

a poem of  
**common prayer**



*C. o iogur putanon en aleyrur o canaleru d' illo panna*



Larry Jones

*C. saltreay en un more aó iogur t'li tolleron quanto tragia.*

Cover Side



A Poem Of Common Prayer - Larry Jones

- A Single Volume.
- 128 pages.
- Trade Paperback.
- American contemporary poetry collection by a single author.

“a poem of common prayer” is a revision of the author’s earlier manuscript, “troubadour”, Hunter College, 2005.

My thanks to the Fred Ewing and Lola Austin Case Endowment at Western Illinois University for a Writer-in-Residence honorarium which assisted this publication. - Larry Jones

Also by Larry Jones: “we become a picnic”, Venom Press, New York, NY (1994)

Contact Information:

Lawrence Worth Jones  
994 Bushwick Ave., Apt. 4R  
Brooklyn, NY 11221-3749  
(718) 453-4295  
ljones11221@yahoo.com

Design and layout by C. D. Johnson

Front Cover and Frontispiece: Group of Troubadours, illustration from “*Cantigas de Santa Maria*”, made under the direction of Alfonso X (“The Wise”), King of Castille and Leon (1221-1284 AD).

Back Cover: Photo of Larry Jones by Rob Weiss, 2002.

ISBN-10: 0-9840982-2-4

ISBN-13: 978-0-9840982-2-4

Copyright © 2016 by Lawrence W. Jones

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations for reviewing purposes, this book or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form or by any means, whether print, audio, or electronic, without permission in writing from the publisher and / or author(s).

Published by Rogue Scholars Press  
New York, NY - USA



*C. o iograr putnon en aleyrry o canaleira d' illo spainna*



*C. salteay en un mote ad iograr e li tollayn quanto magia.*



a poem of

# common prayer

Larry Jones

Published by Rogue Scholars Press  
<http://www.roguescholars.com>





# a poem of common prayer

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>XI</b>
<b>Dedication and Invocation</b>	<b>XIII</b>

## *adoration*

<b><i>Prayers of Adoration</i></b>	<b>3</b>
mccauley's morning after	5
gaga's house	6
a charismation	9
the other unsuspecting witness	11
roberts votive	13
anonymity	14
Our father	15
Lichtenstein	17
Bolivia	18

## *thanksgiving*

<b><i>Prayers of Thanksgiving</i></b>	<b>21</b>
the long gone show	23
Megalomania	25
holyfield	27
old boy	31
MTV hangover	33
cheese blintzes	35
partners in crime	37
darling devil derring-do	38
Faber	40

# Larry Jones

## *contrition*

<b><i>Prayers of Contrition</i></b>	<b>43</b>
(tom &) jerry & me	45
Reloj	48
Secreto	50
("RICO")	51
from Jubilate Neoleo	53
For Donna and Damian from Voyage	55
Prayer for New York City 2070	57
first evening star	58
Stepmom / Dying Young	59

## *supplication*

<b><i>Prayers of Supplication</i></b>	<b>63</b>
Holiday	65
Shelly & Circle	66
Biographia Literaria	69
Postscript	71
The Idyllic Landscape of the Male	73
Jad provokes	74
Variation on a Theme by Kenneth Koch	76
Coincidence	77
good God regardless	78

## *petition*

<b><i>Prayers of Petition</i></b>	<b>81</b>
for Delmore Schwarz	83
Manhattan, and elsewhere	84
Ethics	85
Peepshow	87
PEN Pal	89
the \$5- poem	91
this then the day	93
five stations	95
Prayer	99

<b>Appendix - List Of Graphics, Alphabetical</b>	<b>A-I</b>
Index of Poems, Publisher's Colophon	

# a poem of common prayer

## *Acknowledgements*

My thanks to the following editors and their respective publications in which some of these poems previously appeared:

Armando Jaramillo Garcia, *The Olivetree Review*

Raymond Saint-Pierre, *Quack*

J.D. Rage, *Vital Pulse, Curare*

Bruce Weber, *Stained Sheets, Hart*

Tom Savage, *Tamarind*

Dorothy Friedman August, *Downtown*

Ellen Aug Lytle, *Downtown Poets 1999*

Carol MacAllister, *Writers on the Water's Edge, for Chocolate Lovers*

Graduate Center of the City University of New York, *CUNYarts*

Hunter College Department of English, *Perspectives*

C. D. Johnson, *ANYDSWPE Anthologies*

Genna Rivieccio, *The Opiate*

Malik Crumpler, *those that this*

The prefatory prayers at the beginning of each of the five sections are from the *Bible* and *The Book of Common Prayer*.



