LOUISE GLÜCK

# JAPONICA

The trees are flowering
on the hill.
They are bearing
large solitary blossoms,
japonica,
as when you came to me
mistakenly
carrying such flowers
having snapped them
from the thin branches.
The rain had stopped. Sunlight
motioned through the leaves.
But death
also has its flower,
it is called
contagion, it is
red or white, the color
of japonica—
You stood there,
your hands full of flowers.
How could I not take them
since they were a gift?