LOUISE GLÜCK

THE TRIUMPH OF ACHILLES

In the story of Patroclus
no one survives, not even Achilles
who was nearly a god.
Patroclus resembled him; they wore
the same armor.
Always in these friendships
one serves the other, one is less than the other:
the hierarchy
is always apparent, though the legends
cannot be trusted—
their source is the survivor,
the one who has been abandoned.
What were the Greek ships on fire
compared to this loss?
In his tent, Achilles
grieved with his whole being
and the gods saw
he was a man already dead, a victim
of the part that loved,
the part that was mortal.