

Echo's Reflection

I

When Narcissus asked Echo's reflection to bear his child, her face fell open in two ways. He froze. He boiled over her prognosis. Some say she should have sensed bitter waters – yes & no. At 19, she didn't know daffodils choke romance from the rose.

II

*in love & pregnancy: fell, fell
both verbs stressed as if ill as*

*in coming down with him. in the early
days i had no reason 2 seek thru reeds*

*4 bloodwort & juniper leaves but the possibilities
repeated in dreams: ossified creatures in the belly*

III

He hunted Echo's body for discourse on tragedy. The academic daddies & catamites cried what a scholar! such theories! For Narcissus predicted the rise of Oedipus. He'd show them, he insisted, in his thesis. They'd see.

IV

*as selected host of these pathogens & genes, my voice
auditioned 4 victim roles: this i had 2 learn 2 admit*

V

Each clean day was a week. Months were centuries. In her 21st year, when the herbs didn't work, she found a novel where someone got lost on the way to an abortionist: the woman neither cried nor died & she stopped at a shopfront post-operation to admire crystallised figs

& pears that shimmered like insects, like possibilities. She bought every dried fruit, gorging on life & choice with no debate in sight & truth fell from the fiction like petals.

VI

no & no & – so
she spoke. Narcissus started
skipping his own lectures & concerned
members of the academy asked Echo where he was, as
if she had graduated to mother, no longer mere understudy
but she was done with Jocasta's lines. Sometimes he'd lie outside
her home or leave 20 messages in a row about embryos but she floated
in a feverdream of Alone. She found taffeta curtains & bathed by their
teal light, staring at curlicues of air bricks that looked like clear
wombs, fallopian tubes. Her old supervisor & his wife (two
metaphysicians who grew seedlings) said she started to
glow, to bloom. So she rose by writing
a treatise on agency & so on
& on & on & –

VII

*lightyears later, living in the lee, I received a
throwaway message with familiar grammar:*

*'I'll show u, u'll see.' dear parasite of the past
ur myths r revisionist; no Lynx bird was borne*

*by me. I chose 4 my abandoned inner
children & the opposite of tragedy. 4*

*gone as the foetus is, there always was &
will b shadows of u, narcissus, within me.*

*in time I will meet a shepherd & carry a lamb
named Iambe. it's enough 4 now 2 give thanks*

*4 what u never meant 2 teach
4 the inner mirrors & beasts*