LOUISE GLÜCK

THE LADY IN THE SINGLE

Cloistered as the snail and conch
In Edgartown where the Atlantic
Rises to deposit junk
On plush, extensive sand and the pedantic
Meet for tea, amid brouhaha
I have managed this peripheral still,
Wading just steps below
The piles of overkill:
Jellyfish. But I have seen
The slick return of one that oozed back
On a breaker. Marketable sheen.
The stuffed hotel. A shy, myopic
Sailor loved me once, near here.
The summer house we'd taken for July
Was white that year, bare
Shingle; he could barely see
To kiss, still tried to play
Croquet with the family—like a girl almost,
With loosed hair on her bouquet
Of compensating flowers. I thought I was past
The memory. And yet his ghost
Took shape in smoke above the pan roast.
Five years. In tenebris the catapulted heart drones
Like Andromeda. No one telephones.