

*I have already thrown  
this poem away*

BUFF WHITMAN-BRADLEY

I have already thrown this poem away  
It's crumpled up in a ball  
In the bottom of the wastebasket underneath my desk  
You wouldn't have liked it

I showed it to the man at the hardware store  
Who sold me a bag of nails  
He felt the helicopter metaphor was too abstruse  
And thought I should put a hammer in the second stanza

The woman who cuts my hair  
Was put off by the iguana on the dining room table  
And said the description of group sex was gratuitous  
She also told me the poem hovered dangerously close  
To the border between genuine feeling and cheap sentimentality  
And in some places actually crossed over the line

After re-reading it a few times  
I couldn't help agreeing with both of them  
And I decided to toss it out  
If I had a dime for every poem  
I've sweated blood over then scrapped in umpteen years  
Well let's put it this way  
I wouldn't have to mow lawns for money to buy a ream of paper

To be honest I haven't given up on the poem entirely  
I'm working on new draft right now  
The helicopter the iguana and the sex are gone  
There will be a crow in this version  
And one or two bare trees  
And a man slowly retracing his steps across a snowy field  
Looking for the hammer he dropped