# a poem of common prayer

## *Foreword*

I must have already been fifteen or sixteen by the time I was first confronted by J. D. Salinger's story Franny, whose setting is over lunch with a boyfriend, Lane, prior to his presumably Ivy League mater's football game against Yale. When she returns to their table after recovering from an episode of dizziness and nausea, he questions her about the small book she has been carrying. She nonchalantly responds that it is titled The Way of a Pilgrim, the story of how a Russian wanderer learns the power of "praying without ceasing."

The prayer in play is "The Jesus Prayer," the mantra "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," internalized to a point where it becomes unconscious, like a heartbeat. So essentially this is the story of a nice Jewish girl from the Upper East Side of Manhattan mesmerizing herself in a Catholic requiem which becomes a Zen koan. When after her disclosure Franny faints, Lane tends to her until she regains consciousness, postpones the weekend's events, hails a tax for her, and leaves Franny, who is still praying without ceasing.

This present selection of my poems harkens back to that initial reading of Salinger's story, and to Dante's of "the love that moves the sun and other stars," through a spring semester with Paul Ruggiers, a distinguished Jesuit scholar who taught at the University of Oklahoma at the time. Admittedly, my identification with the Judeo-Christian tradition is largely incidental; had I been born somewhere other than Biblically belted Norman Oklahoma, I might well have been inclined toward Buddhism, Islam, etc. (then again there may well be something nominative going on, Jones being a derivation from John, St. John the Baptist having been the disciple to proclaim Christ, something perhaps both semiotic and symbolic).

The eventual assembly of this collection evolved in what educators refer to backward design, an objective for a curriculum being determined and then strategies toward it devised. Just prior writing another of my raunchy" ditties, "Peepshow," I vowed to next subject myself to a sustained, spiritual, interrogation; "five stations," a rather apparent evocation of T. S. Eliot's "Four Quartets," followed. The collection then began to reassemble itself along the strata of that sequence. (I continue to find myself amused with the knowledge that Hunter College, my thrice-fold alma mater, declined Thomas Stearns a faculty position early in his career, a history courtesy former Hunter and Princeton professor, and John Berryman drinking buddy, James Williams).

And so these were the origins of a poem of common prayer, perhaps best characterized as a collision and collusion between Eliotic apology and Whitmanic queer theory. The impact of my initial encounter with Franny Glass some fifty years hence continues to haunt me in an oddly reassuring way. Yes the possibility of the ability to pray without ceasing, to quote the close to the last line to my last poem herein, "a love poem being a prayer" that, in fact, something, or one, greater than ourselves does indeed love us.

L.W.J.



a poem of common prayer

*To Catherine Elizabeth Jones Young  
January 11, 1955 – June 22, 2015  
Our sister, and*

*Our mother  
Jane Elizabeth McCauley Jones  
March 30, 1928 – June 24, 2015*

*Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto  
thee.*

*Psalm 102*



a poem of common prayer

*Adoration*

Reviewer's  
Copy



# a poem of common prayer

## *Prayers of Adoration*

### **The Psalmist's prayer for joy:**

But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.

*Psalm 68:3*



Grant to us, O Lord, the royalty of inward happiness, and the serenity which comes from living close to thee. Daily renew in us the sense of joy, and let the eternal spirit of the Father dwell in our souls and bodies, filling every corner of our hearts with light and grace; so that, bearing about with us the infection of good courage, we may be diffusers of life, and may meet all ills and cross accidents with gallant and high-hearted happiness, giving thee thanks always for all things.

*Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 - 1894)*



### **Traditional Irish Blessing**

May God give you...

For every storm, a rainbow,  
For every tear, a smile,  
For every care, a promise,  
And a blessing in each trial.  
For every problem life sends,  
A faithful friend to share,  
For every sigh, a sweet song,  
And an answer for each prayer.





## a poem of common prayer

### mccauley's morning after

*(st. pat's)*

some rice pudding with raisins  
green bagels and cream cheese  
life on unemployment  
lifestyle of the sleaze

japanese morning glories  
from the museum shop  
life on unemployment  
cash flow from a sop

what's it really all about  
you lead this life of mirth  
what's it all, really, lawrence  
what's it really, lawrence, worth

Reviewer's  
Copy

## Larry Jones

### 'gaga's house

christ's mass. this parochial kindergarten  
class photo of me and jack the jew with the  
broken arm, his fall from 'grace,' the massive

elm in the backyard to what until recently had  
been his 'gaga's house. i remember the mezuzahs  
we removed, unrolled, returned like summonses,

his cast; jack retails in dallas. robert krumme  
renounced oil for christ. when we were twelve  
or so our hike to a recently abandoned home

