

JoLLE@UGA[®]
JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

Can't
Christine Jackson

Tumbling,
Words spill, unwittingly out of my heart
My body retching as they pour out
And you mop up the mess of words
And dispose of them, once and for all.

But I find them
I prowl and dig
and salvage them
Swallow them whole
Digest them back into the most
Secret chamber of my heart

You can't have them

There Would Be Music

Christine Jackson

There would be music,
If I had command of notes and scales and chords and all that

To really reach you
To make sure you know, from inside out,
The truth of it

But words on a page – never perfect, rarely accurate, sometimes approximate-
Are all I can muster
Insufficient, I know.
My voice, my eyes, my body could tell you more, so much more.

So how can I really reach you
To make sure you know, from inside out,
The truth of it

The daunting truth of
Inside out
And upside down
And what it means to me to be so undone by you
The happy sadness of it
The unfinished end of it
The implausible possibility of it

There would be music,
If I had command of notes and scales and chords and all that

And the music would be lovely
Reminiscent of the lilt in your voice
And the laughter you gave me
And it would move you
Make you want to dance with me
And you would feel me melt in your arms,
Secure, happy, certain in the knowledge that
You know the truth of it.

A Child, Quite Alone

Christine Jackson

In the shelter of the tall pines,
I created my sacred sanctuary.
There I buried the tiniest creatures
mice, birds, snakes, and salamanders

I sang for them
My tender young heart
Pumping hard
Blood rushing in my ears
Words forming in my throat
Breath parting my lips
Sky welcoming my song

I can still feel the weight of a lifeless bird in my hand
I can still hear my heart's song
My mind travels there, to my secret burial ground
In the shelter of the tall pines,
And I am once again, 6 years old,
Marveling at the mysteries
of life and death
and breath and song.



Christine Jackson is a sessional lecturer at OISE/UT and Brock University, with a focus on arts and literacy education. She is inspired by bold creative collaborations with teachers, students, and artists, and draws upon this work to develop numerous arts and literacy education resources. She participated as a Fellow in the inaugural Toronto Arts Council Cultural Leader's Lab, and deeply values the relationships that are inspired across a diverse range of arts experiences and practices.