

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Government Relations, and Arts Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2:00 PM, April 3, 2007

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Brian McGuigan**

Today's poet is **John Burgess**

John Burgess grew up in upstate New York, worked on a survey crew in Montana, taught English in Japan and now lives and works in Seattle. He's a 2006 Jack Straw writer and co-founder of Washington Poets Association's Burning Word festival. His first book is *Punk Poems* from Ravenna Press (2005).

There is no myth in his life

By John Burgess

For 5 blocks he wonders how the elk got there. The only way into the city from the mountains is Interstate 90 so he guesses they took the commuter lane. Rode someone's bumper all the way to town. Used their antlers as horns. When he spots them they're grazing the green belt at the north end of the community college. His peripheral vision catches the sandy brown of elk hide against the row of poplar trees that buffers traffic noise. They're chewing as if counting to 15 before swallowing. Everything else rushes by too fast to notice the care they're taking. In fact by the time he stops at the traffic light just 5 blocks away he's no longer sure he even saw elk.

-- end --