

Poem Beginning with a Line by Louise Glück

The fire of my own heart
mourns its shadows, halos

smoked on old cave walls,
dark coronas ringing visions

of stamping hooves that stunned
when the flame divided: nests

of warmth, burning slow.

The fire blazed, ruby and topaz—
brilliant object of desire—

was stolen into other hearts
and became a cloud that rained

in lynch-mob throats, then flickered
through the long dream-hour

when nothing was allowed to grow.

Now the fire bleeds there, vexed
in the beet-picker's hand,

it rises and dies, sweet glimmer
of a young mother's prayer.

The fire of my own heart is fanned
by crowded texts and fed

with memory's hot, ancient breath.