

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Government Relations, and Arts Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2:00 PM, March 6, 2007

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Brian McGuigan**

Today's poet is **Felicia Gonzalez**

Born and raised in Cuba, **Felicia Gonzalez** has had poems published in various anthologies, including Word Thursdays. An occasional journalist in the area of arts and culture, Felicia has written for the national publication "Art Papers" and a monthly art column for "Metropolitan Living." She is a 2000 Jack Straw writer and a 2006 recipient of an individual artists grant from the Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs for her forthcoming chapbook, 'Recollection Graffiti.'

Ripple Effect (a prose poem)

Felicia Gonzalez © 2007

Getting on? asked the bus driver.

Slowly up the three steps. She searched for the fare, feeling shells among the coins.

Getting to a seat seemed to take forever. She could sense the driver's frustration. His urge to keep on schedule.

The motor belched as soon as she'd worked her way behind the Plexiglas divider near the back door.

It was before eight in the morning. Passengers wore sleep across their faces. Her nose picked up the scent of soap and shampoo. Fake clean.

On the roof of a warehouse, rain from last night's storm had formed a lake.

Reflected sky, telephone lines, nearby trees.

Still, except for vibrations along the surface which she guessed came from the building's heating and cooling system.

"Sometimes I'll sit there having singles. Sometimes, doubles." The man, rumpled and derelict, said. Turns out he was talking about espresso, "sometimes with whipped cream," he smiled.

The bus was coming slowly around the west side of the hill. Dirt and pebbles lay across the road. More debris from the storm.

A passenger was telling the driver how on the news they said a part of the Bay had gone missing sometime during the storm.

They were now on the bridge. From the bus it didn't seem as high. She had been afraid it would make her nauseous to be suspended in the air like this. She took a deep breath, and exhaled as the bus tires confirmed they had finished crossing.

The view from Yesler and Boren was a surprise. The water looked higher than the road. And from this angle, Smith Tower appeared to be half as tall and sitting in the Bay—like an old man fishing, his hat pulled over his ears.

They were moving quickly. She wasn't sure which stop would be the right one, never having seen the city from this vantage point.

People on their way to work, jumped off the bus at every other corner and hurried through doors that swung open as they neared. It must be coming up soon, she thought.

When the freshly showered scent was replaced by brine and echoes of fish, she knew this was the stop. The bus rocked gently back and forth on its tires as the driver poised it on the steep street facing the Bay.

It took her some time to collect herself. Work her way out of the seat, down the steps at the back door. She thanked the driver by waving to him in the tiny mirror above the door. Noticing how it resembled a fish scale.

She moved to the end of the pavement and tumbled forward rejoining the rest of the Bay. Staring at the city from this familiar view, directing ripples toward the street, she wondered how the evening News would report her return?

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