

The tree

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The tree remains a figure for grief.

—Louise Glück

February, your death, then April,
the tree a dazzling pool of pink
where I fish for remembrance—
just last year, and the year before,
we two saying, again and again,
Look! wonder rendering us
inelegant, nearly dumb. (But what
did it matter, the blossoms spoke
in our place.) We shared the view,
the praise, all belonged to us both,
and now, no less marvelous, it's
mine alone. By May, the tree is
wholly green, still radiant, still
fine, green the color God must
love, breezes astir within it as
breath, but shade forming deep
in summer foliage, the seasonal
relentlessness, anticipation of
orange and gold in fall—and,
skulking behind, the bitter cold,
with a skeleton tree, emptied.