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LOUISE GLÜCK

BROWN CIRCLE

My mother wants to know
why, if I hate
family so much,
I went ahead and
had one. I don’t
answer my mother.
What I hated
was being a child,
having no choice about
what people I loved.
I don’t love my son
the way I meant to love him.
I thought I’d be
the lover of orchids who finds
red trillium growing
in the pine shade, and doesn’t
touch it, doesn’t need
to possess it. What I am
is the scientist,
who comes to that flower
with a magnifying glass
and doesn’t leave, though
the sun burns a brown
circle of grass around
the flower. Which is
more or less the way
my mother loved me.
I must learn
to forgive my mother,
now that I’m helpless
to spare my son.