

Seattle City Council

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

Friday, 2:00 PM, January 5, 2007

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Jeannette Allée**

Today's poet is **Jeannette Allée**

Jeannette Allée is a recipient of a 4Culture grant, an Artist Trust grant, finalist for the 2005 Iowa Review Award for poetry, and winner of the Richard Hugo House New Works competition. Her poetry is forthcoming or has appeared in *The Iowa Review*, *FIELD*, *Fence*, *Gulf Coast*, *RHINO*, *The Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Atlanta Review*, and *Pontoon: an anthology of Washington State poets*. Additionally, she has written and performed social critique monologues in venues throughout the NW including On the Boards, Theatre Off Jackson, and the Vancouver Fringe Festival. She recently completed her poetry manuscript, "Eunuchs on their Lunch Hour" and is seeking a publisher.

**Tranquillissimo**

by Jeannette Allée

after Henryk Górecki's *Symphony No. 3, Op. 36, Sorrowful Songs*

February, and the enemy is lifting me  
Lowering my body into this gouged grave  
Hewn with calamity.  
Mother, I am flooded with  
*You'll never know where I am buried.*  
Do not weep for me.  
From down here I watch the winds stir  
Through the ceiling of leaves  
Cathedraline trees  
Stainedglass shafts  
Fond bending  
Tranquility.  
First shovelful of soil comes over me

lace veil  
black

coffee  
fresh grounds  
falling

Into the percolator of your warm kitchen  
Yeast sweet buns goldening the oven.  
We sit again at the cherry bing'd tablecloth  
Window ablaze with cockcrow.  
We're always asking  
How does this happen  
The discarding of humans?  
The question—academic, bureaucratic—as rote as the answer.  
Mother, they never knew you, never felt your hands  
So dearly veined and sure upon them.  
You have loved me to the bone  
And soon the mineraling begins.  
We fallen, we inhabit this earth otherwise  
Drink deeply from below.  
Look—that's me, that's us—  
Thrusting supple, viridescently upward  
Willing sun slantwise through the blades of our being.  
See that vivid patch of late afternoon grass?  
Alive—our belief spreading—

-- end --