LOUISE GLÜCK

EARLY DARKNESS

How can you say
earth should give me joy? Each thing
born is my burden; I cannot succeed
with all of you.
And you would like to dictate to me,
you would like to tell me
who among you is most valuable,
who most resembles me.
And you hold up as an example
the pure life, the detachment
you struggle to achieve—
How can you understand me
when you cannot understand yourselves?
Your memory is not
powerful enough, it will not
reach back far enough—
Never forget you are my children.
You are not suffering because you touched each other
but because you were born,
because you required life
separate from me.