

1976

# The Gift

Louise Glück

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Glück, Louise. "The Gift." *The Iowa Review* 7.4 (1976): 54-55. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2096>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

Once, long ago, you lay  
beside a stream, not sleeping.  
Cells of light floated on the water;  
they rocked gently,  
held by white threads.

And in the deep grass your lover stirred,  
as real as memory,  
his mouth touching your cheek  
so the skin  
was marked when you turned away.

4.  
It is as though they were still  
waiting for you.  
The light is on, the potted jade  
covered with thin hairs of dust.

Soon for the first time  
the house will be empty  
where your parents lie  
clinging to one another  
with the same loneliness  
that forced you to be born.

In their dreams they are safe:  
it is summer, the lawn  
in its green slipcover  
gripping the street.

## The Gift / Louise Gluck

Lord, You may not recognize me  
speaking for someone else.  
I have a son. He is  
so little, so ignorant.  
He likes to stand  
at the screen door calling

*oggie, oggie*, entering  
language, and sometimes  
a dog will stop and come up  
the walk, perhaps  
accidentally. May he believe  
this is not an accident?  
At the screen  
welcoming each beast in  
love's name, Your emissary.

## Rosy / Louise Gluck

*for Sandra*

When you walked in with your suitcase, leaving  
the door open so the night showed  
in a black square behind you, with its little stars  
like nailheads, I wanted to tell you  
you were like the dog that came to you by default,  
on three legs: now that she is again no one's,  
she pursues her more durable relationships  
with traffic and cold nature, as though at pains  
to wound herself so that she will not heal.  
She is past being taken in by kindness,  
preferring wet streets: what death claims  
it does not abandon.  
You understand, the animal means nothing to me.

## Shrine / Leonard Nathan

I've waited for you  
in this room, day by day  
excluding what wasn't needed  
until there's only this green cushion