(1) APOLLO AND DAPHNE

The story begins just after the young god Apollo has established himself as an adult, powerful god by killing the dragon/serpent Python and claiming its former grounds as the site for his most significant sanctuary, Delphi.

Apollo’s first love was Daphne, the daughter of Peneus. 
It was not blind chance which made him love her, but Cupid’s savage rage. The Delian god, proud of his recent conquest of the snake, saw Cupid flexing his bow, pulling back the string, and said to him:

“Impudent boy, why are you playing with a man’s weapon? Carrying that suits shoulders like my own, since I can shoot wild beasts and never miss and wound my enemy. I am the one who with my countless arrows has just killed that swollen Pytho, whose venomous gut covered so many acres. Stay content kindling any kind of love you fancy with that torch of yours, but do not pre-empt those praises due to me.”

The son of Venus then replied to him:

“O Phoebus, your bow may strike all things, but mine can strike at you. Just as all animals are less than gods, so, to the very same extent, your fame is less than mine.”

Cupid spoke. Keen to act, he struck the air with beating wings and stood on the shady peak of Mount Parnassus. He pulled out two arrows from his quiver,
each with a different force. One of them makes love run off, the other brings it on. The arrow which stimulates love is gold, with a sharp, glittering head, while the arrow which inhibits love is blunt and has lead below the shaft. With this second arrow the god pierced the daughter of Peneus, but with the first he struck Apollo’s bones, piercing right through them, into the marrow. He is in love immediately, but she runs away from the very name of love, delighting in deep places in the woods and skins of the wild beasts she chases down, emulating virgin Phoebe.* A ribbon holds her tousled hair in place. Many men court her, but she dislikes all suitors. And so, rejecting men, knowing nothing of them, she roams the pathless forest glades, without a care for Hymen, love, or marriage.*

Her father often said:

“Daughter, you owe me a son-in-law.”

And often he complained:

“Daughter, you owe me grandchildren.”

But Daphne, despising the bridal torch as something criminal, with a modest blush, would wrap her loving arms around her father’s neck and say:

“My dearest father, allow me to enjoy virginity for ever. Diana’s father did that earlier.”*

Her father does, in fact, grant her request, but your beauty, Daphne, is an obstacle to what you so desire—the way you look makes sure your prayers will not be answered. For Phoebus sees Daphne and falls in love. He wants to marry her, and what he seeks he hopes to get. But his own oracles deceive him. Just as light straw catches fire once grain is harvested, and hedges blaze
from torches which some traveller by chance
has brought too near or else left there at dawn,
that’s how Phoebus is changed then into flames.
That’s how his whole chest burns, and by hoping,
he feeds a love that is in vain. He sees
the tangled hair hanging around her neck
and says:

“What would that hair of hers look like,
if only it were beautifully arranged.”

He observes her eyes, like bright fiery stars,
gazes at her lips—but the sight of them
is not enough—and praises fingers, hands,
her arms, and shoulders (more than half exposed!),
imagining those parts which lie concealed
are even lovelier. She runs away,
swifter than a soft breeze, and does not stop
when he calls her, crying these words:

“O nymph,
daughter of Peneus, stay! I beg you.
I do not chase you as an enemy.
Nymph, stop! This is the way a lamb runs off,
fleeing a wolf, or a deer a lion,
or a dove on quivering wings takes flight
to escape an eagle—each one of them
racing from its enemy. But the reason
I am pursuing you is love. Ah me!
I feel so wretched—you might fall head first,
or brambles scratch your legs (which don’t deserve
the slightest injury)—and I might be
the one who brings you pain. You rush ahead
through rugged places. Set a slower pace,
I beg you, and restrain your flight. I, too,
will follow you more slowly. At least ask
who it is that finds you so delightful.
I am no shepherd or mountain dweller,
or some uncouth local custodian
of herds or flocks. You have no idea,
you thoughtless girl, you do not know the man
you’re running from. That’s why you scamper off.
The Delphic lands, Claros, and Tenedos,
the palace of Pataraea— all serve me.*

Jupiter is my father, and through me
what has been and what is and what will be
are each made known, through me songs and strings resound in harmony. True, my arrows always find their mark, but there’s an arrow, with truer aim than mine, which has wounded my uncommitted heart. The healing arts are my invention, and throughout the world I am called the Helper. Power of herbs lies in my command. Alas for me! Love cannot be cured by any herbs, and arts which aid all people are no help at all to their own master.”

