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LOUISE GLÜCK

ADULT GRIEF

Because you were foolish enough to love one place,
now you are homeless, an orphan
in a succession of shelters.
You did not prepare yourself sufficiently.
Before your eyes, two people were becoming old;
I could have told you two deaths were coming.
There has never been a parent
kept alive by a child’s love.
Now, of course, it’s too late—
you were trapped in the romance of fidelity.
You kept going back, clinging
to two people you hardly recognized
after what they’d endured.
If once you could have saved yourself,
now that time’s past: you were obstinate, pathetically
blind to change. Now you have nothing:
for you, home is a cemetery.
I’ve seen you press your face against the granite markers—
you are the lichen, trying to grow there.
But you will not grow,
you will not let yourself
obliterate anything.