

The Old Peoples' Fruit

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In my pajamas I stepped down the staircase
And sat behind the plate
Mother made pancakes, poured me some OJ
Made with concentrate
But in her own glass alongside her pancakes
Made with berries of blue
She poured her own juice of fruit that's forbidden
This is not for you

When I first tried grapefruit, I tried to spoon it
I sprayed it on my shirt
The attack was intrusive, the taste was elusive
I was just a squirt

Grapefruit they say is the old peoples' fruit
A taste you must learn to achieve
You bear down, pucker up
And take the bitter with the sweet

My great-grandmother toasted her bagels
And made chicken on the bone
I ate her soup and munched on those cookies
But I left her juice alone
I could see that at eighty it helped keep her sturdy
But why I hadn't a clue
How every morning a small glass of grapefruit
Could keep her feeling new

As people get older, we learn to drink coffee
And some drink bitter tea
Some dig the grape and some drink the barley
And some like cranberry

Grapefruit they say is the old people's fruit
A taste you must learn to achieve
You bear down, pucker up
And take the bitter with the sweet
With the sweet

Nobody told me until I was twenty
About a sweeter taste called Ruby Red
Was it a hybrid? A product of science?
Or a gateway to manhood instead?

When I was thirty, I saw California
And what a sight to see
We went to Jen's house, somewhere in Burbank
A mile from NBC
There in her backyard, burly with bark
Was a tree with treasures so round
She said they're bitter, we don't eat them much
But wide-eyed, I wrestled one down

And I dug my nails in and I ate every bite
And I felt it put hair on my chest
In that grand old tradition, a man on a mission
Like our forefathers learned to digest

Grapefruit they say is the old peoples' fruit
And it seems now it happened to me
'Cause as you get older, you learn to get bolder
And then you learn to eat
The bitter with the sweet
With the sweet