LOUISE GLÜCK

SONG

Like a protected heart,
the blood-red
flower of the wild rose begins
to open on the lowest branch,
supported by the netted
mass of a large shrub:
it blooms against the dark
which is the heart’s constant
backdrop, while flowers
higher up have wilted or rotted;
to survive
adversity merely
deepens its color. But John
objects, he thinks
if this were not a poem but
an actual garden, then
the red rose would be
required to resemble
nothing else, neither
another flower nor
the shadowy heart, at
earth level pulsing
half maroon, half crimson.