Peneus’ daughter with timid steps ran off, away from him, as he was on the point of saying more. Though his speech was not yet over, she left, and he was by himself. And even then she seemed so beautiful. The winds revealed her body, as the opposing breezes blowing against her clothes made them flutter, and light gusts teased back her free-flowing hair. She looked even lovelier as she fled. The youthful god can endure no longer wasting his flattery. Love drives him on. With increasing speed, he chases after her. Just as a greyhound, once it spies a hare in an open field, dashes for its prey, and the hare, its feet racing, runs for cover—one looking as if now he is about to clutch her and already full of hope he has her in his grip—his outstretched face brushes against her heels—while she, not sure whether she has been caught, evades his jaws, and runs away, his mouth still touching her, that’s how the god and virgin race away, he driven on by hope and she by fear. But the one who follows, who has the help of Cupid’s wings, is faster. He gives her no rest and hangs above her fleeing back, panting on hair spread across her shoulders. She grows pale as her strength fails, exhausted by the strain of running away so fast. Gazing at the waters of Peneus, she cries out:
“Father, help me! If you streams have heavenly power, change me! Destroy my beauty which has brought too much delight!”

Scarcely has she made this plea, when she feels a heavy numbness move across her limbs, her soft breasts are enclosed by slender bark, her hair turns to leaves, her arms to branches, her feet, so swift a moment before, stick fast in sluggish roots, a covering of foliage spreads across her face. All that remains of her is her shining beauty.

**APOLLO MAKES THE LAUREL HIS TREE**

Phoebus loves her in this form, as well. He sets his right hand on her trunk, and feels her heart still trembling under the new bark and with his own arms hugs the branches, as if they were her limbs. He kissed the wood, but it shrank from his kiss. The god spoke:

> “Since you cannot be my wife, you shall surely be my tree. O laurel, I shall for ever have you in my hair, on my lyre and quiver. You will be there with Roman chieftains when joyful voices sing out their triumphs and long processions march up within sight of the Capitol.* And you, as the most faithful guardian of Augustus’ gates, will stand on his door, and protect the oak leaves in the centre.* And just as my untrimmed hair keeps my head always young, so you, too, must always wear eternal honours in your leaves.”

Paean finished.*

The laurel branches, newly made, nodded in agreement, and the top seemed to move, as if it were a head.
The king of the gods, Jupiter, had many affairs with mortal women, fathering many heroes, and his wife Juno was always furious when he found out. Here the ruler of the universe shows some terror of his wife, and allows his human lover, Io, to suffer intensely at her hands.

In Haemonia there is a grove enclosed on every side by steep forest. People call it Tempe. Through here Peneus pours its roiling stream from the foot of Pindus. Its heavy fall gathers mists and drives them on, like thin fumes, drenching tree tops with the spray and making places near and far weary of its roar. This is the house and home, the inner heart, of the great river. Seated in a cave carved out in the rocks, he sets down laws for the waters and for the nymphs dwelling within those streams. There the native rivers of that country first assemble, unsure whether to congratulate or console Daphne’s father—the restless Enipeus, poplar-growing Spercheus, Aeus, old Apidanus, gentle Amphrysus, and not long afterwards other rivers taking exhausted waters to the sea, weary from meandering here and there, wherever their current’s force carried them. Only Inachus is absent—hidden deep inside a cave, he is increasing the volume of his water with his tears, in total sorrow, grieving for Io, his missing daughter. He has no idea if she is enjoying life or sitting among the shades. Since he is unable to locate her anywhere, he believes she must be nowhere, and so in his mind fears for the worst.

JUPITER AND IO
Jupiter had glimpsed her returning from her father, the river, and had said:

(2) IO
“Virgin, worthy of Jupiter and about to make some man or other happy in your bed, while it is so hot, with the sun in the middle of his path, at his highest point, move into the shade of the deep woods.”

Jupiter pointed to some shadowy groves.

“If you are afraid to go all by yourself into places where wild beasts lurk, you can safely enter the deepest parts of any grove at all with a god to guard you—no common god, but me who holds the heavenly sceptre in my powerful fist and who flings down wandering thunderbolts. Do not fly from me!”

She was already fleeing and by now had gone past Lerna’s pastures and the trees planted in Lyraean fields. Then Jupiter, spread darkness and concealed earth far and wide. He caught her as she was running away and forced her to have sex against her will.

**JUNO SUSPECTS ZEUS**

Meanwhile Juno looked down on middle Argos, curious why swift clouds in bright daylight had brought on what looked like night. She noticed they had not come from rivers, nor been sent from the moist earth. She looks around to see where Jupiter might be, knowing already her husband’s tricks, for he has been caught out so often. Not finding him in heaven, she says:

“Either I am quite mistaken, or I am being wronged.”

