

"Words' Worth" Poetry Readings

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

What's Dangerous About Plumbing by Frances McCue

For weeks, that waterline
held gravity's wings
and refused to leave
the ceiling for the floor.
Above, I walked the edges of my rooms.
What would it take to torque
the thing? One loose doorbell,
some plant's twitch? All dangers
smooth as- imagine the silt
once the flood soaked the silt
The wires, hanging ready,
urge the pipe to drop;
they'll need only one wet spark. I could have fixed it then:
the girl who loosened everything,
saw pipes and fiddled with the bolts. Nothing
scared me when I crawled
under the sinks, climbed ladders;
I'd hitch the pipe up and go heavy through the house.
The problem here I think
is knowing how the pipe will blow
ahead of time- there's no time
to get the tools. Uneven currents
crackle through the walls
as the pipe meanders
under the floorboards, drips.
Comes the moment when I wish it would flip
it shackles, give the house a shudder, let me fire up
the pumps, and splash by splash,
go headlong, then recover.

Doctor Doctor by Frances McCue

When sleep is sultry, harn-hock swear
to nose and mouth, the surgeon in insomnia sets
she bones- work endowed by human rumblings
folding in armless and enormous. He's never lost
a patient, even with pills. Without
a white coat, but sporting wing tips
dusty as cats, the surgeon jolts

ahead, keeping the patient wide-eyed.
Raid on the bedclothes, he stirs this woman
awake: Turn up the heat. Chug the wind.
But who keep the surgeon up, alert and sinewy?
Untimely precession- a graveyard shift dismantling
sleep with such clear slices: wake wake wake-up
This is a house call. We're losing time.

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