

NARCISSUS

by Lagnajita Mukhopadhyay

narcissus, the hunter, the numbness
son of river, god, reflection of the water
time dies to the ground, comes back
from the bulb, let them eat, breadlines
but with a price, medicine or narcotic,
poison, protection—Camus' prophetic
plague, Bach's sonata, Nero's fiddle—
shame, thirst mirror, love in the trumpet-
shaped corona, grows a flower in its
face, in its greed, gold and white,
public enemy turned martyr, hunger,
doctored, death bed of seeds, of youth,
extinct or good fortune, a false spring,
no end in sight, gathering in the name
of self-salvation, single central leafless
hollow flower stem, late leader of
numbers, faceless, under ground,
living dead, hermaphroditic, bipolar,
Chinese New Year lucky daffodil
with no angel's tears or soft hands,
and not enough soap to wipe clean,
narcissus poeticus, waiting it out,
poet's narcissus, to sit and watch