I would not see the light again for many months. Was I sand again? Would I ever again know light and cool and the touch of a finger? When might I greet a lip and feel the cool of the Fino?

At last our box was chosen and taken to the home of a lipped creature. For a while we lingered in the dark. Then we were released and carefully placed upon another plinth. It was hot and noisy with shouted welcomes. There was light, light upon light, lights of all colours. The sound of a bottle moving near me and then the shadow as its great mouth fell over me. I am ready! Ready to receive the cold Fino! But it is strange stuff – sticky and ... warm? Where is the promised chill? The lips are gentle on my rim, but the mark they leave must be rubbed off, and then I am back in the box. How long will I stay here? Surely I may again see light? Surely soon I will know the joy of the cool freshness I thought was mine?

But there is more. The bottle is returned to join our confinement, to be shuttered away with us. And with that come words I will now share with you, so that you may understand the dread, dark despair in which I remain. Words said to the bottle as it is brought into our cell and placed at our side.

We can put you away now! You've enough left for next Christmas!

Paul Lusk

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