

"Words' Worth" Poetry Readings

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

Sonnets for the **Arctic Rose** by Bart Baxter

1.

There is no Robert Foreman in the crew,
or Michael Neureiter, or David Whitton,
and it was only later that we knew
their names, the immigrants, the ones who'd written
the bogus resuŕŽs, the ones who'd spent
their life savings on phony documents,
the ones who'd sent their money home, they went
to sea, and Alejandro's brother, since
he has a job already working for
the Mariners cleaning the stadium
after the baseball games, and since he swore
he'd try to help his younger sisters come
to Washington, makes up his mind to stay
in hopes he'll see Edgar Martinez play.

2.

Imagine how the Arctic Rose rides high
without her catch. The skies are lost in thought
tonight, and Austreberto wonders why
he was so apprehensive. Having fought
the first two weeks to keep his dinner down,
now he can eat a little, read, and play
some cards, and how could anybody drown
with so many survival suits, the gray
inflatables, and so much family
around? Now Austreberto's only fears
are not about the weather, but if he
can work the Arctic Rose for two more years
(enough to put some money on a car)
and how his mother and his daughter are.

3.

A Navy plane from Whidbey Island lands
somewhere in China, and the Mariners
play Oakland Opening Night. Hush! The stands
are empty. North of St. Paul something stirs
along a sandy ridge where flathead sole
and yellowfin converge. Only a light
breeze blows. The Arctic Rose begins to roll.
Remember, Jimmie Conrad was the night
assistant manager at Little Park
in Spanaway. They say he was a fine
young man. But there is something in the dark
that waits for him: maybe a tangled line,

maybe the ice, maybe the nets. On shore,
the Mariners beat Oakland 5 to 4.

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