

Seattle City Council

Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee Meeting

2 p.m. Wednesday, July 10th, 2013

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Judith Roche**

Today's poet is **Judith Roche**

Judith Roche is the author of three poetry collections, most recently, *Wisdom of the Body*. Black Heron Press, and editor of *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*, are both American Book Award recipients. She has poems installed in several Seattle area permanent public arts pieces. She was a Distinguished Northwest Writer at Seattle University, is past Literary Arts Director for One Reel, and a Fellow in the Black Earth Institute.

Metaphors of Dust

By Judith Roche

"We are stardust. We are golden." Joni Mitchell

As it turns out, we actually are stardust.
I thought it was a metaphor
of life and space and time.
Apparently, our materials are 13 million years old.
We are star stuff pondering the story
told in the life of the stars.

Our ancestors include imploded stars-
they are with us now, our dust,
we but continue the story
as additions, epilogues, a metaphor
for all that's been in this old
galaxy, the gravity of time .

Big balls of burning light and time
says the website of the stars.
How many millions of years old?
And we are made of all that dust
I can hardly tell now, what is *not* metaphor
and, literally, the story behind the story.

We are stardust pondering our own story.
We are spirit and story and caught in time
of existence as metaphor—
for what? That we are stars
and, like stars, will become dust
when we die old?

But it's so old,
this grand, often told story—
that we are dust and return to dust—
We are an instance of star in story
of rocks, glaciers, carbon-based creatures, stars.
We become the metaphor

and in this metaphor
we are all old
souls, stuff of ancient stars
singing our story
and whatever it says
about our mixture of spirit and dust.

We are the metaphor for the story
old souls swirling in the wind tunnel of time,
spirit and star and dust.

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