

Seattle City Council

**Finance and Culture Committee Meeting**

2 p.m. Wednesday, January 14, 2015

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Sierra Nelson**

Today's poet is **Ann Teplick**

**Ann Teplick** is a Seattle poet, playwright, prose writer, and teaching artist, who received her MFA in creative writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts. She writes with youth at Seattle Children's Hospital, through Writers in the Schools; Child Study Treatment Center (the Washington state psychiatric hospital), through Pongo Teen Writing; and Coyote Central, an arts program for middle-school students in Seattle's Central District. She's received funding from Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, 4Culture, Artist Trust, and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. She is currently working on a collection of poems, called *Snapped into Fractions*, about her fourteen years writing poetry with youth who experience significant mental health challenges. She is also curating two poetry readings and facilitating a poetry workshop as part of the art exhibit *The Incredible Intensity of Just Being Human: De-stigmatizing Mental Illness*, which recently opened at Seattle City Hall, and runs through February 27.

**BLESSING COMPLEXITY**

Ann Teplick

When the voices in your head slit neuron after neuron into frays that crave AWOL

When the days are a cesspool

When your skin unzips, a little too punctured, fissured, and chafed

When lava creeps from lymph

When you dangle the guppies, then swallow

When Mahalo's your tongue, when you pray for the hooligan, rogue, when you steel your toes into foam, how far will you go? This ocean of rope, razor, and pill.

When marimba, xylophone, vibraphone

When you snap into fractions—neck at the cervical, chest at thoracic, low back at lumbar, pelvic at sacral. Carpels, patellas, tarsals.

When TseTse flies panic, data that's frantic, the scent of hemlock, that's when you scatter, that's when you gather your halogen, tungsten, filament bolder than incandescence

When 2,000 hours equal your lifelong

When extra blessings—the perennial vest of citron, acacia, and goldenrod nest you

When peacocks are the halos that bless you

When blessings, blessings, blessings

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