

1976

# Shrine

Leonard Nathan

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*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

tassled at the corners  
and, in the far wall, a recess  
for an orange vase with three white irises,  
and a scroll stroked with ink  
meant to be a bird flying  
or how it feels to fly.

I've made good talk for us both  
over tea while snow quietly aged  
the pines outside and settled like ash  
on the pond where carp  
deepen the shadow.

Have you come  
without my noticing  
and gone again?

Were you the one  
simply passing by  
whose smile I mistook  
and so built all this  
and so must live  
in the wrong hope?

## Sorting the Tools / Peter Everwine

*for E. C.*

This is the hammer  
and the nails.  
I enter my brother's house  
for the last time.

This is the miner's lamp,  
the bit and the sack of dust.  
This is the bread  
that stinks of carbide.