LOUISE GLÜCK

THE CELL

(Jeanne des Anges, Prioress of the Ursuline nuns, Loudun, France: 1635)
It’s always there. My back’s
Bulging through linen: God
Damaged me—made
Unfit to guide, I guide.
Yet are they silent at their work.
I walk
The garden in the afternoon, who hid
Delusions under my habits
For my self was empty … But HE did
It, yes.
My Father,
Lying here, I hear
The sun creak past granite
Into air, still it is night inside.
I hide and pray. And dawn,
Alone all ways, I can feel the fingers
Stir on me again like bless-
ing and the bare
Hump mount, tranquil in darkness.