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CHARLES MARTINDALE and COLIN BURROW

Clapham's Narcissus:
A Pre-Text for Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis?
(text, translation, and commentary)

John Clapham (1566-ca.1620) was not quite a nobody. His public career began in the 1590s as clerk to Lord Burghley. This was an important but undistinguished administrative job of a kind which inevitably leaves little impression on the records. Men like Clapham transcribed history rather than lived it.¹ He eventually rose to an equally dry but rather more lucrative post as one of the Six Clerks of Chancery,² and here, as far as can be determined, his career ended. If he is remembered, it is for the vivid account of the death of Elizabeth I which concludes his digest of Tudor history, *Elizabeth of England*. He also found time to translate (from Amyot's French) Plutarch's *De Tranquillitate Animi*, and to write a rather costive history of Saxon Britain.³ As well as these works he composed one Neo-Latin poem, *Narcissus, sive Amoris Iuvenalis et Praecipue Philautiae Brevis atque Moralis Descriptio*.

Clapham was modest about his poem. In the elegant prose epistle to the Earl of Southampton he compares his efforts as an imitator of classical poetry with the career of his Narcissus: as Narcissus is born prematurely (*abortivus*, 21), so *Narcissus*, Clapham's offspring, is *abortiva*. The epistle employs,

1. For a brief biography of Clapham, see his *Elizabeth of England*, eds. Evelyn Plummer and Conyers Read (Philadelphia, 1951), pp. 4–11. On the obscurity of Burghley's clerks, see Joel Hurstfield, *The Queen's Wards* (London, 1958), p. 67: "These personal assistants were the ancestors of the principal private secretaries in a government department today, whose modest place in the civil service hierarchy gives no measure of the significant role they play."

2. On the Six Clerks, see W. J. Jones, *The Elizabethan Court of Chancery* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 119–35; pp. 119–20: "men who had followed comparatively successful careers outside Chancery or in some other department of that institution were more likely to attain this office." In 1594 their income was estimated as £750 per annum minimum (Jones, p. 135), and £800–1600 by 1624–1628. See G. E. Aylmer, *The King's Servants: the Civil Service of Charles I 1625–42* (London, 1961), p. 222.

3. For "Historical Observations on the Reign of Queen Elizabeth," British Library MS Add. 22925, see *Elizabeth of England*, pp. 57–102; *A Philosophical Treatise Concerning the Quietnes of the Mind* (1589); *The Historie of England* (1602), published anonymously and reprinted, augmented, as *The Historie of Great Britannie* (1606).

reflexively, other words to describe the poem which are also used to describe the failings of its hero: *error*, *stultus*, *ineptus*, *tener*, and above all, *umbra*. The author elides the distinction between himself and his work to his own disadvantage.

Narcissus, the poem which follows, is a characteristic if undistinguished example of Neo-Latin verse. Its language is fraught with echoes of phrases from classical poets, especially Vergil and Ovid. Line 1 sets the tone: *roseis surgens Aurora quadrigis* conflates two Vergilian phrases, *surgens Aurora reliquit* and *roseis Aurora quadrigis* (*Aeneid* 4.129; 6.535). The piece is decorated with such typical epic features as *ecphrases* of time and place, which often recall some of the great primary *loci* in Vergil and Ovid. Echoes like these are generally better regarded as instances of *imitatio* or as intertextuality rather than as deliberate allusion. They illustrate the way Elizabethan schoolboys were taught to memorize, analyze, and imitate passages of Latin poetry. For example, the anti-feminist lines 121ff. are less of an allusion to *Aeneid* IV (596ff.) than an expansion of a famous Vergilian *sententia*, *varium et mutabile semper / femina*—a maxim often plucked from its context in *florilegia* and the like.

The poem's main classical source is obviously Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III.339–510 (Narcissus and Echo), which Clapham follows, at times closely, in the second part (details are given in the commentary). Clapham also follows both medieval and Renaissance commentators on Ovid's story in interpreting the Narcissus story as a warning against the dangers of self-love (*philautia*).⁴ In general his conceited and paradoxical style derives from Ovid. His greatest departure from the original is the omission of Echo's role in the story. However, at 178ff. he includes a virtuoso "over-going" (more bizarre and baroque than the original) of Ovid's much shorter passage of echo-effects (379ff.). As in the many vernacular examples of echo poems in this period, every line of *Narcissus*' lament ends in an echo which alters the meaning of the last word or words, usually in a moralizing direction.⁵

4. Cf. T[homas] H[owell], *attrib.*, *The fable of Ovid tretting of Narcissus* (1560), rpt. in Thomas Edwards, *Cephalus and Procris. Narcissus*, ed. W. E. Buckley, Roxburghe Club (London, 1882), pp. 157–58; Golding's Epistle to *The XV Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis* (1567), 105–06, sig. a3; Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, trans. Sears R. Jayne, University of Missouri Studies 19 No. 1 (Columbia, 1944), 6.17, p. 212; George Sandys' note on *Ovid's Metamorphosis* III (Oxford, 1632), p. 103; Milton, *Paradise Lost* 4.449ff.; see also Louise Vinge, *The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Lund, 1967), pp. 137–38 *et passim*; and C. R. Edwards, "The Narcissus Myth and Spenser's Poetry," *Studies in Philology* 74 (1977), 63–88.

5. See further John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: a Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley and London, 1981) and Elbridge Colby, *The Echo Device in Literature* (New York, 1921), rpt. from *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 23 (1919), 683–718, 783–804, which notes the prevalence of vernacular examples of the form. On Neo-Latin echo poems, see J. W. Binns, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age* (Leeds, 1990), pp. 56–57. Binns refers to Clapham's poem on p. 469.

Clapham succeeds only in showing how much more difficult such a poem is to write in Latin than in the vernacular. The changes in sense normally involve a change in quantity (e.g. *sācer* to *ācer*). Very often they lead to nonsense.

By contrast with its later parts, the first half of the poem (1–151), which describes Narcissus' visit to Cupid's palace, looks back to medieval allegories of love in the tradition of *The Romance of the Rose*. Its allegorical personification is often wooden: Narcissus is the offspring of Prosperity and Pride, nurtured on the milk of Error; he is greeted on the threshold by Idleness; and the steps above which Cupid sits enthroned represent the three stages in the familiar *gradus amoris*: Sight, Conversation, and Touch. The style of this episode owes more to Vergil than to Ovid, and in particular contains numerous echoes of *Aeneid* VI, Aeneas' trip to the underworld (see commentary). This could be regarded as a deliberate allusion (as well as simple *imitatio* of Vergil's language), and so be taken to imply that the service of Cupid leads to Hell (cf. *Lethaei*, 147). These Vergilian adaptations may be felt less than convincing in their new context. There are a number of other ill-considered touches, like the comparison of lovers first to doves and then to crows looking for dead bodies. Cupid's cynical advice to Narcissus on how to succeed in love includes a virtual quotation from Ovid's mock-didactic poem on seduction, the *Ars Amatoria*: *tibi semper amabilis esto* (139; cf. AA II. 107). This line points to the stylistic model for the whole speech. Another signal is the word *ars* itself, coupled with the elegaic phrase *blandis verbis*. It is interesting that these implicit allusions to the *Ars Amatoria* immediately precede the poem's main generic shift, from Ovid's erotic treatise, so popular in the Middle Ages, to his narrative poem, the *Metamorphoses*, the key Ovidian text in the Renaissance. Clapham is perhaps attempting to fuse these two aspects of Ovid.

But the poem cannot be said to succeed in this respect. The allegorical introduction seems to be a warning against the love of girls, until suddenly, at the end of Cupid's speech, with its lurch into a very different style, there is an unexpected switch to the notion of self-love. The sequel imitates the manner of the *Metamorphoses*, although Venus' final intervention again raises the tone toward moral solemnity. But even here and in the ensuing metamorphosis Clapham seems unable to decide whether he requires moralizing or pathos. In general there is a failure to integrate the Ovidian stylistic features with the overall moral and didactic tone. The weakness of structure, with its accompanying stylistic uncertainties, is the poem's most obvious defect.

