

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