

Seattle City Council

Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee Meeting

3 p.m. Friday, January 29th 2009

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Priya Keefe**

Today's poet is **Priya Keefe**

Priya Keefe Priya Keefe entered life through the door of the Pike Place Market. Her work has been published in *qarrtsiluni*, *Pontoon 7*, *Metro Poetry Buses*, and *Drash*. Performances include the Bumbershoot festival and Bart Baxter Poetry in Performance. Last fall, she taught a poetry class at Seattle Central Community College. This July, she will graduate with an MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College.

Travelogue

By Priya Keefe

At the bus stop
a diminutive elderly black lady and I speak
about how nice it is to see the sun,
had the #8 come yet?, her grandson
who plays for the NBA in Georgia.
We board the bus, a sea of life.
A young man gets up
to offer his seat at the front (good boy).
In evening hours, the bus is heavy
with its load. Passengers on their way
home stand and sit and lean.
They talk and stare and
nod off. Some are plugged in and tuned out.
Business woman reads the newspaper: headlines
still harbor hate, but no more than the heart.
Old man reads the bible:
eye for an eye, love thy neighbor
you shall have no other gods, turn the other cheek.
A woman in headscarf asks for help finding an address.

Two men converse quietly in Spanish
near an entire family in fleece and Gor-Tex.
A smelly drunk starts an altercation at the back of the bus.
Chinese grandma carts home groceries.
Loud lady blares her cellphone laugh.
A young woman generalizes about people while
announcing she is not a racist.
People jostle south west north east.
Lanky obese lame athletic veterans school kids 30-
somethings yuppies junkies blind middle class homeless
construction workers elderly babies
hikers bikers Boeing strikers
immigrants natives locals many ethnicities.
Oct 13, 2008, 4:21 pm – people's heads are filled
with grocery lists quarrels loneliness what she said
remission midterms minimum wage razor's edge
sending money home the last one they took to bed
ballroom dancing the one who got away
is 9 too early to go to bed?
sapphire saxophone a toddler's arms
the 49th casualty of today's suicide bomb
the next cigarette
our first black presidential nominee
two more weeks til I can buy a jeep
Thunderbird tuna casserole
hell, even poetry.
Perhaps no one considers a ghost
gone 50 years,
a sign near the driver: White Front. Colored Rear.
People shift and cough and sigh at the end of their days. Feet hurt.
The bus lumbers on, carrying people toward shelter,
along many anticipated stops,
with miles to go before we sleep.

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