

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Civil Rights, and Arts Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2PM, May 3, 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 **Shannon Borg**

Shannon Borg has an MFA from the University of Washington, and a PhD from the University of Houston. Her work has appeared in Poetry Northwest, The London Review of Books, The Paris Review, Gulf Coast, mobilecity.com, Pontoon and other journals. She writes about food and wine in Seattle.

A Drive Through Town

by Shannon Borg

Let us drive through as we are told to do.

Let our Expedition follow the yellow arrows,
for there is somewhere there. Let the small voice
from the box repeat the holiest number,

ninety-nine, ninety-nine, ninety-nine.

The voice promises an abundance.
Let the makers inside lay a row of perfect,
round meat, like faces waiting. Let us inch

our vehicle forward and let this process take four minutes.

Let the shake maker make shakes as we listen
to the radio tell us and sing, and in singing, tell us.
And in no time, no time, no time at all, the driveway

will open before us, for we have been given change.

So let us be released, into the baptism of traffic.
Let us practice the art of unwrapping our prize
with one hand, pressing Send, changing lanes.

No signal necessary, my friend, for we not only know
where we are, but we are certain of where we are going.

The Crow's Shore Lyric

by Shannon Borg

We tail-fan, wing-twitch, wait and scheme.
We hustle, switch and bait, because we know those gulls
must slip up soon, leave French fries strewn across the dock,
forget to guard the Dumpster as the highway's double snake
creeps and winds behind us. We watch the waterfront

as ferries shuffle back and forth to Bremerton,
through morning's pink stain, past massive cranes
perched like herons along the Duwamish.
In the harbor, ships are heavy with cargo; what fills
those boxes, massive and hollow as a god's fist?

We to and fro, watch dim pigeons circle and gulls reel
on ferry air. We bamboozle, hoodwink, but then give back,
drop bread to scatter on stone.
We're middle,
not city, not sea, no shore here but crates and pylons,
crumbling wharfs and fishrot. Ours is to stitch,

to flimflam and hoax, to bob and weave city and bay together.
And when we flit through your vision, don't believe
what the others tell you, that we are a black rumor,
a hint of what is to come. Don't believe that we are
a peek at death's card, a feathered purse of devilish questions.

We sing no dark dissonance, we squawk at traffic's clatter.
Believe we're no harbinger of storm or cloud, no omen
of rising rates or falling stocks. Can't help you there.
We have no memory, you see, of fate's full moon
or dawn's red sky, or of a child left alone. Just birds,
just birds; we're only wing and eye and hollow, hollow bone.

-- End --