

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Civil Rights, and Arts Committee Meeting

Friday, 2PM, January 21st, 2005

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Anna Maria Hong & Grant Cogswell**

Today's Curator is Anna Maria Hong and her poet is **Kary Wayson**

Kary Wayson is a recipient of a 2003 "Discovery"/The Nation award and a 2001 Artist Trust/Washington State Arts Commission Fellowship. Her poems have appeared in Poetry Northwest, The Nation, and FIELD, among others. Her chapbook, *Dog & Me*, was published in April, 2004 by LitRag Press. A 2004 Pushcart Prize nominee, she was named One to Watch by The Stranger Genius Awards. Kary lives in Seattle, where she teaches poetry through the University of Washington's Extension Center.

If English

By Kary Wayson

If geography is the highway I take to your house,
then geology is the house, the cliff it sits on,
the cross hairs the frames cast on the yellow walls.
Geometry is the windows into the living room
and entomology is the key under the brick by the back door.
Biology, then, is the bathroom,
and the shower with you singing inside it
a lecture on erosion in a conservation class.
Chemistry is the kitchen, the feta cheese on the counter,
and how many leaves is calculus
collected in the corner by the pot of wilted daffodils.
The brother's abandoned bedroom is history: his globe,
his football helmet, his ratty blue bathrobe.
And if the front porch is philosophy
with eye-screws in the rafters where a swing should be,
then theology is the front door ajar.
In English I'd say English
is the telephone and the telephone book
and the table with one vase and the cut rose.
Belief would be the unmade bed
and any discussion of God is your body
still sleeping in your sleeping clothes.

The Wrong Place for a Long Time

By Kary Wayson

When I ask if she wants to start running
at the farthest fir tree, she guesses, hedges her bets,
she asks what? but she means yes.
Another number adds one to itself
and we call it an accumulation of tenderness.
She will need me and I will need her
to need me and not
the other way around,
resembling nothing much more than love, even now:
nothing much that I can tell.
Not an alcoholic and not

not an alcoholic, we spend every Sunday discussing what
each of us meant by what we said to the other, forever
getting ready to be able to begin to say
what neither of us will let
just yet. Not a lot unlike building a bridge in a cartoon:
nailing the one plank, then stepping out
to nail the next,
dividing the good bye from the by
god, the big if from the bullheaded but, always leaving
and always about to leave: lervous,
by which I mean a little nervous and she will understand.

- *end* -