

Seattle City Council

Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee Meeting

2 p.m. Wednesday, September 11th, 2013

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Judith Roche**

Today's poet is **Paul Nelson**

Paul Nelson's research on a process perspective in poetics, [Organic Poetry](#), extends the work of poets like Robert Duncan and Denise Levertov and his daily practice of writing an [American Sentence](#) has taken a form Allen Ginsberg created to new levels. His own poetry extends the North American West Coast tradition of the serial poem with the well-regarded book [A Time Before Slaughter](#) and the work in progress [Pig War & Other Songs of Cascadia](#).

Periphery

by Paul Nelson

We would fly
right out of Shakespeare's pages & find a bath in which
to go into a trance, maybe ant ourselves w/ a caught
ant
or splash of vodka, vinegar
speaking
the name Mortimer, metallic are we tearing about the sky
above the city that feeds us, splitting in two
connecting by a field, or a membrane, or a star force, vulgar
our last name, but darkening the sky like an
avian motorway, funnel cloud above looking for bugs
roosting in a masculine perch, shoving off
the females and adolescents. Zinnias tower above us.
Unafraid of the hawk or eagle in bunches would scare
Hitchcock
shitless here we are
only understanding each other, borg-like in our power
of the collective.
With a taste for cherries and daytime dragonflies becoming one
with that celestial tone we learn to mimic
and the needles that feed us, & fix our flow, help us to celebrate
and remember. Take a picture of this she chirps

and the flock advances, escapes, goes as far west as possible, into
direction of ancestors
is it they making our cues? Is it we tuned in to a field that's
occupied
by someone from another dimension?
Is it black cod barely cooked through, or goat cheese followed
by sake? Are we remembering all this or is it
another inspired improvisation? This city of our heart does
grow
smaller. Diminishes before our peripheral vision.
Becomes a blur when I focus on your skin, or your exotic
plumage.
And I grow into you, protect you from every predator, beckon
prophets, bird baths and real estate angels and
somehow
somehow, we never collide.
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