

**Lazarus Blessing**  
**by Jan L. Richardson**

**The secret  
of this blessing  
is that it is written  
on the back  
of what binds you.**

**To read  
this blessing,  
you must take hold  
of the end  
of what  
confines you,  
must begin to tug  
at the edge  
of what wraps  
you round.**

**It may take long  
and long  
for its length  
to fall away,  
for the words  
of this blessing  
to unwind in folds  
about your feet.**

**By then  
you will no longer  
need them.**

**By then this blessing  
will have pressed itself  
into your waking flesh,  
will have passed  
into your bones,  
will have traveled  
every vein  
until it comes to rest  
inside the chambers  
of your heart  
that beats to  
the rhythm  
of benediction  
and the cadence  
of release.**