Bourne toWrite...
creative writing workshops

Malbec

by Mikey Young

The bad blood rose in me,
just like wine.

Not rosé wine,
not that filth.

Not the stuff that looks like weak squash
and tastes like sad summers
and burnt barbecues.

Not the five percent wine either—
what's the point?

It isn't fizzy.
It's not a celebration.

It's not all those bubbles
going to my head
and burning the back of my throat.

It's not a party hat
or a squeaky balloon
or a Colin the Caterpillar cake.

It's not boxed wine
that cannot breathe,
that comes with a plastic tap
and an open apology.

Once the box is finished,
I'm left with what looks like
a used blood transfusion bag:

an adult Capri-Sun,
a DIY colostomy bag
for the vampire within.

It's not train wine
in one of those tiny bottles
that makes your hand
look like a giant's.

Or, worse still,
a can.

As if grape and tin
can be such a thing.

It's not orange wine;
the colour is all off,
for starters.

It could be sangria.

But who has time
to steep the fruit,
add the juice
and swirl the ice?

I do not.

It isn't dessert wine,
the kind that makes your trifles sing—
and your grandmothers too.

It certainly isn't cheap wine.

What can you do with that
apart from unblock toilets?

I would love an expensive wine.

But why must the finest things
be so costly?

That said,
I once had a vintage Pinot Noir,

rich in colour
and bursting with life.

After a quick swill—

bin it.

Tasted like muddy puddles,
old coins
and shame.

No,

this wine is dark
and full-bodied.

A Merlot
or a Malbec, perhaps.

It has character.
It has a heartbeat.
It has an iron taste.

It knows your darkest secrets,
your weakest links.

It knows the days you've missed.
The tears you've shed.
The heart that aches.

It feels like thunder
and sparks like lightning,

and all the while,
it keeps you numb.

I stare
at the broken bottle.

The wine flows
from my wrist
and into the bath.

My full-bodied body
is no more.

Yes,

Malbec.

That is the wine
I have decided
my blood most resembles.

Malbec.