

## 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.