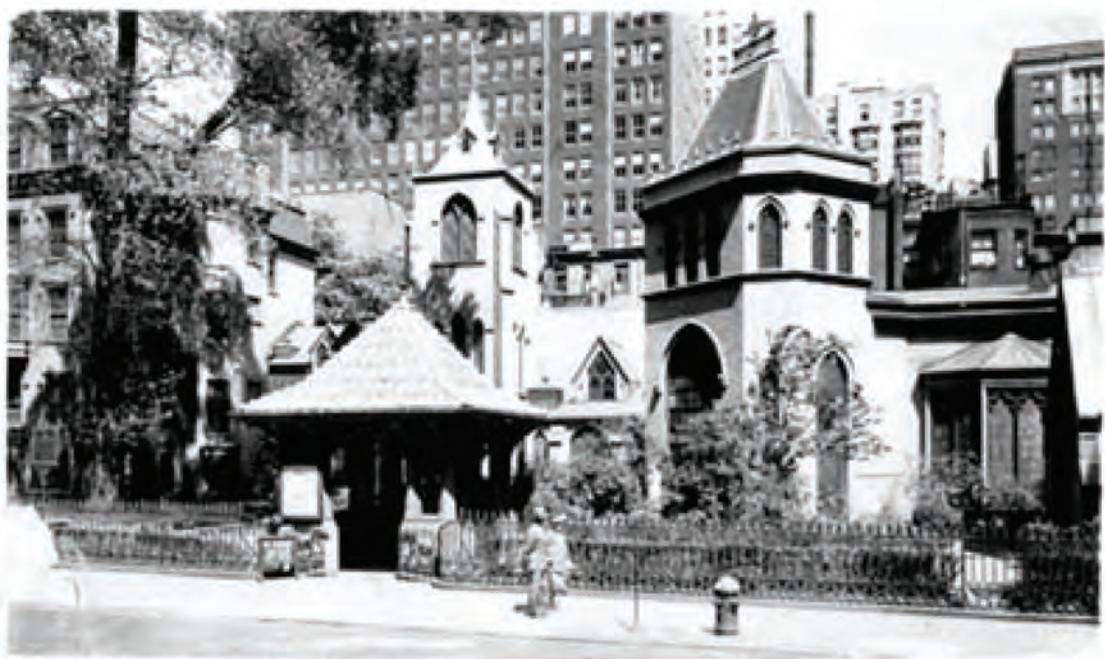
on the outskirts of tulsa revealed still crystal  
and china receptions across a mahogany room,  
sealing our resolution to trespass no further

the following afternoon. The parents divorce;  
comes another magdalenean wedding, the baby  
sister's in the living (...didn't this... used to be

blue? mam-mo) room in what was the groom's  
of what had been 'gaga's house christmas  
morning, thirty-fifth self-portrait west on the

eleventh hour streets of bristow and manhattan,  
the record citizen and the times. jack's cast...  
and why this cast of characters this very day

some same two thousand miles and years away  
and if jesus was indeed the capricorn, then pray  
for whomsoever lives in 'gaga's house today



The Little Church around the Corner, New York City.



## a poem of common prayer

### a charismatation

I. last service to  
the summer camp  
you now as then  
but one of four

but there has been  
a small mistake  
a falling out  
of 'methodists'  
one songwriter  
and these

the invocation  
fr. catir

from my knees

II. the polaroids  
you contemplate  
that eastern afternoon  
your mediation on  
'the method' actor  
your classic miscasting  
as lucifer at rupel jones  
fades to a nice notice  
for 'the duke,' 'duchess'  
nancy hanks, 'ondine'

yes, there you are  
looking like an old baptist  
old jewish namesake john  
long against an ancient elm  
hands clasped against your back  
like that last time  
you saw me mother

in shackles

## Larry Jones

III. one fern ruth jones  
james patrick hill  
married here, 'around  
the corner,' thirty-  
five (she always lied  
five years, a big inside  
jokes between "jimmy"  
and her only sibling  
lawrence

"lorraine"

lawrence worth walks  
around the corner  
of new york via  
swansea, london  
richmond, lawton  
norman, boston

an immigrational  
confession in the temple  
an oxfordian reform

a penitential  
larryjones  
before the bishop  
this black priest

'david'

