

Seattle City Council

**Public Safety, Government Relations, and Arts Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, 2:00 PM, May 2, 2006

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Jeannette Allée**

Today's poet is **Rebecca Loudon**

**Rebecca Loudon** is the author of two collections of poetry, *Tarantella*, Ravenna Press, 2004, and the forthcoming *Radish King*. She teaches violin to children in the Seattle area, and is the librettist for composer Roupén Shakarian. She wrote the text for *Bone Island Suite*, a five part song cycle for soprano and orchestra, which was premiered on April 30th 2006 by Philharmonia Northwest Chamber Orchestra. Rebecca is the founder and teacher of the Wallingford Irregulars workshop which is now in its eighth year.

**Yangshuo Quay**

by Rebecca Loudon

At night, my father's boat is strung with lanterns. I give him  
a basket of pears, three dumplings wrapped in paper.

He presses his thumb to the top of my head for goodbye,  
enters the Li River with his flock of tethered cormorants.

They fly out on their leashes, kites flickering against limestone.  
The avu swim close, attracted to the bob and sway of lanterns.

The cormorants swoop, pluck, swing the fish in pouchy beaks,  
thrash against the wooden collars that circle their throats,  
trying to swallow, swallow. My father reels the birds in,  
yanks the fish from their mouths.

In the morning he walks to the village and I ride my bicycle.  
He laughs when I flap, caw and squawk,  
stretch my neck to one side, then the other,  
like the cormorant escaping its collar.

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