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LOUISE GLÜCK

END OF AUGUST

End of August. Heat
like a tent over
John’s garden. And some things
have the nerve to be getting started,
clusters of tomatoes, stands
of late lilies—optimism
of the great stalks—imperial
gold and silver: but why
start anything
so close to the end?
Tomatoes that will never ripen, lilies
winter will kill, that won’t
come back in spring. Or
are you thinking
I spend too much time
looking ahead, like
an old woman wearing
sweaters in summer;
are you saying I can
flourish, having
no hope
of enduring? Blaze of the red cheek, glory
of the open throat, white,
spotted with crimson.