**IO IS CHANGED INTO A COW**

She glided down from the lofty aether, stood on the earth, and commanded the clouds to go away. Jupiter has foreseen his wife’s arrival and has changed the daughter of Inachus so she looks like a sleek heifer—even so,
transformed into a cow, she is lovely.
Juno, Saturn’s daughter, reluctantly
approves of the fine-looking cow and asks
who it belongs to, what herd it comes from,
as if she is ignorant of the truth.
Jupiter lies. In order to forestall
all enquiries about parents, he claims
the cow was born from earth. Juno then asks
to have it as a gift. What can he do?
To hand over his own love is cruel,
but not to hand her over suspicious.
Shame insists he should surrender Io,
but then love insists he should refuse.
Love would have conquered shame, but for the fact
that, if he refused the partner of his bed
and his own kindred such a trifling gift,
the cow might seem to be no cow at all.*
He gave the girl to Juno.

JUNO, ARGUS, AND IO
The goddess
did not at once set aside all her fears.
She was still suspicious of Jupiter,
worried about his devious trickery,
until she handed Io to Argus,
son of Arestor, to watch over her.
Round his head Argus had a hundred eyes.
These eyes took turns resting two at a time,
while the others kept watching and remained
on guard. No matter where he was standing,
he could see Io. When he turned his back,
Io was still there, right before his eyes.
He lets her graze by day. Once the sun sets
below the earth, he puts her in a pen
and ties ropes around her innocent neck.
She eats arbutus leaves and bitter herbs.

IO’S SUFFERING
In her misery, she lies on the ground,
often on bare earth where there is no grass,
instead of in her bed, and drinks water
from muddy streams. Then, too, when she wanted
to stretch her arms out in supplication
towards Argus, she had no arms to stretch,
and when she tried to speak out to complain,
her mouth made a lowing sound, and the noise made her afraid, frightened of her own voice. She went to the riverbanks where often she used to play—the banks of Inachus. When she saw her new horns in the water, she drew back from herself, amazed and fearful. The naiads have no idea who she is. Even Inachus himself does not know her. But she follows her father, trails behind her sisters, allowing them to touch her, offering herself for their admiration. Old Inachus pulls herbs and holds them out. She licks his hands, kisses her father’s palm, and does not hold back her tears. If only words would come out with them, she would declare her name, describe her troubles, ask for help. Instead of words, her hoof traced in the dust letters which conveyed the wretched story of her body’s alteration. Inachus, her father, hanging on the horns and neck of the snow-white heifer, groans and cries out:

“I feel so sad”

And then he groans again.

“I feel so wretched! Are you the daughter I have been searching for in every land? When you were missing, there was less sorrow than there is now, after we have found you. You cannot speak or answer what I say, but only give out sights from your deep breast—the only way you can converse with me is with lowing sounds. In my ignorance, I was getting marriage and a bridal bed ready for you. My first hope was to have a son-in-law and then some grandchildren. But now you will have to have a husband from the herd, and now offspring from the herd. And this great grief of mine I cannot end with death. It is painful being a god—since the gate of death is closed, it draws out our sorrow into everlasting time.”

While Inachus is grieving for his daughter, bright-eyed Argus takes Io from her father
and leads her away to different pastures. He himself sits on a high mountain peak, some distance off, where from his position he can keep watch in all directions.

**MERCURY KILLS ARGUS**
The ruler of the gods cannot endure that the granddaughter of Phoroneus suffer such great sorrow any longer. He calls his son whom the bright Pleiad bore and orders him to put Argus to death.* Mercury does not long delay—he ties wings on his feet, his strong hand grips that rod which brings on sleep, and he covers his head. This done, the son of Jupiter leaps down from his father’s citadel to the earth. There he takes off his cap and wings—the rod is the only thing he keeps. And with it, looking like a shepherd, he drives she goats, which he has stolen as he walks along, through trackless countryside, playing a song on reeds he tied together. Juno’s guard, enchanted with the sound of this new art, speaks out:

“Whoever you are, you can sit with me here on this rock. There’s nowhere else where there is better grazing for your flock—as you see, this shade well suits a shepherd.”

The grandson of Atlas sat down and spent the passing day in conversation, talking of many things and playing melodies on his tied-together reeds, attempting to overpower Argus’ watchful eyes.
(3) THE STORY OF SYRINX

This is the story Mercury tells to lull Argus to sleep, but it is a love story of its own. Pan, the wild, goat-legged god of the wilderness, falls in love with the nymph Syrinx, who (like Daphne) seeks escape through transformation.

But Argus fights to keep soft sleep at bay, and though some of his eyes doze off, others stay awake. He also asks how the pipe, something invented only recently, has been developed. Mercury then says:

“On the icy mountains of Arcadia among hamadryads of Nonacris—nymphs called her Syrinx.* She had eluded many times the satyrs who pursued her, as well as those gods who inhabited the shady woods and fertile countryside. She worshipped the Ortygian goddess in her actions and remained a virgin.* She tied up her dress just like Diana and could have been confused with Leto’s child, except her bow was made of cornel wood, while Diana’s was of gold. Even so, her appearance was deceptive. Once Pan, his head wreathed in sharp pine leaves, observed her on her way back from Mount Lycaeus and spoke to her.”*

Now Mercury had to give more details—how the nymph then ran away, despising his pleas, through pathless regions, until she came to the gentle waters of the sandy Ladon stream and how here, with water hindering her way, she begged her sisters of the stream to transform her, how Pan, just when he thought he had Syrinx in his arms at last, was holding marsh reeds instead of the nymph’s body, and then how as he sighed there, wind passing through the reed had made a subtle, plaintive sound, and Pan, captivated by the new art’s sweet voice, had said:
“This way of conversing with you will remain with me.”