But this does not mean it deserves to be ignored. There is a remarkably widespread failure in Renaissance studies to explore connections between Neo-Latin and vernacular poetry. Clapham's *Narcissus* provides many hints—some of them tantalizingly oblique—of an interchange between Latin and English poetry of the 1590s. It is tempting to speculate about

possible connections between *Narcissus* and Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (not published until 1598, but registered in 1593 and probably written by 1591). The story of Hero and Leander (treated by Ovid in the *Heroides*) furnishes the second and most elaborately described of the paintings which illustrate love's dangers on the walls of Cupid's palace. This could be a nod toward Marlowe's poem. In view of its context, and of the allegorizing touch in the image of the fragility of the human body (45), Clapham's treatment might be construed as a reassertion of the value of the moral tradition. By contrast, Marlowe's comparable *ecphrasis* of the pavement in Venus' temple, depicting the amours of the gods (141ff.), represents Ovid immortalized.

But the most intriguing connections between *Narcissus* and vernacular poetry concern Shakespeare. Clapham's *Narcissus* (published in 1591) was the first work of any kind to be dedicated to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. The second, two years later, was Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*.⁶ This is at least a suggestive coincidence, and critics have occasionally dared to claim that it is more than this. In 1902 R. K. Root argued that Clapham's poem was the source of Shakespeare's evident belief that Narcissus drowned himself. This version of the myth concludes Clapham's *Narcissus* and crops up in *Venus and Adonis* (160–62) and in *Lucrece* (265–66). It is also present in *Hero and Leander* (73–76).⁷ Root's hypothesis was later overwhelmed by the massive learning of Douglas Bush, who showed that all over European literature Narcissus was busily leaping to a watery grave.⁸ Clapham's *Narcissus* sank with him. Bullough omitted it from his rather conservative gathering of Shakespeare's narrative and dramatic sources.

More recently, however, G.P.V. Akrigg has argued for stronger links between Clapham's and Shakespeare's poems. *Narcissus*, Akrigg argues, was composed by Burghley's secretary in order to rebuke Burghley's rebellious ward Southampton for his narcissistic refusal in 1590 to marry Burghley's granddaughter, Lady Elizabeth Vere. *Venus and Adonis* is, Akrigg claims, a retort to *Narcissus*, which exculpates the youth by showing what a good thing it is for young men to resist women.⁹ This thesis is fairly unconvinc-

6. Franklin B. Williams, *Index of Citations and Commendatory Verses in English Books before 1641* (London, 1962).

7. See M. C. Bradbrook, "Shakespeare's Recollections of Marlowe" in *Shakespeare's Styles: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Muir*, ed. Philip Edwards, Inga-Stina Ewbank, and G. K. Hunter (Cambridge, Eng., 1980), pp. 197–98.

8. R. K. Root, "Some Notes on Shakespeare," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 4 (1902), 454–55; Douglas Bush, "Notes on Shakespeare's Classical Mythology," *Philological Quarterly* 6 (1927), 297. See also T. W. Baldwin, *On the Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Poems & Sonnets* (Urbana, 1950), pp. 20–21, and Shakespeare, *Poems: a New Variorum Edition*, ed. H. A. Rollins (Philadelphia and London, 1938), pp. 142–43; Charles and Michelle Martindale, *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity: an Introductory Essay* (London and New York, 1990), p. 57–58.

9. G.P.V. Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 31–35; 195–96.

ing. Although *Narcissus* does contain a string of cynical precepts for lovers spoken by the god of love, it does not praise marriage nor advocate sex and reproduction with anything like the urgency of Shakespeare's sonnets or, for that matter, Shakespeare's *Venus*. *Narcissus* could scarcely be regarded as an argument for marriage. And the unenviable end of Shakespeare's Adonis, transformed to a flower and plucked, is not perhaps the most effective piece of propaganda to convince young men to remain bachelors.

For all the excesses and failings of past source hunters, however, it is hard to believe that two mythological poems dedicated to the same patron within three years of each other are *not* in some way connected. In the early 1590s *Narcissus* was the only tangible evidence that Southampton might be a welcoming patron for erotic narrative poems. And *Narcissus*, for all its stiff, derivative dullness, does have momentary affinities with *Venus and Adonis*. Critics have unearthed a number of rather distant parallels for the elaborate description of Adonis' horse,¹⁰ but have not fully explained how Shakespeare got the idea of giving him a horse in the first place. Clapham's *Narcissus* may well be the shadowy prototype of this interlude. After the god of love has lectured Narcissus on techniques of courtship, the youth mounts an uncontrollable horse called *Libido* on which he gallops frenziedly away. This equestrian addition to the myth is unusual: Gower's *Narcissus* also has a horse; Ovid's does not.¹¹ But it derives, obviously enough, from the long-standing tradition which allegorizes horses as various forms of carnality. Patristic writers frequently associate horses with the flesh, and Renaissance iconographers (probably under the influence both of Plato's *Phaedrus* and of a general tendency in sixteenth-century ethical thought to replace the frailties of flesh by the rebellious urges of passion) often present unbridled horses as emblems of unbridled lust.¹² Shakespeare's rambling steed, which threatens

10. VA .259–64. *Variorum* lists, among others, *Ars Amatoria* I, 280; II, 487ff.; *Hero and Leander* II, 141–45; *Aeneid* VIII, 596. Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare: Early Comedies, Poems, Romeo and Juliet* (London, 1961), pp. 163–64, offers *Georgic* III.75–94, following Baldwin, p. 23.

11. John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* I, 2275–2358, esp. 2301–03 in *English Works* ed. G. C. Macaulay, EETS, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1900). Akrigg also argues that Adonis' horse derives from that of *Narcissus* (p. 196).

12. The medieval background is traced in V. A. Kolve, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: the First Five Canterbury Tales* (Stanford, 1984), pp. 237–48. The Renaissance descendants, and their origin in Plato's *Phaedrus* 253d, are discussed by Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1980), pp. 145 and 147n. A further example, closer to Clapham, is in Sir John Harington's translation of *Orlando furioso* (1591), ed. R. McNulty (Oxford, 1972), p. 79: "We may understand the Griffeth horse that carried him [Ruggiero] to signifie the passion contrarie to reason that carries men in the aire." See also Guy de Tervarent, *Attributs et symboles dans l'art profane 1450–1600*, 2 vols., *Travaux d'humanisme et renaissance* 29 (Geneva, 1958–1959), II, 417, and Erwin Panofsky, *Problems in Titian mostly Iconographic*, The Wrightsman Lectures (London, 1969), p. 118: "the whole tradition reaches an unforgettable climax in the description of mating horses in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*."

to break out of the confines of art and to distort the formal limits of the poem, refigures this allegorical tradition in ostentatiously literalized and fleshly form. In the process one immediate source for his knowledge of that allegorical tradition, Clapham's *Narcissus*, is made to seem frail and empty by comparison.

This could be part of the point of the long digression brought about by the fierce amorousness of Adonis' horse. To transform an insipid interlude in a Neo-Latin poem into such equine vitality would be the clearest possible sign to Shakespeare's patron that here was a writer who could make texts live in the vernacular. It is hard to believe that Shakespeare would have bothered to plunder *Narcissus* in the manner which earlier hunters after sources imply. But to absorb, animate, and transcend the poem, to make it appear a lifeless husk awaiting the animating impulses of Shakespeare, would have both imaginative and practical point. His patron would see, even in the most cursory comparison of the two poems dedicated to him, vernacular literature growing an abundant life from a zestless and old-fashioned Neo-Latin prototype.

