

## No Regrets

I treasure these reminders  
of the year we were friends —  
a battery-operated bird book  
trilling songs of selected birds,  
a round wooden box  
emblazoned with a quail  
— little ladies in hats we called them  
on our long daily walks —  
a friendship box you said this was.  
But it was too small to contain more  
than that first year.

We quarreled over foolishness —  
biting babies and banning pitbulls.  
Our men mistrusted one another  
and on his advice you moved on,  
left me behind,  
to grieve over another friendship failure.

But I've learned this in the intervening years:  
I'm a tough friend to have;  
I say what I think, and that just might hurt;  
I'm opinionated and angry sometimes;  
I know you heard the lot of it,  
and it was more than you could bear.

I miss you, old friend.  
I have found and lost other friends  
since you flew away.  
You remain for me a friend set apart,  
one who for that one year I could rely on  
until the fatal blow was struck.  
Until the misspoken words from my mouth  
crossed the filter of your husband's ears.  
And then suddenly  
we were no more.

Yet the treasures remain,  
along with the memories,  
and my regret that you cannot hear  
my gratitude for what I've learned  
both since — and because — you left me behind.