

Seattle City Council

Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee Meeting

2 p.m. Wednesday, April 11th, 2012

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Sibyl James**

Today's poet is **Ann Spiers**

Poet **Ann Spiers** grew up in Seattle on Capitol Hill, her family being part of the post-WWII generation of large families. Presently, she is privileged to be involved with her grandchildren in Columbia City. She earned a BA and Master Degree in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Washington. Her poems appear in *The Raven Chronicles*, *Fine Madness*, *Seattle Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Pontoon* and other local journals. Her collections are in chapbooks, small-press publications. They include *What Rain Does* (Egress Studio Press, Bellingham); *The Herodotus Poems* (Brooding Heron Press, Waldron Island); and letterpress editions *Volcano Blue*, *A Wild Taste*, and *Tide Turn* (May Day Press, Shelton). She is present Poet Laureate of Vashon Island. She leads writing workshops in many venues from colleges to grade schools, from community centers to writing festivals. She volunteers for projects that focus on the environment.

TO AN INFANT

The bright light settles you
out here on the porch, glassed in.
I hold you,
your arms and legs tucked
to your chest as if in the womb.
I show you what is out there,
what's down those steps.

To the left,
the park where you will ride your bike
popping wheelies in the grass, rutting the green,
and you will pump the swings aloft,
someday launching yourself.

Straight ahead,

the lake where salmon still migrate
from the ocean to spawn, to die.
In late Augusts, you will swim,
dive for dimes and come up shiny and wet.
You will watch girls' dark cleavages deepen,
and you will dance as their breasts lift.

And at the hill's mid rise,
the school, its new bricks covering old stone.
Teachers pile up your notebooks, full and heavy.
Kids fill the rooms with the ricochet
of so many languages spoken
in this neighborhood, blocks of houses
and lawns and sidewalks and street lamps.
Your language will be English, Thai, Spanglish,
hiphop, Somalian, Chechan, Mandarin, Rez
—a mix native to you and your friends.

But for years,
after you learn to walk,
you will come home each night,
up these stairs, for a while,
to touch your mother's shoulder,
and at the dinner table, you will edge
your father over a little more each night.

For awhile you will, that is;
then you will walk away, and I will
remember for you, this moment,
on the porch, and you in my arms
wrapped so tight, and the east sun
brightening your space here.

End.