

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Richard Jones: Two Poems

Richard Jones · Wednesday, September 23rd, 2015

Richard Jones is the author of seven books of poetry from Copper Canyon Press, including *The Correct Spelling & Exact Meaning*. This autumn a new collection of poems about his father, *King of Hearts*, will appear from [Adastra Press](#). *Cultural Weekly* is proud to premiere these two poems.

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### The Messengers

*Of making many books  
there is no end. . . .  
—Ecclesiastes*

The children miss me,  
remote in the study,  
devoted to the making of books.  
They think my devotion misplaced  
and can leave me  
to solitude  
for brief moments only,  
finding any number of excuses  
to come into the room.  
They “need to talk”  
and always what they have to say or ask  
is “very, very important.”  
That’s why  
they must interrupt  
“one last time.”  
Seated,  
I look into their eyes  
as they stand by my desk,  
perfectly still.  
They take a breath  
and search their minds;  
for that which is,  
is far off,

and deep, very deep;  
 who can find it out?  
 Endless questions burn,  
 a thousand fires they must extinguish—  
*How do birds fly?*  
*Why are stars invisible*  
*during the day?*  
*Where does my shadow go*  
*at night?*  
 But just as often  
 they already have the answer—  
 ever-surprising,  
 divine—  
 and which as messengers  
 they've come to share with their father,  
 who lays down his pen,  
 takes their hands,  
 and looking into their faces  
 listens  
 to each breathless soliloquy  
 describing and pondering  
 the sight of the eyes,  
 the light sweet,  
 their small voices  
 the miracle  
 he was praying for  
 before they came into the room.

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## Shoes

“Astonishing now to see  
 my whole life has been a lie,”  
 he said, looking in my eyes  
 to see if I understood  
 the horror of his insight.  
 “It’s almost too much to bear,  
 knowing everything I did,  
 every thought I ever had,  
 was all wrong—off center,  
 out of kilter. It’s too much,”  
 he said, “too painful to bear.”  
 Then he lowered his head and  
 looked at his polished shoes,  
 clumsy and absurd at the end  
 of his long legs, and pondered  
 their laced deceitfulness,  
 as if all those terrible years

his shoes should have known  
better, and turned, and walked  
him in the opposite direction.

*(Photo of Jack Grapes (l) and Richard Jones by Alexis Rhone Fancher)*

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