

LINDA CHASE

*Late*

That night, using his key,  
entering on tiptoe, moving  
closer and closer to the bed,  
peering over them,

he couldn't imagine who  
that strange man was.  
Even so, he left  
the rolled up gift behind—

a Navajo rug  
for his faithless lover,  
the tree of life  
cut down in front of him.

Oh, giver of gifts, long dead,  
is it too late to say  
she too didn't know who  
that strange man was—

the one she'd wandered after  
in the dark, afraid  
she might lose you, her love,  
her life, along the way.