There are signs that Shakespeare, rather than just taking allegorical or mythographic materials from *Narcissus* (as earlier commentators believed), absorbed the poem's shape and, especially in the early part of *Venus and Adonis*, filled the stiffly allegorical forms of Clapham with luxurious vitality. Just before the sudden entry of the horses in each poem there is a long persuasion to love by a personification of love. In Clapham this is a wooden and inflexible generic block drawn wholesale from the *Ars Amatoria* tradition, in which Cupid lectures Narcissus at length on how to win a woman. The episode lacks any trace of dramatic fluency. Narcissus' silent response to the god of love's advice means little more than that the genre of Advice to Lovers does not allow for dialogue. There is no sense that his silence might be either absurd or significant. Shakespeare's equivalent episode (which might almost be a gentle send-up of his predecessor's stodgy pedantry) animates a didactic interlude with conflicting desires. Unlike Clapham's Cupid, his earnestly vital goddess of love has an immediate and personal interest in eliciting a response from her victim. Adonis' protracted silence becomes in this dramatized context poutily weighted with significance. The gray outlines of this one-sided courtship could be drawn from Clapham's *Narcissus*. This suspicion gains some substance from the fact that during this ineffective persuasion to love, Venus makes her one direct reference to the myth of Narcissus (and at the same time alludes to theft), as though perhaps to acknowledge the distant origin of the scene:

Is thine owne heart to thine owne face affected?
 Can thy right hand ceaze love upon thy left?
 Then woo thy selfe, be of thy selfe reiected:
 Steale thine owne freedome, and complaine on theft.

Narcissus so him selfe him selfe forsooke,
And died to kisse his shadow in the brooke. (VA 157–62)

“Then woo thy selfe” is a rather unexpected thing for Adonis’ divine suitor to say, and is dimly reminiscent of the one surprising moment in Clapham’s poem, when the god of love, having instructed Narcissus how to love others, suddenly orders the unresponsive youth to please himself: “Sisque tibi gratus” (140). But *Narcissus* is more likely to be a structural aid than a verbal source for this stage of *Venus and Adonis*. In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Shakespeare’s main source, there is no trace of Venus’ lengthy courtship of an unresponsive Adonis. Instead the goddess simply tells her established lover the story of Atalanta (*Metamorphoses* 10.560–707) in order to dissuade him from hunting. Shakespeare had urgently to create in order to fill the space left by his omission of this inset tale (although Venus’ unlikely choice of a story about a woman who should never have married surely has a stronger role in fashioning Shakespeare’s chaste hero than is generally recognized). Critics have often suggested that he looked elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses*, to the reluctant ephoebe Hermaphroditus and to the self-loving Narcissus, in order to create his Adonis.¹³ But he may also have been helped by a memory of the structure of events in the only other poem dedicated to his patron. Clapham’s drab persuasion to love, followed by the description of an uncontrolled horse-ride, may have aided the growth of Shakespeare’s tensely animated battle between an overbearingly vocal deity of love and an egoistically silent lover which is then followed by a violently digressive description of an overwhelmingly lustful horse. Emrys Jones has shown that Shakespeare often draws from his dramatic sources the shapes and rhythms of scenes, rather than simply replicating phrases or stories from them.¹⁴ It is reasonable to suppose that in writing his non-dramatic verse, a similar regard for shape, combined with a lively sense of emulous parody, determined how other texts fashioned his own. *Narcissus* could be such a shaping pretext for *Venus and Adonis*.

If Shakespeare were not simply aware of Clapham’s *Narcissus*, but were also mischievously aware both of its structure and of its badness, then the moment when he refuses to provide Venus with a full-blown echo song might have an additional bite as another attempt to define his poem against his only rival for Southampton’s patronage. Clapham’s echo poem is long and, we have found, virtually untranslatable. Shakespeare’s, which occurs at almost the same stage in his poem as in Clapham’s, is tartly cut off:

13. *Variorum*, p. 400; Baldwin, p. 85; Bullough, pp. 162–63; Clark Hulse, *Metamorphic Verse: the Elizabethan Minor Epic* (Princeton, 1981): “Perhaps Shakespeare’s invention owes something to the stories of Narcissus and of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, or to the special tastes of the Earl of Southampton” (p. 146).

14. Emrys Jones, *Scenic Form in Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 21–22 *et passim*.

Her song was tedious, and out-wore the night,
 For lovers houres are long, though seeming short.
 If pleased themselves, others they think delight,
 In such like circumstances, with such like sport (841–44)

The stub-end of Venus' echo song which is admitted to the poem is desperately appropriate. Throughout the poem Venus repeatedly attempts to see her own desires projected in the landscape and in the desires of others. She is perhaps as much a Narcissus as an Echo. This limitation of all experience to selfness comes out in her brief, curtailed echo poem. Echo poems often transform the words of the speaker into an alternative version of their condition, rebounded from the concerns of another,¹⁵ but Venus' echo merely reflects an image of herself. Self-reflection, a kind of punitive narcissism, is the hardest form of solitude: "She sayes tis so, they answer all tis so, / And would say after her, if she said no" (851–52). This is an indication that between the myth of Venus and Adonis and that of Echo and Narcissus there existed a strong affinity for Shakespeare. Certainly subsequent writers felt it. Thomas Edwards' *Narcissus* (1595) draws repeated comparisons between his hero and Adonis, and Shirley's *Narcissus, or the Self-Lover* is perhaps the finest seventeenth-century offshoot of Shakespeare's poem.¹⁶

This association of myths, which could but does not necessarily derive from Clapham, may also have helped to form a strong nexus of ideas in Shakespeare's early verse. Sonnet 1 is vitally indebted to the two stanzas which follow Venus' allusion to the myth of Narcissus, in which she frantically urges Adonis to breed.¹⁷ And after reiterating these arguments Sonnet 1 alludes to Narcissus:

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
 That thereby beauties *Rose* might never die,
 But as the ripper should by time decease,
 His tender heire might beare his memory:
 But thou contracted to thine owne bright eyes,
 Feed'st thy lights flame with selfe substantiall fewell,
 Making a famine where abundance lies,
 Thy selfe thy foe, to thy sweet selfe too cruell

Ovid's Narcissus cries "uror amore mei" and "inopem me copia fecit" (*Metamorphoses* III. 464–66), and commentators generally agree that this cry is

15. See Hollander, p. 27.

16. *Cephalus and Procris. Narcissus*, ed. W. E. Buckley, Roxburghe Club (London, 1882), pp. 42–43. Edwards' hero drowns himself and Buckley notes a possible parallel with Clapham on p. 281. The volume contains many helpful (and some unhelpful) pieces of lore concerning Narcissus. James Shirley, *Poems & c.* (London, 1946).

17. *VA* .163–74. See Baldwin, pp. 186–89; *Variorum*, p. 24.

echoed here.¹⁸ For all its conventionality, it may be echoed too at the start of *Venus and Adonis* when the goddess promises that she will not “cloy thy lips with loath’d satiety, / But rather famish them amid their plenty” (*VA* 19–20). But whatever the precise extent and detail of the association, shadowy reflections of the myth of Narcissus do interpenetrate recollections of *Venus and Adonis* in the *Sonnets*, suggesting that when Shakespeare thought of his early poem he thought too of Narcissus. In Sonnet 53, which puns insistently on “shadow” as meaning both “spirit” and “reflection,”¹⁹ this association grows almost haunting. The young man sees himself reflected palely in every previous hero:

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shaddowes on you tend?
Since every one, hath every one, one shade,
And you but one, can every shaddow lend:
Describe *Adonis* and the counterfet,
Is poorely imitated after you, (Sonnet 53, 1–6)

The multiple images of the youth absorb even the figure of Adonis, who is subsumed into the diffracting and multiplying shadows of the narcissistic young man. Narcissus becomes the true type of Adonis. As the sonnets progress through the poet’s “Sin of self love” (62), which constructs his image after the image of the young man and the young man’s image after his own, narcissism grows into a dangerously strong metaphor for the love which comprehends no difference between lover and beloved, a love which threatens to blend into swamping egoism. Perhaps the whole architecture of the sonnet sequence, with its increasingly tortured visions of the diversity between poet and lover, serves to break the hold of the Narcissus myth on the form of love explored in Shakespeare’s early verse. A vision of love as pained difference, rather than the delighted self-identity of narcissism, emerges through the whole sequence. Whether the slack dullness of Clapham’s *Narcissus* played any part in creating the strong hold of the myth of Narcissus on Shakespeare’s verse is open to question. But this poem may have been one of the first which Shakespeare seriously attempted to overgo. Its subject matter at least remained with him.

