

Seattle City Council

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

Tuesday, 2:00 PM, June 6, 2006

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Jeannette Allée**

Today's poet is **Jed Myers**

**Jed Myers'** work has been featured on *National Public Radio* and published in *Raven Chronicles*, *Poetica*, *Forum*, and *Chrysanthemum*, literary magazine for which he's also been co-editor. Jed has received several regional awards for his poetry and has been featured on web sites including *FriendsJournal*, *PoetsWest*, and *SatyaCenter*. He is a psychiatrist with a private therapy practice, a Clinical Associate Professor in Psychiatry at the University of Washington, an organizational consultant, as well as, a musician.

**Blues Over Nothing**

by Jed Myers

The nothing you have before you again  
as night comes on, the nothing you know  
inside you, the hollow song from below  
the dome of your diaphragm only you  
can follow, the nothing you show

Second Avenue, only the leaning drunks  
moving slow enough to half-notice you  
through the glaze coating their own absence—  
this is the nothing that's granted you  
a chance to see something new, the world

presenting itself as one street, the lights  
coming up as the sun goes red and low,  
restaurant doors opening like mouths,  
the wood and brick buildings beginning to swallow  
people with nothing else in particular

to do with an evening but eat and be eaten.  
Your nothingness shows. You stand on the edge

of the street—you straddle the curb near the corner,  
knowing you don't belong in this quarter  
at all, but no one crossing sees.

A black Celica rolls south, windows  
open—in back, the shellacked hair  
of a girl in a veil of cigarette smoke,  
a smooth blank face that nods to the pounding  
bass of a hypnotic song about nothing

but sex, the traffic thick, some horns  
blasting behind an old Volvo stuck  
in the middle lane of the crammed conduit,  
the sound bouncing off the windows and walls  
in cacophonous calls of the nothing that is all

we have. What you know—watching  
kids in jackets and dresses climb out  
of the limos and cabs across the street  
of this world, watching them sucking smoke  
into the infinite spaces of their chests,

as they shift and look about, looking for something  
they can't find in the others' faces,  
waiting in line to be consumed,  
with the solace of how much cash they can spend,  
the thrill of suspense around getting carded,

the sense that there's all this lush parade  
between right now and the obscure end  
of the road where nothing declares itself,  
where Second Avenue becomes the breath  
of the world—what you know, watching

nothing in its florid eruption, the grid  
of lights like a lattice of cold crystal  
we're migrating in, nothing doing  
its best dance dressed up as us,  
is this: the bum against the bricks is a prince

like you, and you find yourself weaving as if  
you too were so drunk you couldn't tell who  
was he and who was you. But it's  
nothing you've been guzzling—this and a bit  
of ordinary hunger stirred up in your gut.

-- end --