

"Words' Worth" Poetry Readings

Poets at the Culture, Arts, and Parks Committee of the Seattle City Council.

Water Music by Anne-Marie Hackenberger

Swimming in the slow lane
just the right place for someone sixty-three
the water is clear and calm
pleasant and warm

long long ago:
two people swimming in one lane
the water calm and pleasant
two instruments in tune with each other
a melody of love

soon
ripples splashes undercurrents
discord
two people swimming in two lanes

the instruments out of tune
broken strings

years going by

two people swimming with one lane between them
then running out of lanes

the clanging sound of brass and cymbals
no lanes in the ocean
and the water is cold
and wild and full of whitecaps

unbearable dissonances
shrill sounds
that hurt the ears
that hurt the hearts
a crescendo of pain

one hits bottom
yet keeps coming up for air
the other stays afloat
barely at first
soon getting a grip on a buoy
trusting the man who stilled the waters
trusting the man who calmed the sea

the next generation:

two people swimming in one lane
two instruments
in tune with each other

a melody of love

no repeats please
for God's sake
no Da Capo al Fine!

Beauty by Anne-Marie Hackenberger

I see beauty in everything:
in a single leaf
lying on the ground
in a bird's flapping his wings
and frolicking in my birdbath
in the bizarre formation
of a cloud
in the smile of a mother
looking at her child
in the twinkling
of an old man's eye
in the sounds of a string quartet
in a line of a poem
in the emerald velvet of my lawn
in the raindrops
glistening on roofs and wires
in the doe-like eyes
of my dog
in the innocent faces of my grandchildren
in the perfection
of a single rose
that's why my life is so rich
because I see beauty in everything.

Healing by Anne-Marie Hackenberger

Some time ago I wrote a poem that began:
Once upon a time my love was a tree
and it told a story:
how beautiful this tree was -
how it was almost destroyed
by another tree that fell on it
and broke it into pieces
but still it gave nourishment
to the four small trees that grew around it

however as time went by
there was too much
hail and thunder and lightening -
the tree that was love almost died
then recovered
wilted again
blossomed again and so

it went on through many years . . .

two years ago I wrote this line:
sitting here on the warm beach in Hawaii
there is winter in my heart -

today experiencing joy and healing
friendship beauty sharing
I am writing:
sitting here on the cold beach of Puget Sound
there is spring in my heart

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