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Richard Jones: "I Call My Mother Once a Week"

Richard Jones · Thursday, June 20th, 2013

Richard Jones is the director of the Creative Writing Program at DePaul University, as well as the author of five books of poetry. The most recent is *The Blessing*, published by [Copper Canyon Press](#).

I Call My Mother Once a Week

My mother lives in a land
of disaster and tragedy.
Yesterday on the phone
she said, *Look, a small
white plane just crashed
in the yard.* Good thing
it didn't land on the house
I said, not knowing what to say.
It was like the time she'd said
*The house next door burned
to the ground,* and I'd said,
You're kidding, and she said,
It was an inferno, then asked,
because I know about words,
if she had used the right one.
I said inferno was exactly right,
and she added that it was night,
pitch-black, and the young
family of four had died in the fire.
They couldn't be saved? I said.
They couldn't be found, she said,
and in the silence on the phone
we could almost hear the flames.
To change the subject, I inquired
about her crazy friend, Nancy.
Nancy was always up to something.
Arrested for murder, my mother said.
What? I said. *She hired a hit man*

*to kill the wife of the man she wants
to marry. Tragedy is, the man
didn't even really know Nancy.
Of course there's nothing to say
in response to a story like that,
so I just said, Sounds like true love,
and my mother said, It does, doesn't it?*

Cultural Weekly is proud to premiere this poem by Richard Jones.

This entry was posted on Thursday, June 20th, 2013 at 2:09 am and is filed under [Poetry](#).
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