

Seattle City Council

**Culture, Civil Rights, Health and Personnel Committee Meeting**  
2:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Donna Miscolta**

Today's poet is **Angela Martinez Dy**

**Angela Martinez Dy** is a poet and spoken word artist, educator and activist, organizer and emcee. At age fifteen, she was a member of isangmahal arts kollektive, and since then, has been instrumental in the development of a generation of Seattle poets. A founding member and director of Youth Speaks Seattle, the Northwest's premier youth literary arts organization, and 6-time coach of the Seattle Youth Poetry Slam Team, which regularly ranks among the nation's top ten, Angela has performed and taught creative writing at venues nationwide. Thousands have felt the impact of her unflinching truths, intricate verses, and willingness to write about topics too often overlooked. She also performs under the name El Dia, and is part of the Filipina hip-hop duo 1st Quarter Storm.

**Human Causes**

by Angela Martinez Dy

In the 1970s  
they dropped the news  
like bombs over Baghdad  
before too long  
the earth will burn  
Scientists were countered and silenced  
the phrase "global warming" erased  
in official documents

Today the earth suffocates  
in swirling clouds of carbon dioxide  
the feeling's familiar  
asthmatic since the age of three  
when I would choke on my own breath  
mom would hook me to the ventilator  
but there's no solution like that for our planet  
no giant ventilator in the sky to steal from its orbit  
nor can we stop the Earth's spinning  
long enough to place the mask over her gorgeous,

cloud-covered face

a quarter of all children in Harlem have asthma  
This is Homeland Security's most significant breach yet

Hurricane season a-comin  
Climatologists have made their findings  
yet their hands are tied  
the US never ratified Kyoto  
and now that the protocol's past outdated  
the temperature is rising  
and secondhand smoke will kill  
more than a million species in our ecosystem  
we will be extinct  
how much more serious must this get  
and why are the deciders  
gone golfing  
?

Question: What is the difference  
between affect and effect?  
Answer: the global poor, those whom  
warming oceans and changing winds  
will affect most and those  
who had the least effect  
on the current ecological situation

how can we undo  
this Gunner's knot?  
    global warming tied to a global war  
    bred on black gold  
    and white ego  
yet we still pump  
by the gallon, with abandon  
acting like there's a lot to waste  
environmental consciousness must be raised

so stop playing naïve  
recycle like your life depends on it  
recycle because your life depends on it

if we promote only the use of renewable energy,  
force the automobile industry  
to cap emissions and rethink its greed  
the survival of the planet becomes  
a commercial priority.  
for an uninhabitable world  
can buy and sell  
nothing.

Some experts suggest  
more highway tolls, but let's hit  
the American people where it will  
hurt the most. Ask Fox News to  
disable the use of MySpace,  
cancel American Idol  
and every single NASCAR race  
until the CO2 emissions rate  
drops 75% or more.

the levels are rising every day

the tides are rising too  
melting ice sheets are predicted  
to increase sea level a half meter  
in this century alone.  
coral reefs will be forced  
to give up the ghost  
we both thrive at the sea's surface  
but the new depths may drown them  
with our hopes

if there is any chance of salvation  
to be had in legislation  
let it not be our last resort.

-- end --