**Carol Ann Duffy, ‘Circe’**

I’m fond, nereids and nymphs, unlike some, of the pig,

of the tusker, the snout, the boar and the swine.

One way or another, all pigs have been mine —

under my thumb, the bristling, salty skin of their backs,

in my nostrils here, their yobby, porky colognes.

I’m familiar with hogs and runts, their percussion of oinks

and grunts, their squeals. I’ve stood with a pail of swill

at dusk, at the creaky gate of the sty,

tasting the sweaty, spicy air, the moon

like a lemon popped in the mouth of the sky.

But I want to begin with a recipe from abroad

which uses the cheek — and the tongue in cheek

at that. Lay two pig’s cheeks, with the tongue,

in a dish, and strew it well over with salt

and cloves. Remember the skills of the tongue —

to lick, to lap, to loosen, lubricate, to lie

in the soft pouch of the face — and how each pig’s face

was uniquely itself, as many handsome as plain,

the cowardly face, the brave, the comical, noble,

sly or wise, the cruel, the kind, but all of them,

nymphs, with those piggy eyes. Season with mace.

Well-cleaned pigs’ ears should he blanched, singed, tossed

in a pot, boiled, kept hot, scraped, served, garnished

with thyme. Look at that simmering lug, at that ear,

did it listen, ever, to you, to your prayers and rhymes,

to the chimes of your voice, singing and clear? Mash

the potatoes, nymph, open the beer. Now to the brains,

to the trotters, shoulders, chops, to the sweetmeats slipped

from the slit, bulging, vulnerable bag of the balls.

When the heart of a pig has hardened, dice it small.

Dice it small. I, too, once knelt on this shining shore

watching the tall ships sail from the burning sun

like myths; slipped off my dress to wade,

breast deep, in the sea, waving and calling;

then plunged, then swam on my back, looking up

as three black ships sighed in the shallow waves.

Of course, I was younger then. And hoping for men. Now,

let us haste that sizzling pig on the spit once again.

*(from New Selected Poems, 180-81).*

**Kathleen Jamie, ‘Meadowsweet’**

(Tradition suggests that certain of the Gaelic

women poets were buried face down).

So they buried her, and turned home,

a drab psalm

hanging about them like haar,

not knowing the liquid

trickling from her lips

would seek its way down,

and that caught in her slowly

unravelling plait of grey hair

were summer seeds:

meadowsweet, bastard balm,

tokens of honesty, already

beginning their crawl

toward light, so showing her,

when the time came,

how to dig herself out —

to surface and greet them,

mouth young, and full again

of dirt, and spit, and poetry.

(from *Jizzen*, 49).