

Poems / by Mary L. Bradford*

REGRETFULLY REQUEST

Please, send back my children.
I gave them away before I realized
They were not myself
Or any part of myself.

Excuse me for thinking
If I sent them out on their own
I would rid myself
Of certain of my soul's sores.

Forgive me for asking
Them to take the bitter root
Of their parent seed
And sprinkle it over the land.

They were not mine.
They never were.
They came like exploded gems,
New ore, rocks, from caves.

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LETTING GO

I have learned the ways of ashes
Since you left
The sudden spitting shower
Echoing through the rooms
As the stubborn log
Finally surrenders.

BUFFERS

Books and pictures
are my stay
against the day.
It dawns.
I am folded back
against the sheets
My covers closed.

HERITAGE

We are fraught with lives: Ammon in his flocks,
Nephi at Laban's edge, and Alma's sons.
Lehi spins the Liahona and history talks.
The Finger sparks as Jared's brother runs
Into the light. To King Noahs everywhere,
Through all the Abinadis of the world,
It bids us shake the scales until there
Can be in silence no more records curled
Where none may see. The talismanic names,
The old and honored builders of the arks,
(Those covenant-laden ships whose rigid frames
Trembled at the mighty cries of patriarchs)
Bid us hone our rusted tools and speak
To other histories, and to men who seek.