

narcissus, remember me

by Jerry Ratch

You were never at all like Narcissus, trying to remember girls' names with marble in their eyes. You never adored your own image, looking at yourself in the river, not like I did (looking in the mirror that brings sleep.) I remember you admiring the dresses that I wore, painted by immortals. You had me try them on. You bought me boots that laced up the front. You bought me perfumes to lend that faint odor of a woman at my neck.

I know how deeply your hands plunged into my fire. I remember putting my arms around your back and holding you in the flames for as long as you or I could bear it. And I remember I could feel you slipping away, too, serenely, with that light that urges the rose up out of my skin (even with the cream still inside me, after trying to hold on to the liquid jet.)

The sun is my only stimulant now, and of course, the moon. There is saleable laughter to be found, somewhere, because I can hear the sharp voices of youth shouting in the nearby fields of random pleasure. Too bad it is wasted on the young only. The sunlight softens the lips of memory, it is said. I can still remember being one of them, even now. And even now I think fortune is a small rain that a small mouse recalls.

