

Seattle City Council

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

2:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Donna Miscolta**

Today's poet is **Kim-An Lieberman**

**Kim-An Lieberman** holds a Ph.D. in English, specializing in Vietnamese American literature, from the University of California, Berkeley. Her poems and essays have appeared in Poetry Northwest, Prairie Schooner, Quarterly West, ZYZZYVA, CALYX, Threepenny Review, and the anthology Asian America.Net: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Cyberspace. Currently a faculty member at Seattle's Lakeside School, she has taught writing and liberal arts at every level from 5th grade through college. Her first book, *Breaking the Map*, was published by Blue Begonia Press in 2008.

**Breaking the Map**

by Kim-An Lieberman

They began with a giant carbide rip saw at the designated parallel.  
The course was fibrous and deeply stratified.  
The first mile took fifteen days.  
Little bits of rock slid from the selvages.  
Rivers, disconnected, spurted erratically from both ends.  
For railways and telephone lines, specialists were consulted.  
Luckily, no mountains.  
The project was broadcast live on national radio.  
Helicopters buzzed constantly overhead.  
Local hardware stores donated tools by the truckload.  
Workers hoisted crowbars, jackhammers, pickaxes, grappling hooks.  
Entire villages volunteered.  
Children distributed free lemonade.  
Grandparents stationed lawn chairs on either side.  
As the gap unzipped, landowners on the divide had to think fast.  
Brothers tossed coins for the better half.  
Lovers hopped across together, discarding their old lives.  
Airlines held last-minute lotteries.

At the terminus, an official ceremony with golden hammers.  
A thunderclap tore through the completed chasm.  
Startled, those remaining on the edges waved a mechanical goodbye.  
*-- end --*