

Seattle City Council

Public Safety Civil Rights and Arts Committee

Tuesday, 2 PM, April 6th, 2004

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Terrilynn Towns**

Today's Words' Worth poet is **Ms. Olive Larson**

At 86, Olive Larson is an artist, gardener, world traveler, collector and avid book reader in QueenAnne. She has four children, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Olive was born in Wanganui and raised in Wellington, New Zealand. She worked at the US Headquarters of the South Pacific in 1943 when she met Stanley Larson, an active US soldier whom she saw as "a bag of bones and a hank of hair" at first sight. Now some sixty anniversaries later she remembers her wedding day.

Wellington Wedding '43
by **Olive Larson**

You stand between two friends
Face luminescent pale beneath
A Guadalcanal tan. A long
Unknown aisle divides us.

Gothic beams
Hewn from giant kauris
Backdrop stability to empty choir pews.

Stained-glass windows
Cascade rainbows of color on Dean
And the Marine Corp chaplain.

Friends fill the cathedral.
"Know a man for four seasons"
My father used to say
But not for us the leisure
Of summer courting days.
My love I hardly know you.

Will there be time
Before the red blood of your life
Mingles with unknown jungle ooze?

Green slipper orchids quiver
Among cool maidenhair.
And icy palm, a small bouquet
I feel my father's arm gentling
Down the aisle to the dark blue
Of Nordic eyes and an impeccable uniform
On a body already ravaged
By steamy months of fight.

My hand in yours is warmed.
The binding words surround us.
But do I know you?

The signing done
Now we are man and wife
"For richer or poorer
In sickness and in health
Till death do us part."

Time
Is all we ask.
But you are gone by dawn
And cannot say
Where
Or when
Or if we meet again.

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