

Phaeton

Patricia Barber

blinding my eyes
as if Heaven sent you
son of the father
son of the Sun for whom
the Hours attend
and the East Wind waits
holding her breath
because she's afraid

bewitched and belittled
by daddy's light
crowned and cloaked
and ready for flight
on a chariot drawn
by fire breathing steeds
as the stars scatter
and the Moon retreats

slapping the reins
a dilettante drives
winged horses of the Sun
into the open sky
Divine fire in the hands
of mortal man
a coarse charted then lost
for lack of command

dust to dust
and dry as bone
hot as hell without trees
without snow
Mother Earth now choking
on soot and ash
begs for life
for those with one
last chance

who'll save us now?