**The Mirror**

It glimmers like a wakeful lake in the dusk-narrowing room.

Like drowning vague branches in its depths floats the gloom,

The night shall shudder at its face by gleams of pallid light

Whose hands build the broader day to break the husk of night.

No shade shall waver there when your shadowless soul shall pass,

The green shakes not the air when your spirit drinks the grass,

So in its plashless water falls, so dumbly lies therein

A fervid rose whose fragrance sweet lies hidden and shut within.

Only in these bruised words the glass dim showing my spirit’s face,

Only a little colour from a fire I could not trace,

To glimmer through eternal days like an enchanted rose,

The potent dreamings of whose scent are wizard-locked beneath its glows.

—Isaac Rosenberg

**Insomnia**

The moon in the bureau mirror

looks out a million miles

(and perhaps with pride, at herself,

but she never, never smiles)

far and away beyond sleep, or

perhaps she’s a daytime sleeper.

By the Universe deserted,

*she*’d tell it to go to hell,

and she’d find a body of water,

or a mirror, on which to dwell.

So wrap up care in a cobweb

and drop it down the well

into that world inverted

where left is always right,

where the shadows are really the body,

where we stay awake all night,

where the heavens are shallow as the sea

is now deep, and you love me.

—Elizabeth Bishop

**Mirror**

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.

Whatever I see I swallow immediately

Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.

I am not cruel, only truthful—

The eye of a little god, four-cornered.

Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.

It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long

I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.

Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,

Searching my reaches for what she really is.

Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.

I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.

She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.

I am important to her. She comes and goes.

Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.

In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman

Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

—Sylvia Plath

**Reflective**

I found a

weed

that had a

mirror in it

and that

mirror

looked in at

a mirror

in

me that

had a

weed in it

—A. R. Ammons

**Mirror**

A white room and a party going on

and I was standing with some friends

under a large gilt-framed mirror

that tilted slightly forward

over the fireplace.

We were drinking whiskey

and some of us, feeling no pain,

were trying to decide

what precise shade of yellow

the setting sun turned our drinks.

I closed my eyes briefly,

then looked up into the mirror:

a woman in a green dress leaned

against the far wall.

She seemed distracted,

the fingers of one hand

fidgeted with her necklace,

and she was staring into the mirror,

not at me, but past me, into a space

that might be filled by someone

yet to arrive, who at that moment

could be starting the journey

which would lead eventually to her.

Then, suddenly, my friends

said it was time to move on.

This was years ago,

and though I have forgotten

where we went and who we all were,

I still recall that moment of looking up

and seeing the woman stare past me

into a place I could only imagine,

and each time it is with a pang,

as if just then I were stepping

from the depths of the mirror

into that white room, breathless and eager,

only to discover too late

that she is not there.

—Mark Strand

**Narcissus**

Vanity, I could dance all night

Down the hall of mirrors with you,

Looking down the cleft in your dress,

(For you must be a woman),

Dipping here and bowing there

To the portraits of my ancestors

That all look remarkably like me,

Their eyes rounded by looking at water.

I would wear glass shoes if I could get them,

To see my face breaking over them,

Thinly reflected above my white feet moving,

My face moving and vanishing as I walk.

I’ve looked so much in mirrors I could step

Into the soothing presence of myself,

Spectating my own beauty,

Hardly believing I am mine.

If there was an end put to all reflection,

At night you would find me walking

With a burning torch, everywhere,

Looking for whatever I used to find in my face.

—Douglas Dunn