

## *Lines for an Absent Friend*

LARRY RUBIN

So you weren't there—the emptiness  
Would have shattered me, except I know how atoms  
Coalesce and teach themselves to look  
Like hair and teeth and muscles, smiles that  
Beguile. There was a time these old illusions  
Seemed to me the ultimate reality.  
But now, while dissolution looms, I see  
The spaces in the molecules, and know  
New arrangements of these matters may  
Unmask the sun and slyly redesign  
My universe. You'll still be there.