THE THING HERSELF

In the mirror
her lips purse on a bitterness
like orange rind curled round its navel.

I am pipless, she thinks.
And her tongue would be sweet
one day, if only
she could scratch off
this terrible hardness
this glossy rejection
this impulse to scorn and repel,
then she could open
she knows
the scyfies*
of her self
flowering
under circling bees.

* An Afrikaans word, from Dutch, meaning "segment" and used by English-speaking South Africans to mean "segment of orange, lemon, or mandarin."

A. Mary Murphy

DO FORGIVE ME HE SAID

do forgive me he said
my eyes seem to be salivating
all over your lovely bodice