Hamlet, Prince of Darkness

(“What? Hath this thing appeared again?”)

By night
from this enchanted wood
a jewelled toad comes down
to drink its own reflection
in the stream.
Bubbled eyes,
tender as love,
reflect the curvature of earth
the moon’s bright beam.
The squat, humped body settles on a rock
to dream.

By day
the wattled toad becomes
a thing of dread.
Its slimy back and mottled head
are odious, obscene.
The Princess hurries from her bed
to rouse the sleeping Queen.
“Alas, to know what I know!
To see what I have seen!”

Michael Gilkes