

Inductance

draw a picture imagine me as  
two curves.  
current voltage Both  
curves start from the instant the switch is closed; taken together  
instant to instant.  
as I  
have told you, just a convenient way of showing the  
relationship.  
As time goes on, current grows and decreases to zero  
up and down between these two extremes  
varying alternately

Look at the two curves and see this for yourself.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Inductance” was created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922). About the poem and the process of composing it, Jennifer Hernandez writes:

For me, blackout poetry is a form of liberation. Instead of starting with a blank slate and feeling the pressure to fill it with words, I start with a slate of words and excavate those that resonate, discovering the poem as I chisel away at the text. My experience has been that the most utilitarian source texts—manuals, guides, encyclopedia entries—often yield the most interesting poems. I have an intuitive approach. In this case, I scanned the table of contents of John Mills’ *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* and chose the chapter with the title that most pleased my palate upon speaking it aloud—“Inductance and Capacity.” Next, I copy-and-pasted the first page of the text into Microsoft Word and printed it out. I prefer the feel of paper and pen for first drafts of all kinds. At this point, I skimmed through the text, forcing myself to read not for comprehension, but only to circle the most interesting words and phrases that emerged from the text. Quickly, it became apparent that this text painted a picture that operates on multiple levels. What fun to discover! Finally, I returned to the Microsoft Word document and blacked out the remainder of the text, making small revisions of my original word choices and watching the poem take shape on the page. The art of blackout poetry adds another dimension, almost a sculptural quality.

Jennifer Hernandez’s work has appeared in *Red Weather*, *The Talking Stick*, *Visual Verse*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *This Was 2020: Minnesotans Write About Pandemics and Social Justice in a Historic Year*, and elsewhere. She lives in Minnesota.

