

## 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