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LOUISE GLÜCK

A PRECEDENT

In the same way as she’d prepare for the others,
my mother planned for the child that died.
Bureaus of soft clothes.
Little jackets neatly folded.
Each one almost fit in the palm of a hand.
In the same way, she wondered
which day would be its birthday.
And as each passed, she knew a day as common
would become a symbol of joy.
Because death hadn’t touched my mother’s life,
she was thinking of something else,
dreaming, the way you do when a child’s coming.