

## Βατραχομομαχία

Όμηρου

Ἀρχόμενος πρώτης σελίδος χορὸν ἐξ Ἐλικῶνος  
ἐλδεῖν εἰς ἔμὸν ἦτορ ἐπεύχομαι εἵνεκ' αἰοιδῆς,  
ἦν νέον ἐν δέλτοισιν ἐμοῖς ἐπὶ γούνασι θῆκα,  
δῆριν ἀπειρεσίην, πολεμόκλονον ἔργον Ἄρης,

εὐχόμενος μερόπεσσι ἐς οὐατα πᾶσι βαλέσθαι  
πῶς μύες ἐν βατράχοισιν ἀριστεύσαντες ἔβησαν,  
γηγενέων ἀνδρῶν μιμούμενοι ἔργα Γιγάντων,  
ὡς λόγος ἐν θνητοῖσιν ἔην. τοίην δ' ἔχεν ἀρχήν·

Μῦς ποτε διψαλέος γαλέης κίνδυνον ἀλύξας

πλησίον ἐν λίμνῃ λίχνον παρέθηκε γένειον,  
ὔδατι τερπόμενος μελιηδέϊ· τὸν δὲ κατεῖδε  
λιμόχαρις πολύφημος, ἔπος δ' ἐφθέγγατο τοῖον·

«Ξεῖνε τίς εἶ; πόδεν ἦλθες ἐπ' ἠϊόνας; τίς ὁ φυσάς;  
πάντα δ' ἀλήθευσον, μὴ ψευδόμενόν σε νοήσω.

εἰ γάρ σε γνοίην φίλον ἄξιον, ἐς δόμον ἄξω·  
δῶρα δέ τοι δώσω ξεινήϊα πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλά.  
εἰμὶ δ' ἐγὼ βασιλεὺς Φυσίγναθος, ὃς κατὰ λίμνην  
τιμῶμαι βατράχων ἡγούμενος ἤματα πάντα·  
καί με πατήρ Πηλεὺς ἀνεδρέψατο, Ὑδρομεδούση

μιχθεὶς ἐν φιλότῃ παρ' ὄχθας Ἡριδανοῖο.  
καὶ σὲ βλέπω καλόν τε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἔζοχον ἄλλων,  
σκηπτοῦχον βασιλῆα καὶ ἐν πολέμοισιν μαχητὴν  
ἔμμεναι· ἀλλ' ἄγε θᾶσσον ἔην γενεὴν ἀγόρευε.»

Τὸν δ' αὖ Ψιχάρπαξ ἀπαμείβετο φώνησέν τε·  
«Τίπτε γένος τοῦμόν ζητεῖς; δῆλον δ' ἐν ἅπασιν  
ἀνθρώποις τε θεοῖς τε καὶ οὐρανίοις πετεηνοῖς.  
Ψιχάρπαξ μὲν ἐγὼ κικλήσκομαι· εἰμὶ δὲ κοῦρος  
Τρωζάρταο πατρὸς μεγαλήτορος· ἡ δὲ νῦ 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 ἔκρυσψ' ἐννεμέθεσθαι  
 σύκοις καὶ καρύοις καὶ ἐδέσμασι παντοδαποῖσιν.  
 πῶς δὲ φίλον ποιῆι με, τὸν ἐς φύσιν οὐδὲν ὁμοῖον;  
 σοὶ μὲν γὰρ βίος ἐστὶν ἐν ὕδασιν· αὐτὰρ ἔμοιγε  
 ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποις τρώγειν ἔδος· οὐδέ με λήθει

ἄρτος τρισκοπάνιστος ἀπ' εὐκύκλου κανέοιο,  
 οὐδὲ πλακοῦς τανύπεπλος ἔχων πολὺ σησαμότυρον,  
 οὐ τόμος ἐκ πτέρνης, οὐχ ἦπατα λευκοχίτωνα,  
 οὐ τυρὸς νεόπηκτος ἀπὸ γλυκεροῖο γάλακτος,  
 οὐ χρηστὸν μελίτωμα, τὸ καὶ μάκαρες ποθέουσιν,

οὐδ' ὅσα πρὸς θοίνας μερόπων τεύχουσι μάγειροι,  
 κοσμοῦντες χύτρας ἀρτύμασι παντοδαποῖσιν.  
 οὐ τρώγω ραφᾶνους, οὐ κράμβας, οὐ καλοκύνθας,  
 οὐ πράσσοις χλωροῖς ἐπιβόσκομαι, οὐδὲ σελίνοις·  
 ταῦτα γὰρ ὑμέτερ' ἐστὶν 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"