

## Kroshechka Havroshechka

*By Taisia Kitaiskaia*

I wish you a snout, a dead fish coat  
so stinky no one will touch you.  
Teach you to fry evil eyes in a pan.  
Grant you a taste for plunderage,  
milk down the chin. But even the fish  
coat weeps, looking at you: A child  
smuggled from plural winter, a girl  
tossed out from thrashing nurseries.  
Hostile geometry. Georgic sorrows.  
Tail scraped, nailed to the barn.  
So I became a medicine storm. Gave  
you a hiding place between my ears.  
Stepped into my own murder basin  
so Prince might eat my bone fruit.  
Still you fall through the Great Yawn.  
Cow is a hide pinned open to passing  
winds, the unshut eye of the cosmos.  
My language marks your forehead—  
the hoofprint blinks with perceptive  
rain. Even now, I am working on you.



## The Voice

By Farid Matuk

I want you to see the leaves are gone and white like winter  
you said let's make like a girl mean something amazing commercial  
flickered in that dead patch today is where I saw  
the cardinal's glow you wanted to see

me go first you say to use a pleasure in seeing me  
"walk behind this man" the voice said to Duriel so she could live  
on the train platform soft and touched come to see the suds in the sink  
lighting on workmen's calls and some of the Buddhist advice  
bends air before breaking it

birds and kids thread air into each other chiastically

it's not a word but a pressure to impose to feel the shape you're in

tell me what to see when you can it's a false spring after two days of rain

you splashed in little verbs if any come to use us loud handclap teeth suck  
letting us run a voice's grain its facts go in boxes whose faces we etch each shave a gain



### Note

"[T] voice said to Duriel..." refers to an incident the poet and performer Duriel E. Harris shared in a public talk. A voice of intuition directed Harris to walk behind a man who attacked her moments later on a subway platform. Had she been walking in front of him, he may have succeeded in pushing her down onto the tracks.

## Falls First

*by Susan Briante*

I.  
The sun spun like a coin on edge.

Mostly we worried about money,  
about currents and the catch and the value  
of the homes we lived in that the bankers owned.

Mostly we worried about the future.

In forest time, a river unwinds like the hem of a fairy's tulle dress,  
but in our city hours, a river riots like a falcon, chides us  
like an old bookkeeper  
teaching us time and again we do not own it or what floats within.

We waded up to our ankles, knees, neck.

The moon pulls the current, a card trick,  
the moon's up the river's sleeve.

To control the current is to control time, is to control the exchange rate.

So we grabbed a girl,  
by the wrist or waist, pulled her down  
didn't let go, didn't have to pay her.

Heads or tails? The sun spun  
away. Skin or scales?

We edged the ledger closer to shore.

2.  
By the banks or on a shoreline  
a girl might learn about seduction,  
what to reveal or hide,  
might learn about trauma  
and trade, what will flood, what currents will take  
away, a girl might learn about pay and pay.

To drown is to be wrenched from your element, to be immigrant.

An older man, a young girl.



## Bremen

*By Lisa Olstein*

A certain man, corn-sacks, indefatigably, but—  
Bremen. Daily weaker; no longer can, but now  
how—Bremen. Gone askew, worn to stumps,  
three days rain, where—Bremen. Soup tomorrow—  
Bremen. A little spark—Bremen—burning,  
a light. You can find something better than death  
everywhere, every mother never said but instructed  
with the night-music of her heart. Animal tales:  
wild and domestic. Magic tales: supernatural  
adversaries, supernatural tasks. Religious tales:  
God rewards or punishes, the truth comes  
to light. Realistic tales: robbers and murderers,  
chains involving survival, chains involving death.  
Tales of the stupid ogre, jokes about old maids,  
stories about a fool. There are many other features  
of ideas than truth. Bandwagon fallacy, fallacy  
of composition, fallacy of division, genetic fallacy,  
gambler's fallacy, fallacist's fallacy, slippery slope—  
each bad argument has a conclusion. Monster of this,  
monster if that. A ghost, a witch, a judge, a man  
with a knife. Appeal to poverty, appeal to wealth,  
affirm the consequent, argue from ignorance,  
beg the question. Bremen. The lie is the truest part



## Thumbelina

*By Taisia Kitaiskaia*

Thumbelina is a racehorse, muddy, bloody,  
rolling in & out on the Toad's tongue,

a joy-diamond for the choking. Lanuginous  
bride. Planeterium howl

wounding summer's bark. Walks into a room  
and everyone surges out their feet,

crabs or flowers scraping down the drain.  
Approach, approach on your pretty paws

says the mole, the beetle, and Thumb comes  
like an aneurism, a chandelier

plugged into the wedding's socket, booming  
tulips. You're a wish, Thumb,

even your mother stands at your rainbow's  
end like a dark, abandoned hut...

Run, my Diamond, before the Toad swallows!  
You're tiny to carry, tiny your cry,

like an insect seizing her reason  
for the first time—a sound

of no consequence to giraffes,  
chewing the moon's soft yogurt with blind lips.



## Sleeping Beauty

*By Noelle Kocot*

Looking out from the visible, an empathic  
Rain beats down like nails. Ambiguities  
Force their wonders unto us, and a fictive  
Decision is made. Sleep now, you are a

Relic, as the movements of a sunset resemble  
That peace that enriches the waters. Brooding  
& curious, hold yourself inside a burning hem.  
Make no mistake about the heart on the lake,

Make no mistake about surface and luxuries.  
Your lithesome body branches in the night,  
And you are gowned with thyme. The fish that  
Swim unlit by the strawberry moon are austere,

But you trip up those stairs like branches in  
The sky. By tallow light, I greet you specifically.

