

Jacqueline Jules

My Father Was a Winemaker

My father was a winemaker.
Not at a vineyard, but a bottling plant
where they trucked in the grapes
and crushed them on site.

He came home every night at six,
his shirt stained and smelling of wine.

In the summer, he gardened. The backyard
brimming with corn, cucumbers, peas,
and weeds he liked to pluck
before washing up for dinner.

Once a month, he filled
airmail envelopes with narrow
handwriting I couldn't read,
corresponding with a brother
who stayed behind.

I don't know what he wrote
on those thin blue papers
he sent across the ocean
for almost forty years.

But I imagine those letters contained
mostly news of his garden, day trips to the beach,
visits to parks and museums . . . a restaurant meal
with sauerbraten almost like home.

Jacqueline Jules is the author of *Manna in the Morning* (Kelsay Books, 2021) and *Itzhak Perlman's Broken String*, winner of the 2016 Helen Kay Chapbook Prize from Evening Street Press. Her poetry has appeared in over 100 publications including *The Broome Review*, *Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, *Hospital Drive* and *Muddy River Poetry Review*. Visit her online www.jacquelinejules.com