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18. See *The Sonnets and A Lover’s Complaint*, ed. John Kerrigan (Harmondsworth, 1986), p. 171.

19. Cf. *VA* .162: Narcissus “died to kiss his shadow in the brook.”

John Clapham: Narcissus

EPISTOLA

Clarissimo et nobilissimo domino Henrico Comiti Southamptoniae
Johannes Clapham virtutis atque honoris incrementum multosque
annos felices exoptat.

Nonnihil vereor, illustrissime Domine, ne multis ego cum *Narcisso*
meo, cuius in his versibus errores descripsi, ipse etiam videar umbram
affectare propriam, et cum eodem prorsus insanire. Quid enim stul-
tius aut ineptius quam, cum tuto latere liceat, aliorum se iudicio
temere exponere, eaque in publicum proferre quae nihil aliud prae se
ferunt quam ingenii tantum levis atque otiosi indicium? Ceterum,
qualiscumque erit aliena de me opinio, haud male mecum agetur,
spero, si teneram hanc prolem, quasi iam postliminio natam, licet
multis forsitan abortiva videri possit, honoris tui patrocínio dig-
nam existimaveris. Placeat ergo, honoratissime, quantulumque hoc
poema sub nominis tui auspicio non infeliciter in lucem proditurum
ut certum animi erga te multum officiosi honorique tuo maxime
devoti testimonium excipere. Quod, cum perlegeris, si gratum tibi
esse intellexero, sat equidem habeo, sin aliter praeter optatum even-
erit, humiliter obsecro parcas erroribus meis, et umbram tantum
(quae nihil est) te vidisse arbitrare.

Ver erat, et roseis surgens Aurora quadrigis
Liquerat Oceanum, cum Sol coepisset ab ortu
Praecipiti cursu noctes aequare diebus;
Tum iam nuda diu foliis et floribus arbor
Et fecunda novo tellus velatur amictu;

5

Epistle] *postliminio* is used in post-classical Latin to refer to a revival from death. Cf. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 2.28. Early modern writers can use it, as here, of the revival of ancient learning: "Hereupon came that mightie confluence of Learning in these parts, which returning, as it were, *per postliminium*, and heere meeting then with the new invented stampe of printing, spread itself indeed in a more universall sorte then the world had heretofore had it." Samuel Daniel, *Poems and a Defence of Rhyme*, ed. A. C. Sprague (Chicago and London, 1965), p. 142.

John Clapham: Narcissus

THE EPISTLE

To the most famous and noble lord, Henry Earl of Southampton, John Clapham desires increase of virtue and honor and many happy years.

I am somewhat afraid, most distinguished lord, that to many I will myself seem to be striving after my own shadow with my *Narcissus*, whose errors I have described in these verses, and with him too to be quite mad. For what is sillier or more unsuitable than, when one may safely lie hidden, rashly to expose oneself to the judgment of others, and to bring forward to public view things which show nothing except the evidence only of a frivolous and idle disposition. But, whatever will be other people's opinion of me, all will be well with me, I hope, if you think this tender offspring—reborn as it were from the grave, although to many it could seem premature—deserving the patronage of your honor. So may it please you, to receive, Excellency, this poem, however insignificant, destined to go forth into the light—not without good fortune—beneath the authority of your name, as assured testimony of a mind wholly dutiful toward you and utterly devoted to your honor. When you read it through, if I perceive that you are pleased with it, I shall indeed be satisfied; but if it turns out otherwise contrary to my desire, I humbly entreat you to be indulgent to my errors, and think that you have only seen a shadow—which is nothing.

It was spring, and Aurora rising on her rosy chariot had left Ocean, when the Sun began from his rising place with headlong course to make the nights equal to the days. Already at that time trees long bare of leaves, flowers, and the fruitful earth were veiled with new cloth-

Tum frondere nemus, lenti turgescere vites
 Incipiunt, montesque et laeta virescere prata;
 Undique per silvas volucrum concentus in auras
 Labitur, et variis resonant clamoribus arva;
 Tum stabulis audent pecudes exire, solentque 10
 Ludere pastores calamis, dum valle relictā
 Excelsis teneri saltant in montibus agni.

Est in secessu longe pulcherrima, dives,
 Maximaque illarum gelidis quas alluit undis
 Oceanus, variis terrae ditissima donis 15
 Insula, qua graditur Phoebus, cum vespere sero
 Tendit ad occasum, quae Fortunata vocatur.
 Quippe sub imperio reginae virginis aucta
 Floret, et aeterna fruitur segura quiete.
 Hic ortus Narcissus erat pulcherrimus, atqui 20
 Natus abortivus, iuvenis, quem luminis orba
 Prosperitas genuit, peperitque Superbia vana,
 Et tepido Erroris nutrit Opinio lacte.
 Grandis in hac terra silva est, ubi fertur Amoris
 Aula dei caeci multis bene nota teneri. 25
 Florida—ni fallor—dicta est, latissima silva,
 Splendida, densa, virens, altis circumdata muris;
 Nam semel ingressi vix inde revertere possunt.
 Regia porta, micans auro, speciosa columnis,
 Noctes atque dies patet ingredientibus, atqui 30
 Non licet ingressis sine dextra numinis, idque
 Per rigidos montes perque ardua saxa, redire.
 Praeteriens portam facilis tibi trames utrimque

10] Cf. the description of spring in Horace *Odes*, 1.4.3: *neque iam stabulis gaudet pecus*.

15] Cf. *Aen.* 1.159: *est in secessu longo locus* (the most celebrated geographical ecphrasis in Latin literature).

17] Thomas Cooper, *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae & Britannicae* (1565), identifies Fortunate Isles with the Canary Islands. The implicit identification here with England appears not to have been widespread before Ben Jonson's masque *The Fortunate Isles* (1624).

27ff.] Cf. *Met.* 2.1–2: *Regia Solis erat sublimibus alta columnis, / clara micante auro* (from Ovid's most famous allegorical set-piece, the *ecphrasis* of the palace of the sun).

28ff.] Cf. the Sibyl's words to Aeneas about Hell: *Aen.* 6.126–29: *Tros Anchisiade, facilis descensus Averni: / noctes atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis; / sed revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras, / hoc opus, hic labor est*.

ing. Then groves began to become leafy, the pliant vines to swell, and the mountains and happy meadows to grow green. From every side through the woods the song of birds glides into the air, and the fields re-echo with various sounds. Then the cattle dare leave their stalls, and shepherds are wont to play on reed-pipes, while, leaving the valley, tender lambs leap on the high mountains.

(13) There is in a retreat an island, by far the fairest, rich, and greatest of those which Ocean washes cold waves, most wealthy with the varied gifts of earth, where Phoebus goes, when in late evening he proceeds to his setting. It is called the Fortunate Island. Indeed it flourishes enriched beneath the rule of a virgin Queen, and safely enjoys everlasting rest. Here fairest Narcissus was born, or rather born prematurely, a youth whom Prosperity void of light engendered, vain Pride brought forth, and Opinion nurtured with the warm milk of Error.

