

## "Words' Worth" Poetry Readings

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

### **The Angels** by Judith Roche

are not like the Saints.

They do not discriminate  
but come to everyone.

Their eyes burn green fire  
but their kisses are icy.

They can play rough when we get caught  
in the heavy crosswinds that swirl about their wings.

They are not above artifice  
and sometimes appear in disguise:

a mask of smeared lipstick, gypsy  
bangles, or an old man's coat.

Sometimes they carelessly give us gifts:  
an unexpected hobbyhorse, a day's free babysitting,

a poke in the eye with a stick,  
or sudden slant of light on water.

And we are grateful, once we figure out how  
to move within their state of complex blessings.

They work within great wheels and circles,  
turning into dark and back again

They do not obey the laws of gravity  
but laugh a lot and arise at will

to hover like vast hummingbirds  
when we require attention.

What they want of us is the mysterious secret  
we unravel and reweave

down into dark and back again.

### **Marie Antoinette's Last Supper** by Judith Roche

I wanted to give them cake for a treat  
Now my jailers force it upon me.  
It sticks in my throat.  
Tomorrow they will cut off my head.

Now my jailers force it upon me,  
making coarse jokes about foie gras.

Tomorrow they will cut off my head.  
Once I played at being a simple goose girl.

Making coarse jokes about foie gras  
they tell me how the masses didn't have bread.  
Once I played a simple goose girl,  
Tonight they pull my hair and force my mouth open.

Now they tell me the masses didn't have bread  
but no one told me when I was Queen.  
They pull my hair and force my mouth open.  
I tried to make a simple beauty in the midst of opulence  
did not include real hunger

It sticks in my throat  
how the babies and grandmas became borne.  
I wanted to give them cake for a treat.  
I did not know about real hunger.

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