The Transfiguration, April 18, 1987

## a poem of common prayer

### the other unsuspecting witness

the other unsuspecting witness  
bracing beside me at the door  
breathing low on parsons boulevard  
breathing mortality one Sunday

morning on my way to mass  
first such sunday in some years  
seven-forty stepping onto the f  
stepping into the front of the car

doors closing on the stench of  
death, a vigil of bag ladies  
she lies there splayed but shrouded  
her mourner snaggle-toothlessly

shreds and blasts ritz crackers  
again postpones my eucharist

1500  
A



Albrecht Dürer 1471-1528 Selbstbildnis

6-28-2011 *Helmut*

## a poem of common prayer

**roberts votive**

*- for r. wylder james*

saturday, the fourteenth  
a distinct numerology  
friday the thirteenth  
two months in a row  
a full moon on  
the ides, i go  
on and on, out for  
votive candles, handles  
upon what i alone  
cannot control i'm  
on a roll, the dole  
goes public, over-  
exposure, my lover  
i know you know  
another, my feminine  
instinct, mystique  
will air the laundry  
maybe, saturday  
afternoon, rabbi  
you and i espy  
an image or two  
'warholite' at 'liberty'  
mummy dearest  
i would feign forgive  
the pain i bear for  
you you bore with,  
me, i now see what  
understanding  
standing under  
all this bull might  
be, essentially catholic  
rhymes, these english  
new york times, möet &  
chandon's, dunhills  
a kings vision  
of a canon  
a father and a brother  
to the least of these

## Larry Jones

### anonymity

a word or two addressed  
to my so many yes some  
three hundred or so such  
lovers of whom perhaps  
half will be alive today  
to read these words to

hear me say for all of  
you, of us, we were truly  
ours, whomsoever ourselves  
unto ourselves ours alone  
whomsoever as we were we  
would have been

known

Reviewer's  
Copy

## a poem of common prayer

### **Our father**

Your second wife some five years my senior,  
no heiress but a secretary, your secretary,  
eighteen at the time.

Not long after the divorce my mother filed,  
you wrote you were indeed about to marry  
your secretary,

and understood how we four might decline,  
considering your lawyerly misrepresentations,  
over time after time,

again how it well might be we might decline  
to ever speak to you again. Our father,  
who was in heaven,

at the time.

Reviewer's  
Copy

A comic book panel depicting a woman with long, wavy blue hair floating in a body of water. She has a distressed expression, with her eyes closed and tears streaming down her face. Her right hand is raised to her cheek. The water is rendered with dark, swirling lines, suggesting a turbulent or deep environment. In the background, the head and shoulders of another person are visible, also appearing to be in the water. A speech bubble originates from the woman, containing the text: "I DON'T CARE! I'D RATHER SINK -- THAN CALL BRAD FOR HELP!".

I DON'T CARE!  
I'D RATHER SINK --  
THAN CALL BRAD  
FOR HELP!

## a poem of common prayer

### Lichtenstein

(two new kittens)

- Well, goodbye.

- I just can't believe you're walking out on the kids and me again like this, for her!

- For them!

(Pause)

- Give me a call.

- For them!

(Slam, Exit)

(And when you do call, if and when you do call, all I plan to have to say to you is that I'll never give you a reason for, nor will I ever grant you a divorce.

And you'll never get custody.)

(Curtain)

## Larry Jones

### Bolivia

Vicente says Bolivia's  
such a typical woman,  
lives only for Travis,  
her man.

Oh, no! I disdain.  
She's a life,  
a room  
with a view  
of her own

where she can go  
when she needs  
wants  
to be

alone.

While he's left  
to meandering around  
going - Meow...  
where is she

now,

**a poem of common prayer**

**Appendix**

Reviewer's  
Copy



# a poem of common prayer

## *List Of Graphics*

<b>FD&amp;C Green No. 3</b> , food coloring	4
<b>“The Little Church Around the Corner”</b> , One East 29th Street, New York (1849)	7
<b>Albrecht Durer</b> , self-portrait (age 28, 1500)	12
<b>Drowning Girl</b> , Roy Lichtenstein (1963)	16
<b>The Gong Show</b> , Sony Pictures, 1977-1989	22
<b>Bush-Walker Lineage</b> , Walker-Jones Lineage (1840-Present)	29
<b>Candy Darling</b> , Jack Mitchell (1971)	36
<b>Eberhard Faber Pink Pearl Eraser</b> , Greenpoint, Brooklyn (1861)	39
<b>Tom and Jerry</b> , Hanna and Barbera (1940)	44
<b>“Bedtime Stories”</b> , Madonna (1994)	49
<b>Jubilate Agno, Fragment B</b> , Christopher Smartt (St. Luke’s Hospital, 1759-1763)	52
<b>Empire State Building at Night</b> , Andrew Prokos (born 1971)	56
<b>John Berryman</b> , (nee John Smith, 1914-1972)	64
<b>Frank O’Hara</b> , Larry Rivers (1954)	67
<b>St. John the Baptist</b> , Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610)	72
<b>Kenneth Koch</b> , Alex Katz (1967)	75
<b>Hotel Dixie</b> , Percy and Harry Uris (1930)	82
<b>Arizona State Prison</b> , Florence, AZ (1908)	88
<b>Chemotherapy IV Drip</b> , Dreamtimes stock images	92
<b>Poetry in Motion</b> , Poetry Society of America/Metropolitan Transit Authority (1992)	98