In this land is a large wood, where, they say, the palace of the blind god Love (well known to many) is situated. (26) Unless I am mistaken, it is called Flowery, a very broad wood, magnificent, thick, surrounded by high walls. For once entered here men can scarcely depart. A royal door, shining with gold, gleaming with columns, night and day lies open for those coming in, and yet those who have come in cannot return without the god's assent—and then only through hard mountains and towering rocks. (33) Passing beyond the gate you

Consitus arboribus patulis aequi ordinis, illic
 Mollia lascivae posuere cubilia Musae. 35
 Hinc atque hinc nemus est et inextricabilis error.
 Ulterius gradiens augusta palatia cernes
 In quibus historiae veteres pinguntur eorum
 Quos olim pharetratus Amor superaverat; illic
 Herculis effigies telas et fila tenentis, 40
 Quem, positis armis, niveo velamine cinctum
 Undique formosae circumsedere puellae;
 Quin et Abydeni tristis fortuna Leandri
 Pingitur, ut tumidas nimis audax pernatat undas,
 Ipse ratis, remi, tenerae quoque vela carinae, 45
 Cuius ut adventum modo sperat amabilis Hero,
 Perfida nocturno male conscia flamma labori
 Prodit, et—infandum—miseros extinguit amantes;
 Illic magnanimus Troianae gloria gentis
 Hector, et infelix Paris et furiosus Achilles; 50
 O ibi quae strages populorum et funera regum,
 Magnorumque ducum, quos omnes una perire
 Femina purpureasque animas effundere fecit;
 Illic Scipiadae victores, impiger illic
 Hannibal et magnus Caesar, duo fulmina belli, 55
 Atque alii multi quos sub iuga dura redegit
 Saevus Amor captos et de quibus ille triumphat.
 Huc properant iuvenes, laetissima turba, laboris
 Impatiens, audax, penitus secura malorum.

35] Cf. *Aen.* 6.274: *posuere cubilia Curae*.

36] Cf. *Aen.* 6.27: *hic labor ille domus et inextricabilis error* (of the Cretan labyrinth).

40–57] The closest analogue for this list of lovers is Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* 16.3–8, which similarly moves from myths of private affection to Roman history. For Hercules as a type of uxoriousness, see, e.g., *The Faerie Queene* V.v.23ff.; Petrarch's *Trionfo d' amore* 1.125. Hero and Leander are also mentioned in the *Trionfo d' amore* 3.21; Caesar at 1.88–90; Scipio (although not as a lover) at 2.12. Hannibal was often said to have destroyed the morale of his troops by his excessive love for Tamira. See J. Lyly, *Euphues his England* in *Works*, ed. R. W. Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1902), II, 112; and Antonio de Guevara, *The Dial of Princes*, trans. T. North (1568), sig. +*5. The heroes of the Trojan war are regarded as fit subjects for love since the war began with the rape of Helen.

47] Cf. Ovid *Epistolae Heroides* 18 (Hero to Leander), 105: *turris conscia*.

53] Cf. *Aen.* 9.349: *purpuream vomit ille animam*.

55] Cf. *Aen.* 6.842ff.: *aut geminos, duo fulmina belli, / Scipiadas*.

find an easy path on both sides planted with broad trees in an equal rank; there the wanton Muses have made their soft beds. On one side and the other is a grove and an inextricable maze. Passing on further you will see a grand palace, in which are painted the old histories of those whom once quivered Love had conquered: there is a picture of Hercules holding web and threads, whom, his arms laid aside, and wearing a snowy veil, beautiful girls sit around on every side; (43) furthermore the sad lot of Leander of Abydos is depicted, as that overbold man swims over the swelling waves, he himself ship, oars and sails of the light bark—his coming lovely Hero now hopes for, but the treacherous fire, accomplice of the night's efforts, betrays the wretched lovers, and—unspeakable!—destroys them; there is great-hearted Hector, glory of the Trojan race, and unhappy Paris and wild Achilles. O what slaughters of peoples and deaths of kings and great leaders were there, all of whom one woman caused to perish and pour out their red souls; there are the victorious sons of Scipio, there tireless Hannibal and great Caesar, two thunderbolts of war, and many others whom savage Love drove in captivity under his harsh yoke and over whom he triumphs. (58) Here hurry young men, a very joyful throng, unwilling to endure toil, bold, utterly heedless of

Huc simul agglomerant, ut candida tecta columbae 60
 Utque petunt densi demortua corpora corvi,
 Sive ut apes aestate solent per rura volare,
 Cum prima repetunt fetae praesepia nocte.
 Huc inter alios insueto ardore calescens,
 Candida cui comites Libertas atque Iuventus 65
 Iam celeri gressu noster Narcissus adibat.
 Cum venit ad silvam quae lata Cupidinis aula est,
 Lurida Pigrities, cui cura ut limina servet,
 Prae foribus iuvenem recipit, comiterque salutat
 Corpore crassa, rubens oculis, incompta capillis 70
 Per latosumeros pendentibus atque supremo
 Pectore nuda, nihil praestat, sed tota iocatur,
 Ludit, edit, dormit, Venerique est fida ministra.
 Illa sui iuvenis blandis amplexibus haerens
 Exultat, manibusque tenens comitatur euntem, 75
 Et simul ad caeci penetralia ducit Amoris.
 Primus ibi Visus gradus est, Sermoque secundus,
 Tertius est Tactus. Supra sedet ipse Cupido,
 Cuius dextra tenet calamos, arcumque sinistra,
 Vestis ei nubes variae, flammaeque cathedra; 80
 Ex utraque manu Dolor et malesuada Voluptas,
 A tergo lacerata comis sedet atra Ruina,
 Effrontisque Pudor simul, et deformis Egestas
 Luget et aeternum stultos lugebit amores.
 Dum miser huc illuc iuvenis circumspicit, arcum 85
 Acer tendit Amor, calamumque immittit acutum,
 Qui modo per venas perque ilia fervida transit;
 Protinus et magna clamatur voce per aulam
 "Noster eris, captum da te sub numine nostro."
 Ille tener calami violento saucius ictu 90
 Pectore vulnus alit—mirum—nil sanguinis illic

62ff.] For the bee simile, cf., e.g., *Aen.* 1.430ff.: *apes aestate nova per florea rura*; *Aen.* 6.707ff.

75] Cf. *Met.* 4.484: *comitatur euntem*.

77–78] On the *linea amoris*, see Andreas Capellanus, *On Love*, ed. P. G. Walsh (London, 1982), p. 56. See also Terence, *Eunuchus* 638; Ovid, *Met.* 10.342ff.; *Ars Amatoria* 1.482.

84] Cf. *Aen.* 6.617ff.: *sedet aeternumque sedebit / infelix Theseus*.

91] Cf. *Aen.* 4.2: (of Dido): *vulnus alit venis*.

ills. Here they join together, as doves seek a fair rooftop, as massed crows seek dead bodies, or as bees are wont to fly through the countryside in summer, when at nightfall the young offspring seek again the hive. Here among the others, growing warm with unaccustomed ardor, our Narcissus (whose companions were fair Liberty and Youth) was now approaching with swift step. (67) When he arrived at the wood which is the broad palace of Cupid, pale Laziness, whose job is to guard the threshold, receives the young man before the doors, and greets him in kindly fashion. Fat of body, ruddy of eye, hair unkempt as it hangs over her broad shoulders, with the top part of her breast naked, she performs no office, but wholly devotes herself to joking, playing, eating, sleeping, and is Venus' faithful servant. She rejoices clinging to the seductive embraces of her young man, and, clutching him with her hands, accompanies him as he goes, and at the same time leads him to the inner dwelling of blind Love. (76) There the first step is Sight, the second Conversation, the third Touch. Above sits Cupid himself whose right hand holds an arrow, and whose left a bow; shifting clouds provide his clothing, and flames his seat; on either hand were Pain and Pleasure, counsellor of evil. At the back sits black Ruin with rent hair, and with her Shame bold as brass, and ugly Want grieves and will always grieve over her silly loves. (85) While the wretched young man looks around hither and thither, piercing Love bends his bow, and shoots into him a sharp arrow, which immediately passes through the veins and burning flanks. At once the cry goes up loudly through the palace: "You will be mine, yield yourself captive to my power." (90) The tender lad,

