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LOUISE GLÜCK

TRILLIUM

When I woke up I was in a forest. The dark
seemed natural, the sky through the pine trees
thick with many lights.
I knew nothing; I could do nothing but see.
And as I watched, all the lights of heaven
faded to make a single thing, a fire
burning through the cool firs.
Then it wasn’t possible any longer
to stare at heaven and not be destroyed.
Are there souls that need
death’s presence, as I require protection?
I think if I speak long enough
I will answer that question, I will see
whatever they see, a ladder
reaching through the firs, whatever
calls them to exchange their lives—
Think what I understand already.
I woke up ignorant in a forest;
only a moment ago, I didn’t know my voice
if one were given me
would be so full of grief, my sentences
like cries strung together.
I didn’t even know I felt grief
until that word came, until I felt
rain streaming from me.