

LETTERS TO AN OLD FRIEND

1.

The last time we met
was in a borrowed apartment
your former students
were away at work
you thought I would
make love to you
instead we talked
drank coffee, kissed
you showed me
your automatic writing
messages from the Dark Ages
a monk somewhere in Europe
You sat at the kitchen table
tracing nearly legible
words on a pad, your eyes
rolled back in your head
the whites peeked beneath
your lids, as if dead.
The last time we met
I didn't know how
to react, why the monk
didn't write in Latin.

2.

The last time we spoke
you had tracked me down
on the State's computer
were teaching high school
starting a meditation camp
you said I could come
in the summer, work
to earn my keep, a hired hand
you said you would call
again, instead you sent
our lover, Elaine
She found me hung over
we wandered aimlessly
bar-hopping in the Village
she wouldn't sleep with me.

The last time we spoke
you never called back.

3.

The last time I saw
your name in print
was in the phone book
you had moved from the country
chased to the city by your husband
I wondered why it
took so long to happen.
I rode past your apartment
in a gentrified neighborhood
I didn't ring your bell.