And by using wax to join together reeds of different lengths, he had immortalized the young girl’s name.
(2 AGAIN) IO’S STORY RESUMES

The Cyllenian god, about to relate these details, sees all of Argus’ eyes have closed, their bright lights overcome by sleep.* He lowers his voice at once and then strokes the drowsy eyes with his magical rod, to force them to sleep more soundly. And then, with his hooked sword he quickly hacks away the nodding head from where it joins the neck, throws it, covered in gore, down from the rock, and stains steep cliffs with blood.

“Lie there, Argus.
The light you had in all those eyes of yours has been extinguished, and a single night now sits in those hundred orbs.”

JUNO’S ANGER

Then Juno, Saturn’s daughter, picked up those eyes, set them in her own bird’s feathers, and filled its tail with starry gems.* Immediately enraged, she made no attempt to hide her anger. To the eyes and mind of that Argive “whore” she sent out a terrifying Fury, pierced her breast with hidden stings, and drove her through the whole world in wandering terror.

JUNO ENDS IO’S TORMENTS

And you, O Nile, remained the final stage of Io’s measureless pain. She reached you, fell onto her knees at the river’s edge, threw her neck back, lifted her face high up towards the stars—that was the only thing that she could do—and by her groans and tears and sad lowing seemed to be complaining to Jupiter and praying for an end to her distress. Jupiter throws his arms around Juno’s neck and asks her to end her punishment. He says:

“Set your fears aside in future she will never cause you grief.”
And he commands the Stygian waters
to witness what he said. Once the goddess
has calmed down, Io regains those features
she possessed before and becomes the nymph
she was in earlier days. The stiff hair
falls from her body, her horns shrink away,
her eyeballs contract, the bones of her jaw
decrease in size, her arms and hands come back,
and her hooves disappear, after changing
into five nails. Nothing cow-like remains
in her, other than her bright appearance.
Happy to have the use of her two feet,
the nymph stands up, but is afraid to speak,
in case she should utter lowing noises
just like a heifer. Timidly she tries
once more to use words she has stopped using.
Now she is a very famous goddess,
worshipped by large multitudes of people
dressed in linen. At length Io bore a son,
Epaphus, who came, so it is believed,
from the seed of almighty Jupiter,
and guards city temples with his mother.
(4) PHAETHON’S FAMILY

The story begins after Phaethon, the mortal son of Apollo (aka Pheobus), the sun god, unwisely drove the sun chariot, crashed it, and died (creating the Sahara desert in the process). His family’s misery brings further disasters.

PHAËTON’S FAMILY LAMENTS
But his sorrowing father, sick with grief,
had concealed his face, and, so people say,
if we can believe them, one day went by
without the sun. The fires provided light,
so that disaster brought some benefits.
But when Clymene had said whatever
needed to be said at such times of grief,
distracted in her sorrow and tearing
at her breast, she roamed the whole world, seeking
first his lifeless limbs and later on his bones.
She found the bones, but they’d been laid to rest
in a foreign riverbank. She sank down
in that place and with her tears bathed the name
she read there in the marble and warmed it
on her naked breast. The Heliades,
daughters of the sun, grieving just as much,
shed tears, vain offerings to Death, their hands
beating against their chests, while night and day
they cry for Phaëton (who will not hear
their sad laments) and lie down on his tomb.

THE DAUGHTERS OF THE SUN ARE CHANGED INTO TREES
Four times the moon joined up her horns and filled
her sphere. Those women, as was their custom
(for routine had made their grief a habit),
were offering their lament, when one of them,
Phaëthusa, the eldest sister, wishing
to throw herself down on the ground, complained
her feet were growing stiff. Fair Lampetie
then tried to go to her, but was held back,
suddenly rooted to the ground. A third,
whose hands were attempting to tear her hair,
plucked out leaves. One cries that a wooden trunk
now holds her legs, another that her arms
are changing to long branches. While they watch,
amazed at what is going on, bark grows
around their groins and, by degrees, surrounds
their bellies, breasts, shoulders, and hands, leaving
uncovered nothing but their mouths calling
for their mother. What can a mother do,
other than run here and there, wherever
the impulse leads her, and kiss their mouths
while she still can? But that is not enough.
She tries to tear the bodies from the trees
and snap off tender branches with her hands.
But drops of blood come dripping from the breaks,
as though they were a wound. Whichever child
is injured in this way cries out

“Stop, mother!
Stop doing that! I’m begging you to stop!
Inside the tree my body is being torn.
Farewell.”

