

**Teachers Must**

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Each fall when the new grapes arrive,  
we sift and evaluate them,  
trying to determine how best  
to help them be what they can be.  
Some are thin-skinned and delicate,  
others gruff and independent.  
Some need oak, others stainless steel.  
No single process works for all,  
so first we must identify  
the grapes for what they are, not what  
we wish they were. We also must  
believe that careful attention,  
time, and the right environment,  
can help develop character,  
complexity, balance, and depth.  
But, most of all, we must have faith  
that even when we can't see them  
fundamental transformations  
bordering on miraculous  
are bubbling under the surface.