

Seattle City Council

**Public Safety, Government Relations, and Arts Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, 2:00 PM, March 21, 2006

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Jeannette Allée**

Today's poet is **Joshua Beckman**

**Joshua Beckman** is the author of five books of poetry, including *Shake* and two collaborations with Matthew Rohrer: *Nice Hat. Thanks.* and *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty*. He is an editor at Wave Books based in NY and Seattle and has translated numerous works of poetry and prose, including *Poker* by Tomaz Salamun, which was a finalist for the PEN America Poetry in Translation Award. Mr. Beckman is the recipient of numerous other awards, including a Pushcart Prize.

**Unslide the Door**

by Joshua Beckman

Unslide the door,  
uncap the lazy little coffee cup.  
The pasty people must be part of the dinner.  
And a city turns its incapacity in,  
foolish city. She was naked  
and her halo all crushed against  
the pillow while she slept, but I  
didn't care. Wake and totter.  
Place a hand over your mouth,  
a hand over another.  
A killing pain, a bag all organized,  
an inch of skin along your leg.  
It's like they kept making babies  
and stopped making baby whistles.  
Doable, yes, but here they  
teach us something different.  
It's a battery. It's a garden.  
The glass box in which the lettuce grew  
was broken by nasty raccoons  
and we turned the other cheek.

The sun does rise and melt the frost,  
the frost in little drops does fill  
the empty lettuce, and in this way  
the world is truly nourished.

No incredible silence, no  
intangible calorie, just  
bad raccoon in a good world.  
Just coverless table and  
silent drape awaiting breakfast.  
Imagine how mean people  
can be in dreams, and how  
kind sleeping seems later.

-- *end* --