

# Passwords

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## Modern Phaethon

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## Two Poems by

*Kate Kennelly*

## Modern Phaethon

He sailed the sun-filled carriage  
Aloft the sky, arcing blindly when  
He slipped, careened, and singed the earth,  
A migraine of translucence.  
In the ground, there opened  
Graves of rays, flame fences rising;  
Black rains of ash fell smothering,  
Seared waters disappeared.

Above the gasping ground,  
He hurtled through the blindness.  
Inside his carriage cage,  
He pled the gods to rend him,  
To end his reeling ruin;  
But the wheels of sun lurched on, and  
His luminous cries, they shriveled,  
Swallowed up in cindered air.

He steered to make a fatal turn,  
But destruction held him circling,  
Gallop through the glare.  
The barrels of his eyes  
Were smoking dust, his hands caught up  
In the reins like chains,  
As his misery swirled and reared  
To the pit of the sky.