

MARY BRADFORD

You kept me from falling

by lowering me gently
into a basket lined with silk.
You spooned your knees into mine,
lifted me up the well's damp sides,
your hand planing my knee,
your arms locked against the noises strange
below in the streets and in the halls,
your body a boat rocking me.
Sleep is not death,
but only a deeper life
with you as much alive to me
as in your waking speech.
Sleep is not parting, then, as I
the first child, the only girl
believed in the lonely bed.
I now learn your teaching:
Sleep is the intimate journey.
Sleep is the silent dance of love.