LOUISE GLÜCK

MY NEIGHBOR IN THE MIRROR

M. le professeur in prominent senility
Across the hall tidies his collected prose
And poems. Returning from a shopping spree
Not long ago, I caught him pausing to pose
Before the landing mirror in grandiose semi-profile.
It being impossible to avoid encounter on the stairs
I thought it best to smile
Openly, as though we two held equal shares
In the indiscretion. But his performance of a nod
Was labored and the infinite politesse of rose palm
Unfurled for salutation fraud-
ulent. At any rate, lately there’s been some
Change in his schedule. He receives without zeal
Now, and, judging by his refuse, eats little but oatmeal.