LOUISE GLÜCK

SATURNALIA

The year turns. The wolf takes back her tit
As war eats at the empire
Past this waxworks, the eternal city.
We have had our round. What
Lords rise are not of Rome: now northward some two-bit
Vercingetorix sharpens his will. A star
Is born. Caesar
Snores on his perch above the Senate.
This is history. Ice clogs the ducts; my friend,
I wake to frost
On marble and a chill men take for omen
Here. The myth contracts. All cast
For comfort, shun their works to pray,
Preening for Judgment. Judgment fails. One year,
Twenty—we are lost. This month the feasts begin.
Token slaves suck those dripping fowl we offer
To insure prosperity.