

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Government Relations, and Arts Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2:00 PM, September 19, 2006

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Jeannette Allée**

Today's poet is **Doug Nufer**

DOUG NUFER writes poetry, fiction, and pieces for performance that are mostly based on formal constraints. In his *Poem Noir* series, various sonnets, sestinas, and other poems are made up entirely of lines from film noir movies. He's the author of five novels, the most infamous of which is *Never Again* (Four Walls Eight Windows/ Black Square), where no word appears more than once. His poems have appeared in *Chain*, *Bird Dog*, *Monkey Puzzle*, and *Monkey Bicycle*, and in performances with choreographer Erin Mitchell and the spoken word trio Staggered Thirds.

Occasionally Always

from *Poem Noir*

by Doug Nufer

Occasionally I always go around the world like guns and ammunition with my brains
And your looks this is hanging on so long to get back where they have to
Scratch for it like a dog bitter little world this isn't mauling but it keeps getting worse
To be a live coward leading your lunatics to the Pulitzer Prize and a romance
Than a dead hero I like it to bite back at me the man I killed I did for you
And some rusty bobby pins in one eye crawling with germs but I didn't
Ask for it like a man the flies come round waiting for the funeral whenever I saw one
And out the other I was brought up to spit big ideas under the gravy
Bitter little lady strictly poison small results under the mink the sugar makes
For a piece of fudge protesting his innocence to die in bed in a mad frenzy
Between them and the gutter where you go where you come when you run
A guy with my rating stupid enough to embezzle a dame like you when I bite a steak
Your own mother Sheba born smart or no Sheba we're all sisters born dumb
Wouldn't grift a dame on a train the grass looks like and I was living whatever I did
I didn't care if there's anything I don't like starts right now when I've forgotten
I've had complaints like any other man and you get hit with a lug wrench
The road curved enough to make a bulldog a part-time model cutting my throat

And your mother dying there course muscled barbaric it's a word
And repels men being born in prison meaning work has a meaning all its own
Some old collar buttons you'd hardly believe you're just an animal burning hamburger
And stupid enough to get caught like any other man if you want fresh air only moreso
Don't be Moses looking for it in this town when you creeps were eating in dives
I was running this town I thought you'd know how did he die you're the writer
And a full-time pickpocket attracts mosquitoes sometimes for good sometimes for evil
They say native Californians bust his chain and the bags in the river all come from Iowa
To get some fresh air enough to make a bulldog in a third-rate joint on Fourth Street
My first wife was a second cook the best of everything she was playing me
I wasn't playing her how through I am is good enough for me you turn the other cheek
And get yourself a suit a piece of paper go together burn that tent you're wearing
You might live you're just an animal guy like me dame like you some things you do
When they're insane some things you don't it's always simpler maybe my future
It's a smart-cracking dame I had her murder is the contract hit is the sucker
I'll always love I'll tell you the world was dead like it's been left out all night

-- end --