LOUISE GLÜCK

THE FORTRESS

There is nothing now. To learn
the lesson past disease
was easier. In God’s hotel I saw
my name and number stapled to a vein
as Marcy funneled its corrective air
toward Placid. I can breathe
again. I watch the mountain under siege
by ice give way to blocks of dungeons,
ovens manned by wives. I understand.
They coil their hair, they turn their
music on as, humming to herself, the night-
nurse smoothes her uniform. This is
the proper pain. The lights are out. Love
forms in the human body.