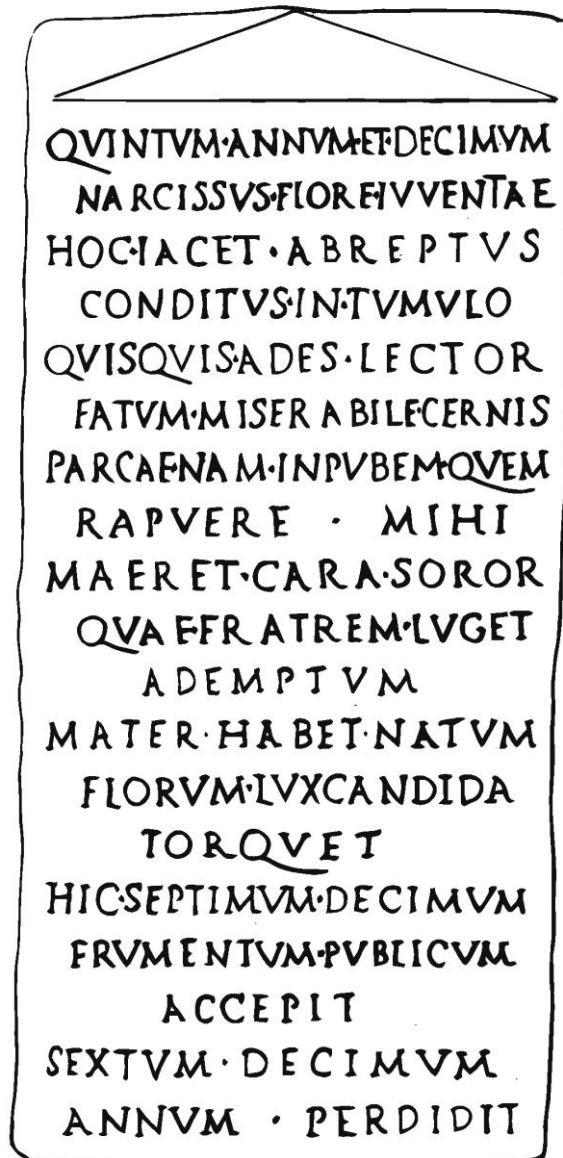# THE DEATH OF NARCISSUS

In Book 3 of his great poem, *Metamorphoses,* Ovid tells the story of Echo and Narcissus, an unhappy nymph and a beautiful young man who falls in love with his own reflection. The popularity of the story meant that Narcissus became popular as a Roman name. This tombstone is for a fifteen year-old Roman boy who died in the first century AD. Reflecting the literary origins of his name, his epitaph is in the form of a poem:

QVINTVM·ANNVM·ET·DECIMVM
NARCISSVS·FLORE·IVVENTAE
HOC·IACET·ABREPTVS
CONDITVS·IN·TVMVLO
QVISQVIS·ADES·LECTOR
FATVM·MISERABILE·CERNIS
PARCAE·NAM·INPVBEM·QVEM
RAPVERE · MIHI
MAER·ET·CARA·SOROR
QVA·FFRATREM·LVGET
ADEMPTVM
MATER·HABET·NATVM
FLORVM·LVX·CANDIDA
TORQVET
HIC·SEPTIMVM·DECIMVM
FRVMENTVM·PVBLICVM
ACCEPIT
SEXTVM · DECIMVM
ANNVM · PERDIDIT

1. **Before you turn over to see the printed text, how much of it can you read from the stone?**
   Tip: The dots (called 'interpuncts') help to divide one word from the next.

2. Translate the following passage into English.

> quintum annum et decimum,
> Narcissus, flore iuventae,
> hoc iacet, abreptus,[1]
> conditus[2] in tumulo.
> 5   quisquis ades, lector,[3]
> fatum miserabile cernis:[4]
> Parcae[5] nam inpubem[6] quem
> rapuere mihi
> maeret,[7] cara soror
> 10   quae fratrem luget[8]
> ademptum;
> mater habet natum.
> Florum[9] lux candida
> torquet.[10]
> 15   hic septimum decimum
> frumentum publicum[11]
> accepit
> sextum decimum
> annum perdidit.

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[1] *abripio, -ere, abripui, abreptus* - I tear away
[2] *condio, -ere, condidi, conditus* - I conceal
[3] *lector* - reader
[4] *cerno, -ere, creti, cretus* - I perceive
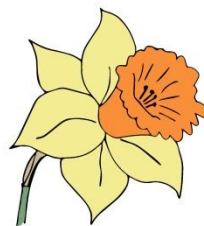[5] *Parcae, -arum* - The Fates
[6] *inpubes, - eris* – young man
[7] *maereo, - ere, maerui* - I mourn
[8] *Lugeo, ere, luxi, luctus* – I lament
[9] *Florus* (proper name) – Narcissus' father
[10] *torqueo, -ere, torsi, torsus* - I torture
[11] *frumentum publicum* – the public corn-dole

As well as being a personal name, Narcissus is also the name of a family of flowers, of which the best-known is the daffodil. This poem makes use of flower imagery, playing on the name of both the dead boy and his father.

3. Using your English translation as a guide, try to make a *verse* translation of the lament for Narcissus.
Tip: Your verse translation doesn't need to rhyme. Like Latin poetry, you can choose to use a particular rhythm or metre.

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