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

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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](#).

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### 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.*

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