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LOUISE GLÜCK

THE UNTRUSTWORTHY SPEAKER

Don’t listen to me; my heart’s been broken.
I don’t see anything objectively.
I know myself; I’ve learned to hear like a psychiatrist.
When I speak passionately,
that’s when I’m least to be trusted.
It’s very sad, really: all my life, I’ve been praised
for my intelligence, my powers of language, of insight.
In the end, they’re wasted—
I never see myself,
standing on the front steps, holding my sister’s hand.
That’s why I can’t account
for the bruises on her arm, where the sleeve ends.
In my own mind, I’m invisible: that’s why I’m dangerous.
People like me, who seem selfless,
we’re the cripples, the liars;
we’re the ones who should be factored out
in the interest of truth.
When I’m quiet, that’s when the truth emerges.
A clear sky, the clouds like white fibers.
Underneath, a little gray house, the azaleas
red and bright pink.
If you want the truth, you have to close yourself
to the older daughter, block her out:
when a living thing is hurt like that,
in its deepest workings,
all function is altered.
That’s why I’m not to be trusted.
Because a wound to the heart
is also a wound to the mind.