

## "Words' Worth" Poetry Readings

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

### **Get To Know Your Jacket** by Murray Gordon

Reach into the closet for your jacket  
and grasp the collar which was sewn on by  
Nan. She has a quota of twenty-eight  
dozen per day. Thrust a hand into one  
sleeve and twist the other hand into the  
second one. They were set by Sideth and  
immediately after topstitched by  
Chong. Their machines are adjacent but they  
are not allowed to speak to each other  
for forty hours a week, fifty-two  
weeks a year. Smooth the jacket around you  
torso. Larita bodyseamed it for  
you. She's been doing that job for more than  
fifteen years breathing in lint all that time.

That the left and right fronts of your jacket  
should match, Khamdy personally took a  
marking pencil and marked your zipper at  
the neck, yoke and waistband. Last year, she set  
61,405  
front zippers. The pocket welts were cut by  
Eulalia who stands on her feet for  
eight hours a day at the Reece machine.  
The pocket zippers were set by Honee  
who is so good that you will never  
see a pucker at the corners because  
she must make repairs on her own time. When  
you put your keys, comb and change into  
the pockets, you can do so with confidence.  
They won't fall through because Jojo is the  
pocket bagger. She is so fast that it  
isn't necessary for her to think  
anymore. William cut out the pattern -  
360 ply. There is  
not a moment anymore when he does  
not hear the buzz of the cutting machines.

Pauline supervised the sewing line. They  
gave her a raise, put her on salary  
and now they don't have to pay her over-  
time when the plant works on Saturdays. George  
is the owner. He comes in late and leaves  
early, takes two hour lunches and he  
does not know the names of any workers.

Your jacket comes as an experienced  
traveler. Ordered in Seattle from  
a catalogue company in Maine, the

fabric was shipped from a Massachusetts  
mill to the contractor in Seattle,  
reshipped to a subcontractor in North  
Carolina, sewn there and reshipped back  
to Seattle to be inspected, tagged  
and bagged, reshipped to Maine and then shipped to  
your home address in Seattle. When you  
wear the jacket no one will be able  
to see any of this. What they will see  
on the left front is a small label with  
the name of a dead man woven on it

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