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LOUISE GLÜCK

THE SILVER LILY

The nights have grown cool again, like the nights
of early spring, and quiet again. Will
speech disturb you? We’re
alone now; we have no reason for silence.
Can you see, over the garden—the full moon rises.
I won’t see the next full moon.
In spring, when the moon rose, it meant
time was endless. Snowdrops
opened and closed, the clustered
seeds of the maples fell in pale drifts.
White over white, the moon rose over the birch tree.
And in the crook, where the tree divides,
leaves of the first daffodils, in moonlight
soft greenish-silver.
We have come too far together toward the end now
to fear the end. These nights, I am no longer even certain
I know what the end means. And you, who’ve been with a man—
after the first cries,
doesn’t joy, like fear, make no sound?