Apparet; siquidem graviora pericula dicunt,
 Cum tacita internis celantur vulnera venis.
 Accedens propius, "tuus, o tuus" inquit. "Amoris
 Servus ero," et flexis genibus se subicit illi, 95
 Ceu rapidis ventis tenuissima cedit harundo.
 Surgit Amor, iuvenem solioque affatur ab alto:
 "Mitte omnem, Narcisse, metum, recteque notato
 Quae tibi dicturus, memorique in mente repone.
 Sint tibi Deliciae nutrices, Otia curae, 100
 Blanditiae cibus, et solacia maxima Nugae,
 Spesque Timorque, tui comites, et amica Voluptas;
 Temporis amissi, sumptus, magnique laboris
 Paeniteat numquam (parcos Amor odit, ut angues).
 Si tibi virgo placet, quamvis pice nigrior, illam 105
 Formosam, mollem, nitidamque vocare memento.
 Si deformis erit, faciem laudare venustam,
 Praespiciuam frontem, roseasque genas et lumina clara,
 Lumine quae dicas Lunae praestare bicorni,
 Et vultum solis radios, solemque referre 110
 Cum pleno aspectu toto nitet aureus orbe;
 Candida colla, manus longas, flavosque capillos
 Erectosque umeros laudabis; et improba blandis
 Suppleat ars verbis quicquid natura negavit.
 Denique dic puro Venerem superare nitore, 115
 Ingenio Musas ipsas, Charitesque decore.
 Crede in amore tuo multum mendacia prosint
 Et conficta dolo, bene quae simulata, probantur.
 Praecipue (ut fertur) laudari femina gaudet
 Qualiscumque; licet falsa et ludibria narres, 120
 Vera putat; siquidem levis est et credula semper,
 Garrula voce, sibi contraria, vana, superba,
 Lubrica, crudelis, mutabilis atque morosa.
 Qui sequitur fugiet, fugientemque ipsa sequetur;

105ff.] For this motif, see Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 4.1153ff.; Horace, *Sat.* 1.3.43ff.; and above all Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 2.657ff.: "*fusca*" vocetur, / *nigrior Illyrica cui pice sanguis erit.*

108] A hypermetric line (with 7 feet), a rare lapse in a technically accomplished piece of versifying.

123] Cf. *Aen.* 4.569ff.: *varium et mutabile semper / femina.*

wounded with the violent blow of the arrow, feeds the wound with his heart, but—extraordinarily—no blood appears there. So indeed they say that the dangers are worse when silent wounds are hidden deep in the veins within. Coming closer he says, “I am yours, o yours; I will be Love’s slave,” and bending his knee submits to him, just as a very slender reed yields to blasting winds. Love rises, and addresses the young man from his lofty throne: (98) “Away with all fear, Narcissus, and rightly note what I will say to you, and store it in a retentive mind. May Delights be your nurse, Leisure your care, Allurements your food, and Trifles your greatest solace, and Hope and Fear your comrades, and Pleasure your friend. May you never repent lost time, expense, great labor (Love hates the thrifty like snakes). (105) If a girl pleases you, although she is blacker than pitch, remember to call her beautiful, delicate, and elegant. If she is ugly, remember to praise her charming face, her distinguished forehead, rosy cheeks and bright eyes, which you can say outshine the light of the two-horned moon, and say that her face recalls the rays of the sun—and the sun when, with full form, it shines golden with the whole of its orb. You will praise her fair neck, long hands, and yellow hair and straight shoulders, and let shameless art supply with beguiling words whatever nature has denied. (115) Finally say that she surpasses Venus with her pure bloom, the Muses themselves in ability, and the Graces in seemliness. Believe me that in your love-approaches lies are very advantageous, and words craftily feigned, which are well counterfeited, win approval. In particular—as people say—every woman likes being praised; even if you tell her things which are false and silly, she thinks them true—seeing that she is flighty and credulous ever, talkative, contradictory, vain, proud, slippery, cruel, changeable and bad-tempered. (124) The man who pursues her will flee, and then she herself pursues him as he flees. She

Quidque velit, nescit, quod tu vis improba nolet, 125
 Vult, non vult, et nunc quod nuper amaverat odit:
 Tam vaga femineo cerebro est innata voluntas.
 Sis quoque facundus sermone, et sit tibi mollis
 Vestitus, varius forma atque colore; memento
 Mores sectari, cantare, salire, iocari 130
 Ludere nunc fidibus, nunc tristes scribere versus,
 In quibus, ut mos est, fortunam et fata dolebis,
 Nunc dare vota, fidem verbis, iurare per astra,
 Perque deos, multum promittere, fingere. Nullam
 Quippe fidem regni nullamque Cupidinis olim 135
 Dixerunt veteres, vereque haec comprobatur aetas.
 Muneribus tentes, quia multum munera possunt.
 Quod castrum aut murus quis inexpugnabilis auro est?
 Qualiscumque aliis, tibi semper amabilis esto,
 Sisque tibi gratus, quoniam tu dignus amore, 140
 Dignus amore tui, quem forma et mollior aetas,
 Ingenium, vires, virtus, et cetera reddunt
 Felicem; similem tibi tempora nulla tulerunt.
 Sic tua te nimium lactabit opinio, donec
 Umbra captus eris, caecusque peribis in illa." 145
 Talia fatus Amor divellit ab arbore ramum,
 Qui gelida maduit Lethaei fluminis unda,
 Et teneri frontem, formosaeque tempora spargens,
 "Te posthac," inquit, "Narcisse, haud noveris ipse."
 Hinc facie iuvenis mutari aut mente videtur. 150
 Mox ascendit equum, qui caeca Libido vocatur,
 (Quippe ferox numquam morsum neque frena ferebat)
 Protinus ut dorso sessorem sentit inermem,
 Cursitat huc illuc, iuvenis per devia fertur,
 Per loca plena rubis, spinosa, incognita, dura, 155
 Per iuga, per valles, puteos, latebrasque ferarum,
 Per vada, per fluvios, per mille pericula, donec
 Decidat in terram pronus prope flumen amoenum,
 Per ripas dum currit equus, cui praepite cursu

151] On *Libido*, see Introduction n. 12.

152] Cooper, *Thesaurus, sub morsus*: "a bitte with the teeth . . . the buckling of harness."

doesn't know what she wants. In her perverse way she won't want what you want. Now she wants, now she doesn't want. And now she hates what recently she had loved. So wandering a will is inborn into the female brain. Be eloquent of speech too, and wear soft clothing, varied in form and color. Remember to follow fashion: sing, dance, joke; at one moment play the lyre, at another write sad verses, in which, as is the fashion, you will lament fortune and fate; again, make vows; as proof of the sincerity of your words, swear by the stars and by the gods; promise much; pretend. For men of old have told how there is no honesty in government and none in Cupid; and truly this age proves the truth of this. (137) Assail her with gifts, for gifts can achieve a great deal. What camp or wall cannot be beaten down with a golden bribe? As you are to others, be always loveable in your own eyes, and be pleasing to yourself, since you are worthy of love, worthy of love of yourself—you whom beauty and soft youth, ability, strength, worth and everything else render happy. No times have produced anyone like you. Thus your opinion of yourself will allure you until you are caught by a shadow, and blindly perish in it." (146) So saying Love plucks a branch from a tree, which was steeped in the cold water of the river Lethe, and sprinkling it over the brow and fair temples of the tender youth, says, "Hereafter, Narcissus, you will not know yourself." From this moment the young man seems changed in appearance or mind. Soon he mounts a horse, which is called blind Lust because the fierce creature never endured bit or reins. (153) As soon as it felt an unarmed rider on its back, it runs about hither and thither. The young man is carried over trackless places, over places full of brambles, thorny, unknown, hard; over hills, valleys, pits and the lairs of wild beasts; over waters, rivers; over a thousand dangers, until he falls on the ground headlong near a pleasing river (while the horse runs along the bank), into which a fountain rushes in headlong

