

Divine Springtime

SHIRIN SABRI

We do not refuse Persephone, cruel,
dilatory, wanton as she is. We know
she is intent upon her own
purposes, forgetful of the woe,

the trampled blossoms, the mud
crusted ice and stained snow
clinging to her skirts as they
trail in the fat, melt-fed river's flow

where lovely gold limns
the wands of the willow
here by the sleek, glistening river
which lips and sucks at the yielding bow

of the bank till it lets go, falls
with the last rattling brown bones
of leaf from the beech, slapped
down by rain and hail stones.

She does what she wants, counts no cost -
if these new leaves unfold
their soft serrated tips only to burn
with frost, she has others bold

enough to take their place.
Clumps of dingy snow huddle in ditches,
storms gather, rain frays the edges
of a distant cloud. Crocus,

hyacinth and daffodil shudder against
the sodden ground, where the thorned
hedgerows shadow them, shelter them:
spiked branches stretching, warmed

into bud whether they will or no,
whatever they do or say.
We do not refuse Persephone.
She cannot be turned away.