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LOUISE GLÜCK

HORSE

What does the horse give you
that I cannot give you?
I watch you when you are alone,
when you ride into the field behind the dairy,
your hands buried in the mare’s
dark mane.
Then I know what lies behind your silence:
scorn, hatred of me, of marriage. Still,
you want me to touch you; you cry out
as brides cry, but when I look at you I see
there are no children in your body.
Then what is there?
Nothing, I think. Only haste
to die before I die.
In a dream, I watched you ride the horse
over the dry fields and then
dismount: you two walked together;
in the dark, you had no shadows.
But I felt them coming toward me
since at night they go anywhere,
they are their own masters.
Look at me. You think I don’t understand?
What is the animal
if not passage out of this life?