

Seattle City Council

Culture, Civil Rights, Health and Personnel Committee Meeting

2:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 8th, 2009

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Donna Miscolta**

Today's poet is **Donna Miscolta**

Donna Miscolta has been a resident at Hedgebrook, the writing retreat for women, and is the 2009 curator for the Jack Straw Writers Program, which showcases the work of Pacific Northwest writers. Donna's fiction has appeared in a number of journals including *Raven Chronicles*, *New Millennium Writings*, and *Calyx*, and has been aired on public radio. She was the 2008 recipient of the Bread Loaf/Rona Jaffe Foundation Scholarship in Fiction, was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize, has been awarded an Artist Trust Fellowship as well as literary grants from 4Culture and Seattle City Artists.

Talent Night

by Donna Miscolta

After the rush for seats, when a gaggle of tripods, necks craned,
line the aisles, and the red eyes of cameras
blink their readiness in the dimmed
auditorium, the spotlight circles the fifth-grade emcee,
who tests the microphone
with a knock-knock joke.

Satisfied, he signals the curtain to open
on the first act. A tiny girl, someone's child,
perches on a stool, squeaks a song off note,
is gently cued by the audience when she forgets the words.

Then the applause, its surge and roll,
moves like a single-celled organism, elemental and enduring,
gathering momentum
for the thirty-nine acts to go.

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