

***Dan Champion***

**Galimatias**

You slip into the river but climb out  
and lie still, convalescent, on the bank.  
I take you in my arms and start to speak  
instead of listening. And then I wake.  
What hint, I wonder, do I have to thank  
for this vignette, what sin for the mistake  
of saying something, when without a doubt  
you had some words for me I'll have to seek  
upstream, in tributaries, drooping leaves,  
rain tumbling through gray air, and never find.  
What woke me up and left us stranded there  
is obvious. The world is full of thieves.  
They steal our goods, and we must be resigned —  
again a speech where wisdom would forbear.

Dan Champion

### **Grotesques**

Though cut in stone they slither and contort,  
Uriah Heeps of both the animal  
and mineral worlds. And we in turn distort  
our faces when we see them, guttural  
expressions in our throats, may even wring  
our hands in horrified sympathy and fear  
and loathing. Some grotesques, however, sing,  
no matter how atrocious we appear  
in cramped incomprehension of their plight,  
for, frozen as they look, they know they'll wear  
to nothing mercifully, while our kind fight  
through generations, suffering. Don't stare.  
It's not polite to gawk at ugliness,  
not even in the mirror of duress.