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LOUISE GLÜCK

MYTHIC FRAGMENT

When the stern god
approached me with his gift
my fear enchanted him
so that he ran more quickly
through the wet grass, as he insisted,
to praise me. I saw captivity
in praise; against the lyre,
I begged my father in the sea
to save me. When
the god arrived, I was nowhere,
I was in a tree forever. Reader,
pity Apollo: at the water’s edge,
I turned from him, I summoned
my invisible father—as
I stiffened in the god’s arms,
of his encompassing love
my father made
no other sign from the water.