

The Farewell

A good-bye dinner
he had said
when he called, and
she said sure, why not.

Cocktails for two
in the Mexican place
where the food wasn't as good
as they remembered.

The waitress winked
at one or both of them
as she withdrew.
They weren't very hungry.

I'm fine, he answered
to her unasked question,
and she really was
but said nothing.

Dessert? The waitress
again, but they refused
and returned
to her new house

where he kissed her
tenderly, on her mouth.
Goodbye;
she closed the door

and untied the last box
he had packed
of her things: a few
familiar, worthless books,

but underneath,
the ragged corner
of a wedding album,
chewed once by their dog.

Pulling it out,
she fingered the smiling
pictures. She stopped
as she saw

there was one page
missing, and cried hard
when she couldn't
remember which one.

—LINDA BRITT