

## *Kidnapped at birth*

BUFF WHITMAN-BRADLEY

Every one of us was kidnapped at birth  
By a man in money-colored shoes who  
Snatched us away from our real parents  
And sold us to the parents we have now

Some of our new parents love us very much  
And some hate us and treat us cruelly  
But they don't remember how they got us  
Or that they are stolen children themselves

A woman on a bicycle made of sticks  
Riding through the leaf piles in front of our house  
Stopped and told me all of this  
And said, Now it's your job to spread the word

I needed to know more and followed her  
On my own bicycle through the late autumn streets  
And out into the countryside along a dirt road  
That became a path through the woods

I watched her bicycle fall apart until it was  
Nothing more than a scattering of broken twigs  
Then the woman herself began to break into pieces  
And sank into the soft earth and leaf mold on the forest floor

Now she is gone and I am alone and lost  
Sitting under maple trees by a placid creek  
Watching yellow leaves pinwheel slowly in the current  
Waiting to be found and taken home