

JACKIE MCCLURE

A Bequest

Under
your boot-soles
I bequeath myself
the grass I love—
not a bit tamed,
untranslatable—
to grow
and filter
and drift in
lacy eddies.

If
you want me again
look for me
on the shadow's wilds,
missing
me one place,
keep encouraged,
I stop somewhere,
true
as any spotted hawk
swoops
over
the roofs
of the world.

I depart as air.
Fetch me.

ABOUT THE POEM

“A Bequest” was created from [I celebrate myself] in *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman (1855). About the poem and the process of composing it, Jackie McClure writes:

Daunting it is to abscond with the words of a famous text and have the audacity to re-assemble them, and yet I gulped and dared. The final lines of Walt Whitman’s poem had much to teach me about the fluidity of vocabulary poets choose, which avails itself to angles of varied assemblage. All the words are Whitman’s, I but re-arranged, maintaining some phrases many may recognize, famous as they are, in ways I can only wish and hope he would approve.

