

PRISCILLA ATKINS

## The Gift

That first night, that last night, when I stayed a-  
wake—after your wake—while your partner slept,  
I did one tiny thing that might raise  
Miss Manners' scrupulous left brow: I slid  
open the smallest drawer in your armoire,  
and found the lily-scented, inscribed French  
sachets—dusty pink, antique green—a small  
part of what was my last Christmas present  
to you. When I'd visited in April  
and noted the empty pearl soap dish,  
which once held the six one-inch-square pillows  
(worn-edged—still, they were the heart of the gift),  
I almost asked, but did not want to be rude.  
I almost asked, *mon ange, mon petit chou*.

