

By Cin-Ty Lee, July 2010

I recently received a rejection. This is the response to the reviewers' comments that I really wanted send back in. But after a second thought, I decided that the chances of the editor and reviewer appreciating my humor might be very small.

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This is a letter to the members of a secret mafic society who serve as the keepers of pure basalts. Their motto is "no basalt can be too far removed from the mantle". I think it's actually a riddle, or at least the start of one, but I can't be sure. What is clear is that you do not want to anger this secret society. They are powerful, they are everywhere, they are omniscient, only that nobody knows who they are or what they really stand for. If you challenge the secret society, a furious wrath will come down upon you unless you repent for your sins and subject yourself to public humiliation.

To the keepers of Earth's most primitive rocks

When we heard that "no basalt can be too far removed from the mantle"  
We were crushed, plunged into the depths of despair  
Had we not treated our basalts with proper respect?  
Surely, basalts come in many different flavors,  
Nurtured by nonlinear walks in life.  
On their way up, they talk with their neighbors,  
They breathe out and sometimes in, as if stopping to smell the roses  
Sometimes they even have a party or two on their way up  
Often, they mingle with unscrupulous bedfellows,  
So by the time they arrive at your doorstep  
They're older and more mature  
And their Mg numbers much lower,  
No vestige of their childhood,  
Save for a few inclusions and crystals that hint of a troubled and tormented past.

Now, you say that that we've been too harsh,  
Most basalts are almost pure, hardly adulterated.  
We hang our heads in shame  
The guilt we feel is beyond comprehension  
The basalts, no, they don't deserve the blame,  
It was us, too quick to judge,  
Too anxious to play in the flowery fields of basalts.  
We know now though,  
That we will never question the histories of basalts again  
We are told that they were and will always be the same.

Please accept this bottle of wine from Lavacap Winery as a token of our appreciation,  
We have especially chosen this wine for its low strontium isotopic signature,  
Even a good red wine is not far removed from its mantle source. We hope you will agree.

Yours truly,

A bunch of reduced misfits