

## "Words' Worth" Poetry Readings

Poets at the Culture, Arts, and Parks Committee of the Seattle City Council.

### **Forensic Love** By Dave Caserio

I can see it now. I will be unearthed--  
Another nameless coffin in an overcrowded world,  
in 2098--and they will jettison me, ninety-two million  
Eight hundred and twenty-seven thousand miles  
Beneath the sun, unto the eternal revolving wheel:  
Bin of old bones, that once in vacuum will never die  
But spin in contrapuntal harmony with the moon.  
Dark sister may she last, watching as I watch  
Whatever earth, with each unfutile spring, may bring  
Again: great gray heron rising from pure blue of water  
Out over mist and reeds, or red wing blackbird, first seed  
And thorn, or Copernicus to tell us he was wrong--  
That the human heart and not the sun  
Marks the center, the doorway, to life.  
So perhaps this end will not be the end.  
But nicked by a meteor, thrown by its wake,  
This old jangle and clank of bones  
With their endless code of once living  
Cells of experience will, as a wolf howl  
Or a vowel will, without the consonant of things,  
Drift toward the vast outer unknown...  
Unlured by Saturn, uninjured by the sun,  
Able to miss each wandering asteroid  
As ancestors, sister and brother of my uncle  
Joe Vazzetti--long may his gold tooth gleam  
--did not. For in a moment of singing they failed  
To miss and travel on their way, a careening  
Drunk one night on a mountainside road in Italy.  
And before bursting in smithereens, they went  
Screaming into flames. But I will last until I last,  
Bump up and nuzzle the nose of another someone  
Who, in whatever form, will pluck me from the deep.  
Mystery or fraud, I will be as Lucy from Olduvai Gorge,  
Piltdown Man, mask of Agamemnon or whatever, hunkered  
Unknown, daubed a bison's soul in primordial light of Lascaux.  
Here the kneebone slipped the femur; the tibia twisted away;  
The shin scraped and the toe cracked. But not the how or why.  
Not the song. Not that I was drunk and spinning on one leg and whirling  
As if it were a stick of fire above my head a cherry-red, feedback  
Engorged, eight-stringed electric bass guitar that yowled and  
Screeched, shrieked as shrieking cats in heat or wild Picts  
At Hadrian's wall, when I tripped and fell and broke my damn knee.  
So perhaps bit by bit, those that discover me  
Will come to know what fragrance lies unbloomed?  
What Bushman chant or Ibo tongue?  
What vanished larynx of Sioux?  
What grief Ekindu underneath?

Upanishad, or Andromache at the wall?  
Odysseus before the blood?  
Or Gullah, Geechee, a south side jive?  
What palaver we, as humans are,  
That lingers in these bones.

This page was last updated: January 8, 2000