

# Narcissus

In Greek mythology, Narcissus or Narkissos (Greek Νάρκισσος), was a hero of the territory of Thespieae in Boeotia who was famous for his beauty. Several versions of his myth have survived: Ovid's, from his *Metamorphoses*; Pausanias', from his *Guide to Greece*, (9.31.7); and one found among the Oxyrhynchus papyri.

In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells the story of a graceful and pretty nymph named Echo who loved Narcissus, in vain. Narcissus' beauty was so unmatched that he felt it was godlike in scope, comparable to the beauty of Dionysus and Apollo. As a result, Narcissus spurned Echo's affections until, despairing, she faded away to nothing but a faint, plaintive whisper. To teach the vain boy a lesson, the goddess Nemesis doomed Narcissus to fall in love with his own reflection in Echo's pond. Entranced by his own beauty and enamoured with his own image, Narcissus lay on the bank of the river and wasted away staring down into the water.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcissus\\_\(mythology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcissus_(mythology)) (4 Jan 2007)



Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Narcissus*, oil on canvas (1594-96), Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rom.