Βατραχομυομαχία

Ὅμηρος

Ἀρχόμενος πρώτης σελίδος χορόν ἐξ Ἑλικῶνος ἐλδεῖν εἰς ἑμὸν ἧτορ ἐπεύχομαι εἵνεκ' ἀοιδῆς,

ἡν νέον ἐν δέλτοισιν ἐμοῖς ἐπὶ γούνασι θήκα,

δῆριν ἀπειρεσίην, πολεμόκλονον ἐργον Ἀρηος,

eὐχόμενος μερότεσσιν ἐς οὐατα πάσι βαλέσθαι πῶς μύες ἐν βατράχοισιν ἀριστεύσαντες ἐβήσαν,

γηγενέων ἀνδρῶν μιμούμενοι ἔργα Γιγάντων,

ὡς λόγος ἐν θνητοῖσιν ἐγν. τοῖην δ’ ἔχειν ἀρχήν·

Μῶς ποτε διψαλέως γαλαίης κίνδυνον ἀλώδας

πλησίον ἐν λίμνῃ λίχνου παρέθηκε γένειον,

ὑδατι τετρόμενος μελιηδέι· τὸν δὲ κατεῖδε

λιμνόχαρις πολύφημος, ἔπος δ’ ἐφθέγξατο τοῖον·

«Σείεις τίς εἰ; πόδεν ἥλθες ἐπ’ ἠϊόνας; τίς ὁ φυσάς; πάντα δ’ ἀλῆθευσον, μὴ ψευδόμενόν σε νοήσω.

εἰ γάρ σε γνοήν φιλὸν ἄξιον, ἐς δόμον ἄξων’

δώρα δὲ τοι δώσω ξεινήτη πολλὰ καὶ ἑσθλά.

εἰμὶ δ’ ἐγὼ βασιλεὺς Φυσίγναθος, ὃς κατὰ λίμνην

τιμῶμαι βατράχων ἡγούμενοι ἤματα πάντα· καί με πατὴρ Πηλεὺς ἀνέδρεψατο, ἔπος δ’ ἐφθέγξατο τοῖον·

μιχθεὶς ἐν φιλότητι παρ’ ὁχθας Ἡριδανοῖο,

καί σὲ βλέπω καλὸν τε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἔξωχον ἄλλων,

σκηπτοῦχον βασιλῆα καὶ ἐν πολέμοισιν μαχητὴν ἔμμεναι ἀλλ’ ἄγε θᾶσσον ἑὴν γενεὴν ἀγόρευε.»

Τὸν δ’ αὖ Ψιχάρπαξ ἀπαμείβετο φώνησέν τε·

«Τίπτε γένος τοῦμον ἄρτεις; ἰδίον δ’ ἐν ἄπασιν ἀνθρώπους τε θείας τε καὶ οὐρανίας πετεινός.

Ψιχάρπαξ μὲν ἐγὼ κικλήσκομαι: εἰμὶ δὲ κοῦρος Τροώαρτας πατρός μεγαλήτορος; ἢ δὲ νυ μήτηρ

Λειχομύλη, θυγάτηρ Πτερνοτρώκτου βασιλῆος.
Battle of Frogs and Mice

Translated by Tanisha Chakma

Beginning at first I pray to the chorus of writing from Helicon
To come to my heart for the sake of a song.
A new one have I put down on the writing tablets upon my knees --
Great battle, clamorous war, the work of Ares.
I offer to place in the ears of all articulate men
How the mice bested the frogs
Mimicking the works of Giants, those earth-born men,
Such was the word among mortals. It began thus:

When a thirsty mouse escaping from the danger of a polecat
Placed his delicate muzzle by the full brink of the marsh,
Delighting in the honey sweet water, there saw him
The many voiced glory of the marsh, which croaked:
“Who are you, foreign friend? Whence have you come to this shore? Who was your begetter?
Speak the truth altogether, and let me not find you lying
For if I come to know you as a worthy friend, I will bring you to my house,
And I will give you many noble gifts of friendship.
I am king Puffycheeks, who across the marsh
Am honoured as eternal ruler of the frogs.
My father Peleus sired me, who lay in love with Hydromedusa, by the banks of Eridanus.
I see that you are both handsome and brave,
distinguished above others,
A sceptred king and a warrior in battles, no doubt.
But come already, tell me of your lineage.”

Crumb-snatcher in turn replied and spoke to him:
“Wherefore ask after my lineage? it is widely evident to humans and to gods alike, and also to winged creatures of the heavens.
Crumb-snatcher I am called. I am the son of Bread-nipper, my great-hearted father. My mother is Millstone-licker, daughter of king Ham-gnawer.
γείνατο δ’ ἐν καλύβηι με καὶ ἐκοψ’ ἐννεμέθεσθαι σύκοις καὶ καρύοις καὶ ἐδέσμασι παντοδαποῖσιν. πώς δὲ φίλον ποιή με, τὸν ἐς φύσιν οὐδὲν ὁμοίον; σοι μὲν γάρ βίος ἐστὶν ἐν ὕδασιν· αὐτὰρ ἐμοιγε ὅσσα παρ’ ἀνθρώπους τρώγειν ἐδος· οὐδὲ με λήθει

ἀρτοὶς τρισκοπάνιστος ἀπ’ εὐκύκλου κανέοιο,
οὐδὲ πλακοῦς τανύπεπλος ἐχων πολὺ σησαμότυρον,
οὐ τόμος ἐκ πτέρνης, οὐχ ἡμαρτα λευκοχίτωνα,
οὐ τυρὸς νεόπηκτος ἀπὸ γλυκεροῖο γάλακτος,
οὐ χρηστὸν μελίτωμα, τὸ καὶ μάκαρες ποθέουσιν,

οὐδ’ ὅσα πρὸς θοίνας μερόπων τεύχουσι μάγευσοι,
κοσμοῦντες χύτρας ἀρτύμασι παντοδαπτοῖσιν.
οὐ τρώγω ραφάνους, οὐ κράμβας, οὐ καλοκύνθας,
οὐ πράσσοις χλωροῖς ἐπιβόσκομαι, οὐδὲ σελίνοις·

ταῦτα γὰρ υμετέρ’ ἐστίν ἐδέσματα τῶν κατὰ λίμνην."
She bore me in a hut and nourished me
With figs and nuts and all such delicacies.
How will you make a friend of me, who am not at all
similar to you in nature?
Your life is to live on water, whereas mine is
To feed on whatever available in the house of men.
Thrice-kneaded bread in its well-circled basket escapes
me not.
Neither does the flat-cake with its flowing robe, full of
cheese and sesame
Nor a slice of ham; neither does liver in its white
encasing
Nor cheese freshly curdled from sweet milk.
Not healthful honey-cake, which even the blessed ones
long for.
None of these foods which the cooks of the articulate
ones prepare, improving their pots with various
seasonings.
I don’t eat cabbage, or anything like that --
No green kale do I feed upon, nor celery
For these are your foods under water”