The bark grows over her last words,
and tears flow from the place. Drops of amber,
distilled from the sprouting branches, harden
in the sun. Then clear streams take this amber
and send it to be worn by Latian brides.

**CYNCUS IS CHANGED INTO A SWAN**

Cyncus, son of Sthenelus, was present
at this remarkable event. And though
he was related to you, Phaeton,
by his mother’s blood, his feelings for you
made him even closer. He abandoned
his royal power (for he was ruler
of many great cities and of people
in Liguria) and filled the green banks
and streams of Eridanus with his cries—
and the woods, too, which, thanks to those sisters,
had increased in size.* His voice becomes shrill,
white feathers cover his hair, a long neck
stretches from his breast, and a membrane links
his reddening fingers, wings dress his sides,
a beak without a point grows on his mouth.
And Cyncus becomes a new bird—the swan.
He does not trust the sky or Jupiter,
for he remembers fire unjustly sent
from there. So he seeks out wide ponds and pools.
Hating fire, he chooses to live in streams,
the enemies of flame.
THE SUN REACTS TO PHAËTON’S DEATH

Phaëton’s father, mourning and bereft of his good looks—the way he tends to be when in eclipse—despises light, himself, and the day. His mind gives way to sorrow, and, adding anger to his grief, denies the earth his services, saying:

“My fate from the very beginning of the world had been disturbed enough. I am weary of the tasks I have been carrying out—they bring no honour, and they never end. Let somebody else, anyone you like, control that chariot which brings on daylight. If no one will do it and all the gods acknowledge they cannot guide the chariot, let Jupiter himself do it. Then, at least, while he is trying out our reins, he may for a while set aside those lightning bolts, which deprive fathers of their sons. Then, too, once he has experienced the power in that team of horses with hooves of fire, he will realize that the one who failed to guide them well did not deserve to die.”

All the gods are standing around the Sun as he says this, and in pleading voices they beg him not to act on his desire to plunge the world in darkness. Jupiter also makes excuses for hurling fire—like a king, mixing his requests with threats. Phoebus gathers up the maddened horses, still trembling with terror. Ill with grieving, he takes stick and whip and turns his rage on them (for he is still incensed), berating them and blaming them for Phaeton’s death.
Callisto, a nymph companion of the virgin huntress goddess Diana, attracts Jupiter’s attention, with predictably disastrous results.

JUPITER AND CALLISTO
The all-powerful father moves around the mighty walls of heaven, checking them, to see if any section has been harmed by the fire’s power. After he’s confirmed they have their old solidity and strength, he looks out on the earth and works of men. But taking care of his own Arcadia is his main concern. He restores the springs and rivers, which have not yet dared to flow, gives grass to the earth, and leaves to the trees, and tells the injured woods to grow once more. As he moves back and forth, he often stops to look at a young girl of Nonacris—then fires burning within his bones would blaze.* She was not a girl who spent time working to soften wool by teasing it or play with stylish new arrangements for her hair. A simple clasp kept her dress together, and white ribbons tied back her tangled hair. Sometimes she carried a light javelin, at other times a bow was in her hand, for she was one of Phoebe’s warriors. No nymph who wandered around Maenalus was more pleasing to goddess Trivia.* But no power lasts for long.

When the sun, high in the sky, had moved past the mid-point, the nymph entered a grove which ages past had left untouched. She set down the quiver on her shoulder, loosed her bow, and lay down on the ground where there was some grass, setting the painted quiver underneath her neck. Jupiter spied Callisto there, tired out and with no one protecting her. He said:
“My wife, I’m sure, won’t learn of my deceit. And if she does, is that bickering of hers really so important?”

Without delay, Jupiter changes face and clothes to look just like Diana and speaks up:

“Young girl, one of my companions, in what mountains have you been hunting?”

Rising from the grass, Callisto says:

“Greetings to you, goddess greater than Jupiter! I make that claim though he himself may hear me!”

Jupiter does hear and laughs, delighted that she thinks he is greater than himself. He kisses her—but not modestly, the way one should kiss a virgin. She is ready to describe where she has been hunting in the forest, but he stops her story with an embrace and, to get his own way, commits a crime. She does fight back, as much as women can—(how I wish you had seen them there, Juno, you would have been much easier on her) but what girl could overcome Jupiter? Could anyone do that? Once he’s triumphed, Jupiter seeks out the heavens above. But Callisto now despised the woods (for the trees were aware of what she’d done). As she left the place, she almost forgot to pick up her arrows in their quiver and the bow suspended there.

