

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Civil Rights, and Arts Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2PM, April 5, 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 **Roberta Olson**

Roberta Olson's work has appeared in numerous literary journals, including Bird Dog, Talisman, Explosive Magazine and Titanic Operas. She is the author of the chapbook *All These Fair & Flagrant Things*, from Ether Dome Press. She was also chosen to participate in the Jackstraw Writer's Program in 2004.

Afterword

by Roberta Olson

People cut ice from frozen lakes
while the revelers start home
neat and black the morning
is the largest cut diamond in the world
I painted my feet with iodine
like that puppet on TV
an infestation of white larvae
covered the shrub outside
there is that space
where cells divide but
how do you not do something?
Hillquist ran for governor
he wished to be a broad anchoring point
when the masses dream
they are like figures in a mirage
the metaphor of course is not perfect
but they have the word 'plateau' on their side
meaning salt, water, vessel and horse
alas, after oak, after salt, the fur keeps imagining

Sleepwalking

By Roberta Olson

When crystal quartz is cut at an exact angle
coal with its dark wing
has the velocity of a hat
rolled by the wind

lakes reflected on a menu of shadows
carve magical signs on the birdbath
swallows slice the air
gathering the clatter apparatus
like a circuit fully loaded

poles apart from sleeping
the wind curves moving to the northeast
if it could be articulated
there would be a collar of stiff fabric
empty but for the landscape

the night has a thousand eyes
but is the night echoless?
muscles tendons ligaments blood vessels
track a line between two bridges
a rabbit hurdle where
the will has no impact
where the foremost sleepwalker
pursues a dome
knowing the arch is a shape
that never sleeps

-- *End* --