Fons ruit ex alto scopulo atque Philautia vulgo 160
 Dicitur; hac postquam sitis illi extinguitur unda
 (Nam valde incaluit iuvenis, sudansque sitivit),
 Continuo cerebrum sopor opprimit, atque per amnem
 Decumbit lassus viridi bene caespite fultus,
 Securusque leni Zephyro spirante quiescit. 165
 Iamque fere medium rapido Sol lumine caelum
 Attigerat, cum vix somno experrectus in auras
 Oscitat et retro iuvenis circumspicit, ut qui
 Vix loca, vix sese noscit—mirabile—, tandem
 Surgit, et ad ripas erecto corpore dum stat, 170
 Umbram flammigeri solis splendore nitentem,
 Quae formam liquidis quasi vivam reddit in undis,
 Adspicit, aspectuque suo stupet inscius, atque
 Iam dubio, cuius facies sit, pectore volvit.
 Accedens propius fluvio sua lumina figit, 175
 Atque gemens alta dum clamat voce per auras,
 Garrula ab adversis respondet montibus Echo

O forma et facies vere pulcherrima	rima	
Quae colis hunc fluvium quem nutrit fons sacer	acer	
Quisquis es, haud nosco, sed si fas quaerere	rere	180
Dic precor, et tua laus de me cantabitur;	itur	
Quis novus hic ardor turbati pectoris	oris	
Qui flammis solito maiores parturit?	urit	
Nil mihi respondes? Frustra clamatur.	amatur	
Si placet, exito, simul hic sedeamus	eamus	185
At quocumque ieris, te nolo relinquere.	quaere	
Clara dies sine te mihi nox et terror;	et error	
Rosque levis sine te mihi cana pruina;	ruina	
Aestivusque calor sine te nix aspera.	spera	
Quid sine te sperem? Num vox clamoris	amoris	190

177ff.] We have been unable to translate the echo poem and retain both its form and (scant) sense. The first few lines could be rendered: "O most truly beautiful shape and face—*space*—which dwells in this river, fed by sacred stream—*keen*—If it is right to ask (since who you are I cannot think)—*think*—I will sing your praise: tell me please—*flees*." But to continue is arduous to the point of impossibility.

course from a high rock. This river is commonly called Philautia (Self-Love). After his thirst is extinguished by this water (for the youth had grown extremely hot, and was thirsty through sweating), immediately sleep oppresses his brain, and by the riverside he falls down tired, well-cushioned on the green turf, and safely rests as the soft Zephyr blows. (166) And now the Sun had almost reached the mid-point of the sky with his swift light, when with difficulty aroused from sleep into the air the young man yawns and looks around and behind him, like one who scarce knows the place, scarce himself—amazingly. At length he rises up, and while he stands near the banks with upright body, he sees a reflection shining in the gleam of the flaming sun, which gives back as it were a living form in the clear waters; and, not recognizing it, he is amazed at his own appearance, and revolves in his now doubting breast whose shape it is. Coming nearer he fixes his eyes on the stream, and, while he cries out in a loud voice through the air, talkative Echo replies from the mountains opposite:

(179) “O shape and face truly most beautiful—*gap*—who inhabits this river which a sacred fountain feeds—*sharp*—who you are I don’t know, but if it is right to ask—*you think*—tell me I pray and your praise will be sung by me—*it goes*. What is this new longing of a stricken breast—*mouth*—which produces fires of love greater than usual?—*burns*. Do you say nothing to me in reply? My cry is to no purpose—*there is love*. If you like, come out, let us sit here together—*let us go*. But wherever you go I am unwilling to leave you—*seek*. Without you bright day is for me night and terror—*and error*. Without you light dew is for me hoary frost—*ruin*. Without you summer’s heat is sharp snow—*hope*. What can I hope without you? The sound of a cry—*of love*—as it resounds through the woods isn’t at last recog-

Per silvas resonans tandem cognoscitur?	itur	
Spes in amore meo sine te iacet abruta;	ruta	
Solamen sine te dolor est et amaror,	amaror	
Et nequeo sine te, sine vita vivere;	vere	
Non adeo rudis est facies et agrestis	agrestis	195
Ut tibi spernendus videar, vel ineptus	ineptus	
Qui fruar optato. Mea fama perennis	Erynnis	
Fama mei miseri qui iam periturus	iturus	
Te Narcissus amat; non vox ea perfodit.	odit	
Multae me nymphae petierunt undique.	diique	200
Quis sonus irridet gemitum clamantis?	amantis	
Heu pereo, tempus sine fructu labitur;	itur	
Quique sua multos facie pellegerat	errat	
Hunc facies aliena ignotaque pellicit,	icit	
Pellicit—infandum!—cogitque perire.	perire	205
O miserere mei mea fata dolentis,	olentis	
Et miseram sine te vitam degentis.	egentis	
Nil movet, ut video; totus sine spe queror.	error	

Talia clamantem ridet resonabilis Echo,		
Dum stupet ipse sibi, propioque exardet amore		210
Saepe petit fluvium, velut oscula blanda daturus,		
Cumque petit petitur, sed, quod petit inscius, umbram		
Non putat esse suam, nec quid sit noscit ineptus.		
Saepe manus offert, et signa remittit imago,		
Quae motum adstantis liquidis imitatur in undis.		215
Sic dum turbat aquas, facies obscura videtur,		
Et videt, et queritur, sed quod vult possidet ipse,		
Atque frui nescit; tantus tenet error amantem.		
Nunc solito Phoebus cursu peragraverat orbem,		
Noxque venire parat, tenues quae dissipat umbras.		220
Tum iam visa diu liquidas vanescit in auras		

195] Cf. *Ecl.* 2.25: *nec sum adeo informis.*209] Cf. *Met.* 3.358: *resonabilis Echo.*212] Cf. *Met.* 3.426: *dumque petit, petitur.*214] Cf. *Met.* 3.460: *signa remittis.*216] Cf. *Met.* 3.475ff.: *et lacrimis turbavit aquas, obscuraque moto / reddita forma lacu est.*218] Cf. *Met.* 3.447: *tantus tenet error amantem!*

nized, is it?—*it is gone*. Without you hope in my love lies ruined—*rue*. Without you comfort is grief and bitter taste—*bitter taste*. Without you, without life, I cannot live—*truly*. My appearance is not so uncouth and rustic—*rustic*—that it seems you ought to spurn me, or regard me as silly—*silly*—for delighting in what I desire? My fame is enduring—*Fury*—the fame of wretched me who, destined now to die—*about to go*—loves you, I, Narcissus. My cry does not penetrate through—*it hates*. Many nymphs have sought me from all sides—and *gods*. (201) What sound mocks the groans of the lamenter?—*the lover*. Alas I die; time glides away fruitlessly—*it goes*. And he who had beguiled many with his face—*wanders*—him an alien and unknown face beguiles—*strikes*—beguiles (unspeakable!) and forces to die—*to die*. O pity me as I grieve for my fate—*evil smelling*—and living a wretched life without you—*lacking*. Nothing has any effect, as I see; I speak my love lament wholly without hope—*error*.”

(211) As he cries out such things resounding Echo laughs, while he is amazed at himself, and burns with a self-directed love. Often he seeks the river, as if to offer seductive kisses, and while he seeks he is sought; but he does not think in his ignorance that what he seeks is his own reflection, nor does the fool know what it is. Often he proffers his hands, and the image returns the gestures, imitating in the clear waters the motion of the standing youth. So, when he disturbs the waters, the reflection becomes obscure, and he sees this, and complains; but he already has what he wants and doesn't know how to enjoy it. So great an error grips the lover.

