

## Vespers by Louise Glück

In your extended absence, you permit me  
use of earth, anticipating  
some return on investment. I must report  
failure in my assignment, principally  
regarding the tomato plants.

I think I should not be encouraged to grow  
tomatoes. Or, if I am, you should withhold  
the heavy rains, the cold nights that come  
so often here, while other regions get  
twelve weeks of summer. All this  
belongs to you: on the other hand,  
I planted the seeds, I watched the first shoots  
like wings tearing the soil, and it was my heart  
broken by the blight, the black spot so quickly  
multiplying in the rows. I doubt  
you have a heart, in our understanding of  
that term. You who do not discriminate  
between the dead and the living, who are, in consequence,  
immune to foreshadowing, you may not know  
how much terror we bear, the spotted leaf,  
the red leaves of the maple falling  
even in August, in early darkness: I am responsible  
for these vines.