

1980

# One Basket

Sharon Bryan

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Bryan, Sharon. "One Basket." *The Iowa Review* 11.2 (1980): 109-110. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2593>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

One Basket · Sharon Bryan

Chance and ignorance give us a little  
grace period. We do not have to choose  
which redolent eggs will be lost,  
which pause to become our children  
spelling themselves out. *Elizabeth*  
I might have called a daughter. How slow

I am to give her up altogether, how slow  
to get the tone right, not a little  
sentimental: dear Elizabeth.  
I give her red hair, blue eyes, choose  
her disposition. Imaginary children  
are constant companions, like all lost

opportunities. I have willfully lost  
myself in thoughts of angels, turning slow  
on luminous pins. As our own children,  
some of us tend ourselves like little  
gardens. I do not want to say I choose  
this, I turn my back on Elizabeth.

*Anything is possible.* Elizabeth—  
not true. Those who believe it are lost.  
It is not even that I must choose  
between you and my work—you are slow!—  
but I must unname you, hold you a little  
to the light, see through you. No children,

no births, no pregnancies. Real children  
can't wait for our next lives. Elizabeth  
lulls me by demanding so little.  
When Jacob wrestled the angel he lost  
false fears and was blessed. The unbearably slow  
motion of that battle forced him to choose

one life incessantly all night, to choose  
this one. Again, this one. I have no children.  
Too easy: I will not have. Knowledge is slow  
to collapse on itself. Elizabeth,  
may your half-truths unwind in the earth, be lost  
in that acid babble signifying little.

When we are children we long to be lost  
briefly. Elizabeth is a slow  
name to unthread. I choose my way a little.