Larry Jones

Reviewer's  
Copy

# a poem of common prayer

## *Alphabetical Index Of Poems*

the \$5- poem	91
anonymity	14
Biographia Literaria	69
Bolivia	18
a charismation	9
cheese blintzes	35
Coincidence	77
darling devil derring-do	38
Ethics	85

**Larry Jones**

Faber	40
first evening star	58
five stations	95
for Delmore Schwarz	83
For Donna and Damian from Voyage	55
from Jubilate Neoleo	53
gaga's house	6
good God regardless	78
Holiday	65

**a poem of common prayer**

holyfield **27**

The Idyllic Landscape of the Male **73**

Jad provokes **74**

Lichtenstein **17**

the long gone show **23**

Manhattan, and elsewhere **84**

mccauley's morning after **5**

Megalomania **25**

MTV hangover **33**

**Larry Jones**

old boy	<b>31</b>
the other unsuspecting witness	<b>11</b>
Our father	<b>15</b>
partners in crime	<b>37</b>
Peepshow	<b>87</b>
PEN Pal	<b>89</b>
Postscript	<b>71</b>
Prayer	<b>99</b>
Prayer for New York City 2070	<b>57</b>

## a poem of common prayer

Reloj	48
("RICO")	51
roberts votive	13
Secreto	50
Shelly & Circle	66
Stepmom / Dying Young	59
this then the day	93
(tom &) jerry & me	45
Variation on a Theme by Kenneth Koch	76



## a poem of common prayer

•  
ROGUE SCHOLARS  
Press

For more information or a price quote  
for our book design services, go to:

<http://www.roguescholars.com>

For General Information, e-mail:  
[info@roguescholars.com](mailto:info@roguescholars.com)

Editor-In-Chief, C. D. Johnson:  
[editor-in-chief@roguescholars.com](mailto:editor-in-chief@roguescholars.com)

•







Cover Side



Upon arriving in New York in the early 70s, **Lawrence Worth Jones** was quickly swept up into "The Plastic Exploding Inevitable" of Andy Warhol's coterie. Through the 90s, Larry was the Artistic Director of "Cafe Nico," his poetry, painting and performance venue at 101 Avenue A. A lifelong acolyte of his original mentor, Kenneth Koch, he has taught literature and creative writing to gifted and talented youth at Long Island University and Hofstra University for many years. An Associate of the Academy of American Poets, his work has appeared in numerous literary magazines and anthologies. His biography is published in Marquis Who's Who in America.

"Given the expanse between the heretical and the ecstatic in this collection of poems by Larry Jones, one might be prone to speculate that he was the object of considerable parochial abuse through his formative years. Best when paired with a glass of whiskey and chased with an open heart." – **Genna Rivieccio, Editor-in-Chief of *The Opiate* magazine and blogger of such popular columns as *Literary Bitch*.**

"Here, in this intensely confessional work, by Larry Jones, the space of our lives becomes close, almost claustrophobic, even his meter closes things down further, until from this compressed place one gets the feeling, though maybe not consciously, things will explode and expand. And they do, but without them falling apart as a result of it. For, always the humanist, his compassion and humor keep everything together." – **Armando Jaramillo-Garcia, author of *The Portable Man*, Prelude Books, 2017.**

"Pious, homey and a heartfelt of quintessential Jones quiriness; at once deeply Catholic and deeply not. He gingerly dabs a finely detailed brush and blends Oklahoma and Judeo-Christianity with his teenage reverence for J. D. Salinger, and the mix is unique. It's a smart, sexy, and gay religious challenge, a piquant charmer." – **Ellen Aug Lytle, author of *homefront: new and selected poems*. The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc., 2013.**

"These poems bring me great joy, for I hear again the singular voice of a friend I have missed for so long, the eloquent, theatrical, self-effacing, sad, loving, funny, transcendent Larry Jones. But enough with the adjectives. Read the book!" – **Merrill Cole, author of *The Other Orpheus: A Poetics of Modern Homosexuality*. Routledge, 2003.**

**Rogue Scholars**  
Press



ISBN 978-0-9840982-2-4

