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LOUISE GLÜCK

CHILD CRYING OUT

You’re asleep now,
your eyelids quiver.
What son of mine
could be expected
to rest quietly, to live
even one moment
free of wariness?
The night’s cold;
you’ve pushed the covers away.
As for your thoughts, your dreams—
I’ll never understand
the claim of a mother
on a child’s soul.
So many times
I made that mistake
in love, taking
some wild sound to be
the soul exposing itself—
But not with you,
even when I held you constantly.
You were born, you were far away.
Whatever those cries meant,
they came and went
whether I held you or not,
whether I was there or not.
The soul is silent.
If it speaks at all
it speaks in dreams.