CALLISTO’S SHAME

Lo and behold, goddess Diana with her companions, on her way across high Mount Maenalus, proud of the creatures she had hunted down, glimpsed Callisto and, having seen the nymph, called out to her.* Callisto fled the call, afraid at first the goddess might well be
Jupiter in disguise. But when she saw there were nymphs with her as well, she sensed there was no trick involved and joined their group. Alas, how difficult it is not to show one has done wrong by how one looks! She finds it hard to raise her eyes up from the ground. She is not tied to the goddess’ side, pre-eminent in that whole company, the way she was before, but keeps silent, and gives signs by blushing that her honour has been shamed. If Diana had not been a virgin, she would have perceived her guilt from a thousand clues. People say the nymphs all recognized it.

DIANA REJECTS CALLISTO

When the crescent moon was rising once more, nine orbits later, the goddess, tired from hunting in the light from the sun, her brother, entered a cool grove where a stream flowed with a rippling murmur, rolling the fine-grained sand. She praised the spot, touching the surface waters with her foot. Commending these as well, she then remarked:

“All witnesses are far away. Let’s bathe our naked bodies in the flowing stream.”

Callisto was embarrassed. All the nymphs took off their clothes. She was the only one who tried to hold things up. Reluctantly she took her garment off—when she did that, her body, now exposed, revealed her shame. She desperately tried to hide her belly with her hands. Diana said:

“Go away—far from this place. Do not contaminate the sacred springs.”

And she commanded her to leave her company.

JUNO PUNISHES CALLISTO

For some time, Juno, the great Thunderer’s wife, had known all this,
Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 21

but was postponing any punishment until the time was right. And now there seems no reason to delay. For Callisto by now had given birth to a young boy, Arcas. That, too, really angered Juno, who thought she was a slut. So when she turned her eye and savage mind onto the child, she cried:

“That’s the only thing that’s missing, you adulteress—you would be fertile and publicly proclaim the injury by giving birth and thus acknowledging the disgrace to Jupiter, my husband. You wretched girl, you’ll get your punishment. I’ll take away that shape of yours, which gave you and my husband such delight.”

Juno spoke. She grabbed Callisto’s hair above her forehead and threw her face down on the ground. The nymph stretched out her arms in supplication, but then rough black hair began to sprout on both her arms, her hands curved inward, changing to bent claws, and served as feet. Her mouth, which Jupiter had earlier praised, became distended into a massive jaw. In case her prayers and passionate words might move his feelings, Juno takes away her power to speak. The voice issuing from her raucous throat is threatening, angry, full of menace. Her mind still works the way it did before, though she has now been changed into a bear. She expresses her grief with constant groans, raising her hands (such as they are) to heaven, and even though she cannot speak of it, she feels great Jupiter’s indifference. O how often she did not dare to sleep in the solitary woods and wandered beside the fields and home that once before had been her own! How often barking dogs drove her across the rocks, and the huntress ran off in terror, fearful of the hunt. And often, when she saw wild beasts, she hid, forgetting what she was. She was a bear,
and yet she trembled when she saw a bear up in the mountains. Wolves made her afraid, though Lycaon, her father, was among them.

CALLISTO AND ARCAS BECOME CONSTELLATIONS
Now Lycaon’s grandson Arcas, grew up and, almost fifteen years old, knows nothing about his mother. While he is chasing wild beasts, selecting suitable thickets, and setting his woven nets to enclose the Erymanthian woods, he meets her.* His mother saw Arcas and stopped, as if she recognized him. Not knowing who she was, he moved back, worried that she kept her eyes, which never wavered, staring right at him. When she wished to move in closer to him, he was about to jab her with his spear, a lethal weapon, but great Jupiter intervened, by removing both of them (and the chance a crime might be committed)—together they were seized and carried off through empty space by a tremendous wind and placed in the sky as neighbouring stars.*

JUNO VISITS TETHYS AND OCEANUS
When Juno saw that “slut” of Jupiter’s shining among the stars, she swelled with rage and went down into the sea to visit white-haired Tethys and old Oceanus, whose reverence often affects the gods. When they asked the reason for her journey, she answered them:

“You are asking why I, queen of the gods, leave my celestial home to be here? Another woman now sits in heaven in my place! I will not lie—once night comes and clothes the world in darkness, you will observe some recent stars designed to wound me, honoured by the highest place in heaven, up there where the most distant and the smallest circle in space orbits the furthest pole. But why would anyone not wish to injure Juno or worry about offending me—the ones I harm
I only benefit. Just look how much
I have achieved! How vast my powers are!
I stopped her being human, and she is made
a goddess! That’s the sort of punishment
I inflict on evildoers! That shows
my great authority! Let him remove
her savage creature’s shape and then restore
the way she looked before, just as he did
earlier with Io, that Argive girl.
Why should he now not get rid of Juno,
wend the girl, set her in my marriage bed,
take Lycaon for his father in law?
But if this slur to your scorned foster child
affects you, then make sure the seven stars
of that constellation are kept away
from your dark blue waters:* Repel those stars
which have been accepted into heaven
to reward their fornication. Make sure
that whore will never bathe in the pure sea.”*
Narcissus and Echo

Narcissus, the beautiful young man who fell in love with his own reflection, rejected the love of the nymph Echo. This story gave rise to our term “Narcissism.” The story also explains two elements of the natural world: the daffodil (narcissus) and the echo.

