

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Sweetbread

By George Kalogeris

For us it meant that big round homemade loaf
Encrusted with sesame seeds. Carved up and passed
Around at stroke of midnight on New-Year's Eve:

Vasilópita. And all eyes hungry to see
Whose piece contained the lucky dime, wrapped
In a clump of tinfoil. But first the sign of the Cross

Made with the tip of the carving knife. God bless
The sweetness and the roundness and the freshness
Of that golden loaf, as sweet as our glaze-eyed faith

In the turning year that always starts afresh
With the first delicious slice of that bread we never
Once called bread: *vasilópita*. And luck

To the one who gets the precious dime, and keeps it
Wrapped for twelve whole months in the crusty foil . . .
But old enough now to dread the turn of the year

And what it may usher in, my heart can't help
But sink. As if there was ever a day whose sweetness
Alone could ready us for the midnight hour's

Darkness, when we would taste, as I still taste
(O rising aromas of rising oven-baked dough!)
That bread we never called bread on New Year's Eve.