



**Bradley W. Buchanan**

### **Soothing and Saying**

To tell the truth is not the fastest way  
to get someone asleep. We sit and talk  
for half the night about what hurts to say

and what's best left unsaid. If we stop shy  
of total honesty, we'll never shake  
the sense that this was an unsettling day.

Shut up. Don't shake your head. Some babies die  
of such refusals, yet to be awake  
is to be conscious of a wish to lie.

It's so predictable~we'll fight and die  
on grounds our silent parents always took  
for granted. Heave a deep, disgusted sigh

if it helps to accept that there's a way  
to let words go, as we breathe round the clock  
that soon describes the new lives ours must be.

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Bradley W. Buchanan's book of poems *Swimming the Mirror* won First Prize in the 2009 Writer's Digest Awards. He teaches at California State University, Sacramento.