

Seattle City Council

**Culture, Civil Rights, Health and Personnel Committee Meeting**

2:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Felicia Gonzalez**

Today's poet is **Felicia Gonzalez**

**Felicia Gonzalez** was born and raised in Cuba. An alumna of Hedgebrook Writers Retreat (February 1998 and February 2007) and Jack Straw Writers Program, she is a recipient of a 2007 Artist Trust/Washington State Arts Commission Fellowship. In 2006, she was awarded an individual artists grant from the Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs for the chapbook, *Recollection Graffiti*. Currently she is working on a collection of interrelated short stories, *Swimming in Mercury*, supported by a 2008 4Culture Individual Artist award. These stories explore how one attaches not only great fondness but also great meaning to the artifacts (photographs, keepsakes, clothing, and even stories) that thread and bind us to the culture we are afraid of losing.

**Ngapandie**

by Felicia Gonzalez

*(Ngapandie is a word from the Mazatec language of the indigenous people of Oaxaca in southern Mexico, meaning world in the sense of "in this world" or "in this life")*

I cleared the kitchen table  
set out the red bowls  
with the incised pattern

poured strong coffee into one  
poured honey into the other

I sat and waited for appetite  
remembering the unwilling anticipation of having  
my second ear pierced when barely one week old

poured my thoughts into the brilliant pressed gold

of my grandmother's earrings

let slip this thread of memory from her hands,  
through my mother's,  
into mine

I drank the coffee and whispered into the bowl with honey  
that it would have to swallow the bitterness

-- *end* --