LOUISE GLÜCK

PARODOS

Long ago, I was wounded.
I learned
to exist, in reaction,
out of touch
with the world: I'll tell you
what I meant to be—
a device that listened.
Not inert: still.
A piece of wood. A stone.
Why should I tire myself, debating, arguing?
Those people breathing in the other beds
could hardly follow, being
uncontrollable
like any dream—
Through the blinds, I watched
the moon in the night sky, shrinking and swelling—
I was born to a vocation:
to bear witness
to the great mysteries.
Now that I've seen both
birth and death, I know
to the dark nature these
are proofs, not
mysteries—