

Seattle City Council

**Public Safety, Civil Rights, and Arts Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, 2PM, June 21, 2005

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

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

Today's Curator is Grant Cogswell and his poet is **James Arthur**

**James Arthur's** poetry has appeared in The Nation, Brick, AGNI, The Iowa Review, and Third Coast, and he has been a fellow at Yaddo, The MacDowell Colony, and La Napoule Art Foundation in France. In 2004 he received the Discovery / Nation Prize. He is a graduate of the UW's MFA program and is currently one of the writers-in-residence at the Richard Hugo House.

**The Death of the Painter**

James Arthur

At the end of his life  
he had money and attention,  
and certain towns were known  
in connection to his name.

He was fastidious, and wore a tie,  
was photographed buying brushes, with a bird.  
Under the sub-tropical sky  
he forgave the things long done.  
He hardly saw his children,  
by habit, was self-absorbed. His atelier  
was sacrosanct, with the ocean for a view.  
When he painted, it was descent  
and descent and descent from the cross,  
and when he died,

his late-life love wept from another room.  
The sepulcher was simple,  
and was all he really knew.

- end -

The Sympathy of Angels  
**James Arthur**

Being of tragic bent  
we incline  
to the unlikely future  
and the faded past. But we  
see you. We  
see how tired you are  
as you lean on your rifle

or your shovel. We  
see that. We  
see the fired shells and the head  
they went into, and we  
also are shells, we  
glorious  
unmathematical angels. Equally  
to all men, we  
have nothing to say. Go on,  
lay us by your ear. We  
work  
the pollen engine. We  
are salvation's weather-  
men, and what  
great false predictors we  
are. We

serve a monarch in a silk sarcophagus  
and are buried  
in secret graves.  
- *end* -