LOUISE GLÜCK

THE SCHOOL CHILDREN

The children go forward with their little satchels.
And all morning the mothers have labored
to gather the late apples, red and gold,
like words of another language.
And on the other shore
are those who wait behind great desks
to receive these offerings.
How orderly they are—the nails
on which the children hang
their overcoats of blue or yellow wool.
And the teachers shall instruct them in silence
and the mothers shall scour the orchards for a way out,
drawing to themselves the gray limbs of the fruit trees
bearing so little ammunition.