

"The Wishing Fountain"  
by An-Dinh Nguyen

A small, copper-haired boy  
Steps up  
To the edge of the circular,  
Rippling pool.  
He closes his eyes,  
Flattening his wish  
Against palms lined with hope  
And life,  
And softly murmurs a dream  
As he drops it  
Into the water.

A large old lady,  
Silver streaming through her hair,  
Glasses gliding off her nose,  
Shuffles toward the fountain.  
She digs into her purse,  
Fingers brushing the  
Soured perfumes,  
Unraveling mittens,  
Images  
Coated with melancholy.  
Luster that has flaked away  
From her portable pieces of fancy  
Surges back  
As a single coin flies  
Off her hand,  
Vanishing  
Beneath the water.

A tall, slender man  
Stops to gaze  
At the lively liquid fan.  
With crinkled brow,  
He looks down,  
Edgily,  
Enviously,  
At its floor,  
So dotted with drowned wishes.  
Sighing, he fishes for pocket change  
And slings it all  
From his hand,  
Into the air,  
Over the water.  
Each coin twinkles  
Coldness,  
Clarity,  
Plunking unceremoniously among  
Rustier friends.  
The man smiles emptily.

He blows away,  
Past the lady,  
Past the boy,  
And thinks no more  
Of his wishes,  
To be lost and forgotten  
Until,  
Somehow,  
They all  
Come  
True.