



# October

*Louise Glück*

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## October Louise Glück

The third annual edition of Sarabande's Quarternote Chapbook Series.

"Identifying with the season of autumn, the dark of it, the barren, irreversible future of it, and the beauty of it, which is not seen as redemptive, the voice of Louise Glück is starker, more direct, more emotionally charged than it has ever been. October is a masterpiece."—Mark Strand

Louise Glück is the author of nine books of poetry. Her many honors include a National Book Critics Circle Award, a Bobbitt National Poetry Prize, a Pulitzer Prize, the first annual *New Yorker* Magazine's Readers Award, an Ambassador's Award, a William Carlos Williams Award, a Lannan Literary Award, a PEN/Martha Albrand Award for Nonfiction and a Bollingen Prize for Poetry.

## October Details

Date : Published April 1st 2004 by Sarabande Books

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Author : Louise Glück

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## From Reader Review October for online ebook

### Cheryl says

A meditation on the autumn of one's life. Clear, concise, and accessible.

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### mwpm says

"October" is a long poem in six parts. Although it is a bit short to stand on its own, it's Glück so I'm no complaining...

Is it winter again, is it cold again,  
didn't Frank just slip on the ice,  
didn't he heal, weren't the spring seeds planted

didn't the night end,  
didn't the melting ice  
flood the narrow gutters

wasn't my body  
rescued, wasn't it safe

didn't the scar form, invisible  
above the injury

terror and cold,  
didn't they just end, wasn't the back garden  
harrowed and planted -

I remember how the earth felt, red and dense,  
in stiff rows, weren't the seeds planted,  
didn't vines climb the south wall

I can't hear your voice  
for the wind's cries, whistling over the bare ground

I no longer care  
what sound it makes

when was I silenced, when did it first seem  
pointless to describe the sound

what it sounds like can't change what it is -

didn't the night end, wasn't the earth  
safe when it was planted

didn't we plant the seeds,  
weren't we necessary to the earth,  
  
the vines, were they harvested?  
- **October**, I (pg. 7 - 8)

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### **Teresa says**

I got this chapbook today at a used bookstore for two dollars. It was the best two bucks I've spend in long time.

*death cannot harm me  
More than you have harmed me,  
My beloved life.*

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### **Kristin says**

I read this monthly.

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### **Dyani says**

Gluck read at the Writers Institute last year and read this poem. The room was utterly silent. The poem is gripping, heartbreaking, frightening, and blazes you wide open. Wonderful.

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### **Haley says**

October is one medium-length poem told in six parts. Gluck's contemplation of the waning of the seasons reminded me powerfully of the classic Greek myth regarding the seasons: Persephone is dragged to the underworld, and the natural world grieves with Demeter. Gluck contemplates violence and earth and the difficulty of revival in this piece. It is touching and beautiful and sad.

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### **Katherine says**

I'm not a poetry expert, but I cannot recommend this highly enough. It is captivating, wrenching, wistful, and lovely--all traits that the titular month embodies to me. I wish more people would read it so we could all meet together to discuss it in a candlelit room.

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### **Jude says**

*...the light of autumn: you will not be spared.*

In a way, this is where i went after Mary Oliver. Gluck is in the natural and physical world too. Her vision is brilliant, dark, fearless. Nature becomes not simply a lover humanity has betrayed, but a mirror of all we refused to let her tell us about consequence within and without an individual human life.

This chapbook was my introduction to Gluck. When i went looking i found the Pulitzer prize winner -The Wild Iris. This woman is amazing.

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### **Ruby says**

"it does me no good  
to be good to me now"

3.5

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### **Sam Rasnake says**

I have a weakness for chapbooks - and this is an amazing work - a poem, chapbook length. #3 in the Quarternote series.

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### **Jenni says**

Amazing chapbook and poem. I'd give it four and a half stars if there was that option, but it's not quite a five.

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### **Leo says**

different tone than her other poetry. definitely worth the read.

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### **Julie says**

It's hot here still, in Colorado, but the mornings and evenings hold the crisp promise of autumn.

The pumpkins out in our garden appear cheerful and plump, and the first yellow patches have appeared on the Sunburst Honey Locusts.

All poets and romantics unite, for autumn comes!

I have always particularly embraced this season, but when autumn comes for Louise Gluck in **October**, it is not the typical poetic celebration of red, yellow and green. Gluck does not shriek, nor clasp her hands in ecstasy as our dear Shelley does.

She surprises us, with a bleak picture of a woman tossing the spent pumpkin vines aside in despair. To say it simply. . . *she's done.*

And, had I read this poem in my 20s or 30s, every bit of my autumn-loving self would have revolted: *how dare she!*

But, here in my 40s, with a different perspective, the dirt forever embedded in my shoes from having buried a father in another October, I get it. Sometimes, some days, it's more challenging than it was before to be cheerful.

Gluck writes, “*You will not be spared, nor will what you love be spared.*”

Ugh, such a blow.

And, more:

It is true there is not enough beauty in the world.

It is also true that I am not competent to restore it.

It's painful, this work, and it made me cry, made me pause and re-read several lines. It's lovely, and awful, at the same time.

But, strangely, it reminded me not to give up on autumn. I believe Ms. Gluck will come around, too.

"Autumn was her happiest season." --Harper Lee

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