The winding river Cephisus had once embraced Liriope, enclosed her in his waters, and taken her by force. From her full womb this loveliest of nymphs had given birth to an infant one could fall in love with, even at that age. She called him Narcissus.

When [the prophet] Teiresias was asked about him—whether the child was destined to witness the distant season of mature old age—the visionary prophet then replied:

“Only if he never looks at himself.”

For some time the prophet’s words seemed worthless. But what in fact took place—the way he died and the bizarre nature of his madness—proved those words true.

The son of Cephisus was now sixteen—one might consider him both boy and youth. Many young men and girls desired him, but in his tender frame there was such fearful pride that no young men or girls affected him.

The nymph Echo, with the resounding voice, who has not learned to hold her tongue when someone speaks or else to speak out first herself, saw Narcissus driving panicked stags towards his hunting nets.

Back then, Echo was not merely a voice. She still had a body. But nonetheless, though she loved to talk, she could only speak as she does now—if a person uttered many words, she could repeat the last ones.

Juno Punishes Echo

Juno had made her talk this way, because, when she could have caught out those mountain nymphs lying beside her husband Jupiter, Echo would deliberately detain her with a long chat, until the nymphs had fled.
After the goddess realized the trick, she said:

“That tongue of yours has swindled me. I will give you less power over it, the very briefest use of your own voice.”

And she made good her threat by what she did. Echo just repeats the last words spoken, merely duplicating what she has heard. So when she saw Narcissus wandering through solitary fields and burned with love, she tracks him surreptitiously. The more she follows him, the more she is on fire, just as quick-burning sulphur smeared around the tops of torches seizes any flames which come close to them. O how many times she longed to approach with flirtatious words, using soft entreaties! Nature stops her and does not allow her to begin. But she is ready for what nature does permit—she waits for sounds which her voice can repeat. Now, it so happened that the boy, enticed away from a group of faithful comrades, shouted out:

“Is there anybody here?”

Echo answered:

“Here”

He is astonished. He casts his eye in all directions and, in a loud voice, cries out:

“Come over here!”

She calls back to the person calling her. He looks around and, when no one comes out, he cried again:

“Why run away from me?”

He gets back all the words he has called out. Narcissus stands there, misled by what seems a voice which answers his, and calls again:

“Let’s meet here together.”

She could not reply more willingly to any sound, and cried:

“Meet here together.”
NARCISSUS REJECTS ECHO

To support her words, she came out from the woods and ran to him, to throw her arms around the neck she loved. He ran away and, as he ran, cried out:

“Take your hands off me! Stop these embraces! I’ll die before you have your way with me!”

All she replied was:

“All your way with me.”

Now spurned, she conceals herself in forests, and, in her shame, covers her face with leaves. From that time on she lives in lonely caves. But her love is still there and even grows from the pain of her rejection. Worries and lack of sleep waste her wretched body. Poverty shrinks her skin, and all juices in her body move out into the air. Only her voice and bones are left. Her voice still lives. The story goes her bones were changed to shapes of stone. Since that time, she hides out in the woods. No one has ever seen her in the mountains, but she is heard by all. It is the sound which still lives on in her.

NARCISSUS FALLS IN LOVE WITH HIS OWN IMAGE

Narcissus scorned her, just as he had scorned other nympha born in the streams and mountains, and just as he had previously scorned whole companies of men. Then one of those Narcissus had rejected raised his hands up to the sky and prayed:

“Though he may love someone in this way, let him not obtain the object of his love.”

