

MARY RUEFLE

Like a Daffodil

What went on when I suddenly understood him,
yellow with age and disillusioned with the despair
that had fired his student days?

I unfolded a map of the city,
knowing it would never fit in my pocket again.

In the very depths of myself I dug a grave — no path
leads to it — and there I planted every bulb I ever felt for him.

I had the sudden urge to eat postcards of famous paintings.

I had a perfectly lucid definition of wine —
blue marble powdered down to sea.
I had the belief it all comes down
to one untranslatable word in Parmenides.

He was pained to see me with no other career
than my emotions about things.

Yet I was continually borne forward by his sense of runes.

I wandered like a flashlight through every room.
I spotted clocks everywhere, but each one told a different hour.

My accurate heart, these rough chimes
and our dead bodies.

These three things occupied my mind.

And joy and joy and joy.