(221) Now Phoebus had completed his circular path in his usual course, and Night prepares to come, which scatters insubstantial reflections. Then indeed the reflection seen for so long begins to vanish into the liquid air, and does not appear to the youth, who looks

Umbra, nec apparet iuveni qui quaerit ubique.
 Pallida nunc facies, modo quae formosa, dolore,
 Viscera sicca, manusque tremunt, speciosaque pendent
 Brachia; paulatim frigescit sanguis; et expes 225
 Extrema fundit miseras has voce querellas:
 "Ergon' abire voles, miserumque relinquere amantem?
 Quo fugis? a nimium crudelis, siste parumper,
 Et videam saltem, si tangere non licet, ora.
 At frustra exclamo, quoniam irrevocabilis ille est. 230
 O vos silvicolae Satyri Faunisque bicornes,
 Naiades, et sacrae Dryades, mea tristia fata
 Plangite; nam vester queritur Narcissus, et aeger
 Quod modo vidit amans, sine spe nunc luget ademptum
 Quodque oculis placuit, nunc pectus perfodit ipsum; 235
 Sic vidi, et pereo, sic vult fortuna, vel error."
 Haec ubi dicta dedit tendens ad sidera palmas,
 Terque gemens dicit "pereo, formose, valetō;
 Dure nimis," repetens iterum, "formose valetō";
 Deficiunt vires, et vox, et spiritus ipse 240
 Deficit, et pronus de ripa decedit, et sic
 Ipse suae periit deceptus imaginis umbra.

Protinus haec miseri casus vulgata per orbem
 Fama volat (nec enim quicquam velocius illa est)
 Cum iuvenis mortem Venus indignata sereno 245
 Despicit e caelo, coetuque adstante deorum,
 Has querulas profert lacrimanti voce loquellas:
 "Nonne mei miseret Narcissi, cuius amores
 —Pro dolor!—infandi scopulos et litora, ripas,
 Silvarum abstrusas latebras clausasque cavernas, 250
 Aerios montes, vallos, loca devia, lucos,
 Oceanum penetrant et caelos, tecta deorum,

228] Cf. *Met.* 3.477ff.: *quo refugis? remane nec me, crudelis, amantem / desere!*

229] Cf. *Met.* 3.478ff.: *liceat, quod tangere non est, / adspicere.*

236] Cf. *Ecl.* 8.41: *ut vidi, ut perii.*

244] Cf. *Aen.* 4.174: *Fama, malum qua non aliud velocius ullum.*

245ff.] Cf. *Met.* 2.321: *de caelo . . . sereno.*

for it everywhere. Now pale was his face, which previously was fair, his flesh dry with grief, and his hands tremble; his lovely arms hang down. Little by little his blood grows cold; and now without hope he pours out these wretched words of lament with his dying voice: "Do you then want to go away, and leave your wretched lover? Where do you flee to? Ah, too cruel, stop for a little, and may I at least see your face, if I am not allowed to touch it. But I cry out in vain, as if he can be recalled. (231) O you satyrs that dwell in the woods and two-horned Fauns, Naiads, and sacred Dryads, lament my sad fate. For your Narcissus complains, and sick in loving what he has just seen, without hope now mourns for it as dead; and what pleased his eyes, now the very same thing pierces his breast. So I saw, and I perish, so fortune wills—or error." After speaking these words, stretching his hands to the stars, and thrice groaning, he says: "I perish; beautiful one, farewell; too hard of heart," saying again, "beautiful one, farewell." His strength fails, and his voice, and his very breath fails, and he falls headlong from the bank. And thus he himself perished, deceived by the shadow of his own reflection.

(245) Forthwith Rumor flies spreading this account of his wretched fate through the world (for nothing is swifter than she), when Venus complaining of the young man's death looks down from the clear heavens, and, before the company of the gods, brings forth these lamenting plaints with tearful voice: "Don't you pity my Narcissus, whose unspeakable love—O the grief of it—reaches rocks, shores, river banks, hidden lairs in woods, inaccessible caves, airy mountains, valleys, trackless places, groves, ocean, the heavens, home of the

Atque Stygis tandem penetrabunt fluminis undas?
 Non prorsus morietur," ait, "sed vivet in herba;
 Flos erit atque suo sumet de nomine nomen, 255
 Cuius erit croceus maculis color intimus atque
 Per medium foliis cingetur mollior albis.
 Sic Narcissus erit specie formosus, ut olim,
 Flosque Iuventutis, siquidem placet, inde vocetur."
 Annuit his verbis superum celeberrima turba, 260
 Et subito, ut fertur, corpus iuvenile vigentem
 Vertitur in florem, retinens sua nomina semper,
 Flosque Iuventuti sacer est, bene notus in arvis.
 Ultima sors haec est nimium infelicis amantis.

FINIS

253] Cf. *Met.* 3.272: *Stygias penetrabit in undas.*

257] Cf. *Met.* 3.510: *foliis medium cingentibus albis.* Clapham's description is perhaps strategically vague. However, John Gerard, *Herball* (1597), notes that a species of Narcissus imported specifically for Lord Burghley (both his and Clapham's employer) has "in the middle some few chives [stamens] or welts, of a bright purple colour" (p. 112). This may account for *maculis*. *Mollior* is botanically odd. Cooper notes, *sub Narcissus*, that the flower's stalk "is soft like a leaf."

259] Narcissi are customarily associated by lexicographers with narcosis, following the etymology proposed by Pliny, *Natural History* 21.128; cf. Natales Comes, *Mythologiae* (Paris, 1567), p. 78. There appears to be no precedent for Clapham's association with youth, which may be specifically tailored for Southampton. For C. Stephanus, *Dictionarium* (Paris, 1596), fol. 313, Narcissus' fate warns against the vanity of worldly glories and shows the danger of flowering too early. This could be taken as a warning to youth. Golding's Narcissus laments that he was cut off in "the floure of youth," p. 38, translating *Met.* III.470: *primoque extinguior in aevo.*

260] Cf. *Met.* 2.321: *celeberrima turba.*

gods, and finally will reach the waters of the river Styx? (253) He shall not completely die," she adds, "but will live in the grass. He will be a flower, and will be named from his own name; whose color in the center will be yellow with flecks, and around the middle more delicate, girded with white petals. In this way Narcissus will be of a lovely appearance, as before; and let it be called the flower of Youth from this, if indeed you consent." The crowded company of the gods nodded assent to these words, and suddenly, it is said, the youthful body is turned into a flourishing flower, ever retaining its name; and the flower, well known in the fields, is sacred to Youth. This is the final end of the too unfortunate lover.

END

A Note on the Text and Translation

The poem exists in one copy, now in the British Library (shelfmark 837.h.11). This modest quarto is not well-thumbed. It is therefore likely to be a single example from a relatively small print-run, rather than the one copy which survived a destructively eager readership. The text has been meticulously and accurately emended in a number of places by a hand careful to disguise itself as print. These may originate from a careful but not infallible author.

In the table of variants, *H* indicates a reading emended by hand in the British Library copy. Letters in **bold** are editorial emendations. The punctuation and orthography of the text have been modernized. The translation has no pretensions to be other than a straightforward crib to help with the construing of the Latin, and errs on the side of literalism.

<i>Line</i>		
33	veteres]	veetres <i>H</i>
38	montes]	mentes
52	ducum]	ducem <i>H</i>
55	ful mina]	flumina
65	Iuventus]	iuventus <i>H</i>
80	variae]	variu <i>H</i>
97	solioque]	solique <i>H</i>
110	aureus]	auraus <i>H</i>
138	murus]	muras <i>H</i>
144	opinio]	opino <i>H</i>
153	inermem]	inernem <i>H</i>
182	novus]	nouuus <i>H</i>
187	et error]	error <i>H</i>
192	iacet]	iacit <i>H</i>
213	esse]	esle <i>H</i>
220	Noxque]	Moxque <i>H</i>
230	ir revocabilis]	revocabilis
234	ademptum]	adem <i>H</i>