The prayer was just, and goddess Nemesis agreed to it.*

There was a clear stream, with limpid waters like silver, as yet untouched by shepherds, or goats and cattle grazing mountain slopes, undisturbed by any bird, savage beast, or bough split off a tree. All around it there was grass fed by adjacent waters and woods which would not let the pool grow warm from any sun. Here Narcissus, weary
from eager hunting and the heat, lay down,
attracted by the scenery of the place
and by the water springs. And while he tries
to slake his thirst, another thirst begins.
As he is drinking, he sees an image,
his face in the water, and falls in love,
desiring something which has no substance.
He thinks the shadow must have a body.
Astonished by himself, he remains there,
motionless, wearing the same expression,
like a statue made
of Parian marble.
Stretched out along the ground, he contemplates
the double constellation of his eyes,
his hair, which looks suitable for Bacchus
or worthy of Apollo, his beardless cheeks,
his ivory neck, his attractive mouth,
and the blush mixed in with snowy whiteness.
He marvels at all those things which make him
worth admiring. Without a sense of shame,
he desires himself—the one approving
is the person being approved. And while
he is pursuing, he is being pursued.
He kindles fire and burns at the same time.
How often he kisses the devious spring
in vain! How often he plunges in his arms
to clutch the neck he sees in the middle
of the water, and yet his arms cannot
embrace himself! What he is looking at
he does not recognize, but what he sees
sets him on fire—and the very error
which deceives his eyes excites them. Why then,
you foolish lad, do you vainly grab for
fleeting images? What you are seeking
exists nowhere. And if you turn away,
you will lose the thing you love. What you see
is the shadow of a mirror image,
which has nothing of its own. It arrives
with you and stays with you and leaves with you,
if you can leave. No need for Ceres’ food,
no need for rest can take him from that place.
Instead he lies on thick grass and gazes
at the deceiving image, for his eyes
can never gaze enough.

NARCISSUS LAMENTS THE FUTILITY OF HIS LOVE
He lifts himself
a little, holds out his arms, and cries:
“You forest trees, has anyone ever been more cruelly in love? You should know, for you have been useful hiding places to many people. In all those ages your life has passed, that huge expanse of time, have you known anyone who pined away like this? I see him, and he pleases me. But still, what I see and what pleases me I cannot find. My loving has been gripped by such a huge mistake! To make my pain even greater, we are not held apart by the mighty sea or by some journey, or by mountains, or walls with bolted gates. The only thing which keeps us separate is a little water! He himself wants to be embraced. Every time I lean down with my lips to the clear water, he lifts his upturned face to mine. And you would think he could be touched. It’s such a tiny thing that blocks our love. Whoever you may be, come here! You extraordinary boy, why do you deceive me? When I seek you, where do you go? You cannot be running from my shape and age—and I am someone who has been loved by nymphs! You promise me, with that loving face of yours, unknown hope. When I held out my arms to you, then you happily held out your own. When I smiled, you smiled. Often I have seen you weeping, when I shed tears. And if I nod my head, you return my gesture. From the motion of your fair mouth I guess you send back words which do not reach my ears. I am in you. I have felt it. I am not being deceived by my own image. I am burning up with love for own self. I rouse the flames and suffer from them. What am I to do? Should I be the one asking or being asked? But what is there to ask for? What I want is with me. My riches have made me poor. How I wish I could separate myself from my own body! What a novel wish for someone who’s in love, for I desire to be divided from the one I love. Now sorrow saps my strength. My time of life will soon run out, and I will pass away.
in the prime of youth. And for me my death
will not be a burden, since, by dying,
I put my pain to rest. I would prefer
the one I love to keep on living longer,
but now the two of us, both in one life,
will die together.”

Narcissus finished.
Not thinking clearly, he went back again
to the same image and splashed the waters
with his tears. Once he disturbed the surface,
the reflection was obscured. When he saw
the image disappearing, he cried out:

“Where are you going? Stay! Do not leave me,
you pitiless boy, the one who loves you!
Let me gaze upon what I cannot touch
and get food to feed my wretched madness.”

DEATH OF NARCISSUS
In his grief, he ripped the upper border
of his clothing and beat his naked chest
with hands as white as marble. As he struck,
his chest turned rosy red, just like apples,
in which some parts are usually red
and some are white, or just as unripe grapes
in various bunches commonly possess
a purple colour. Once he saw his form
in the water, he could not endure it
a moment longer, but, as yellow wax
drips in a tiny flame, as morning frost
dissolves in the warm sun, so Narcissus,
wasted by love, melts away—gradually
consumed by hidden fire. And now his face
has no more colour red mixed in with white,
he lacks vitality and strength, those things
which, only recently, gave such delight—
the body Echo earlier had loved.
She was still angry and remembered him,
but when she saw Narcissus, she was sad.
Whenever the poor boy would cry:

“Alas!”
her echoing voice would then repeat:

“Alas!”

And when he struck his shoulders with his hands,
she sent him back the same sound as the blow.
His final words as he was looking in
those waters he habitually watched
were these:

    “Alas, my beloved boy, in vain!”

The place gave every word back in reply.
He cried:

    “Farewell.”

    And Echo called:

    “Farewell!”

He set his weary head down on green turf,
and death closed up those eyes which so admired
the beauty of their master. Even then,
after he had been received in houses
of the dead, he would keep gazing into
waters of the Styx. His naiad sisters
wept for Narcissus. They cut off their hair
and laid it out for him. The dryads, too,
lamented, and Echo returned their cries.
Now they were preparing the funeral pyre—
the torches they would brandish and the bier.
But there was no body. Instead they find
a flower with a central yellow part
surrounded by white petals on all sides.