

Snow-drop

That was her name in 1831.
Between 'Sneewittchen' and 'Snow White',
Low German and American English;
The Brothers Grimm and Walt Disney.

She was a wish made on blood.
She was a wish made on ice.
She was a wish made on a black splinter.

Painted in colours primmer than yellow,
Bolder than blue,
She bit the apple that was like all those apples...

...and Snow-drop had to come back, too.
While her body lay in its glass coffin -
White as Mary's lamb -
She went below like a bulb.

Her crystal tomb was the top bunk. As she slept, fruit lodged in her throat,
She awoke in the berth beneath without the flowers in her hair.
There she closed her eyes again, to open them
In the third bunk down, minus her silk brocaded gown.
Down she went, bed by bed, stripped of her shoes and the hair on her head.
Each time she closed her eyes to doze, she opened them again and rose
Another storey farther from the land of the living: and more taken from her.
For all that – bald and unadorned – any mirror in the land would tell you: she was still the fairest yet,
Until the sixth below. That was where her looks were taken.
When she closed her eyes in that penultimate cot,
She awoke in the one beneath without them.

There at last she dreamed the true dream of death.
Walking on white carpets of her namesake bloom
To her mother, who pointed up at cracks of light
Now pouring down from the January sun
As her body took another breath.

Wes Viola, Haggerston

...that Herakles hustled from the garden, before he rustled the hellhound from Hades.
...that Woden chomped and Tiw chewed every day to cheat death.
...that Inanna sat at the trunk of the tree of, before she was treated to:
"Truth! Descent to the Underworld! Ascent from the Underworld!"