

"Words' Worth" Poetry Readings

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

Grapefruit in Greenland by John Olson

Art is not difficult because it wishes
to be difficult but because it wishes
to be a gorgeous energy or hardware

versatile as either. Blood is not difficult because
it circulates the body but because it promulgates the nose
perpetuates the arteries & predicates a pilgrimage

for antihistamine. Antihistamine is not difficult antihistamine
desires only the reduction of histamine, the indulgent
muscles of summer lifting the wings of a watercolor

chicken into a metaphor for wood. There are things
in music we will never understand. Why for instance
is the minor sad and the major glad? Music is not difficult

because it chooses to be amphibious but because it pastes
transcendence to the moccasins of the gritty Mississippi
night. The judgment of taste is therefore not a judgment

but a mineral with water running down its sides
& a bald man in a beige nylon jacket carrying a green umbrella
up & down the streets of Pascagoula revising the darkness

with a flashlight. Life is not difficult because it chooses to be
flamboyant but because it overlaps the contradictory predicates
of possibility sewn to the sleeves of oblivion like the ocean

waves breaking into a cogent pandemonium. Each phrase
is an experiment in small balls of water called bubbles, bulbous
universals of foam. Les tonnerres d'applaudissements ebranlent

les voutes de l'immense salle de spectacle. Choose to be difficult.
Do not choose to be difficult because you choose to be artless & broad as a paragraph
of steam. Air goes in, air goes out. Thought is not difficult
because it chooses to be tubuliflorous or real or considerable
but because it expressed digestion as digits & digits as indigestible

with a conical bore & a double reed mouthpiece. The fascination
with what's difficult is difficult to explain. It will mesmerize like a
crab
cooked in a court-bouillon or tantalize like a truffle soufflŽ or formula

for glue. It will harbor irresolution where there was a calm
& follow rumor & conversation to the ends of the earth on the basis
of a clue. If there is a fascination with what's difficult it must begin

with fruit. With a large sour fruit. With grapefruit. With growing

grapefruit in Greenland. If there is a fascination with what's
difficult
it is grapefruit. It is grapefruit in Greenland. In
Greenland.

If is grapefruit. It is Greenland. It is growing grapefruit in
Greenland.

I believe there is a sonata that addresses this in certitudes of blue

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