

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Richard Jones: "If I Should Die"

Richard Jones · Thursday, January 26th, 2012

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](#).

If I Should Die

If I should die this afternoon
who will take care of my dog?
Who will let her out this evening
and walk her twice around the block,
letting her stop now and then to sniff
an especially delicious turd
some other dog has left behind
just for her, a gift
hidden among leaves and tall grass
that she discovers
like a little girl at an Easter egg hunt?
Like a little girl, she needs someone to feed her.
Who will fill her red bowl with the bone-shaped feed
that smells of old socks, her favorite fragrance,
lovely aroma, gourmet that she is?
And who will howl with her at the moon at midnight
in the backyard as I do? Who will get down
on all fours, snarling by the back gate
at ghosts and thieves?
Who will bury his nose in snow or dirt or mud?
Who will walk in circles, curl on the old pillow,
dream the dream of the dog-
as I do, night after night,
lying on my back, my snout and whiskers twitching,
my eyes opening and closing,
my paws trembling, my legs shuttling back and forth?
Dreaming like a dog,
I chase whatever it is I want

but never catch in life,
though, in my dreams, like a dog, I do-
I catch it and bite down hard;
it can't get away;
I'm devouring it now, whatever it is,
whatever it was I wanted
all my life
and begged for
every day
like a dog.

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