

## Ravi Shankar

### *Pike Place*

Under a gray fine as sand grains  
Puget Sound sounds astound  
no one for the crowd is pressed

against the gills of a fish stall  
rapt at sinewy young mongers  
tossing carp, filleting them

with an efficiency of motion,  
doling out coral nubs of salmon  
jerky to a sea of flailing hands,

wisecracking the entire time,  
minor stars in their own minds.  
Throughout labyrinthine arcades

in Seattle's oldest market, edibles  
are treated like art objects:  
rows of mussels iridescent in ice,

bell peppers near neon spilling  
carefully over wooden bushels,  
uncapped jars of jalapeno jam

framed by sprigs of rosemary,  
but I wonder how many remember  
Executive Order 9066, what FDR

signed after Pearl Harbor, leading  
to the internment of over a hundred  
thousand Japanese-Americans,

many of whom owned fish stalls  
in this very market, had to sell out  
at month's notice to middlemen,

for a fraction of their worth?  
Families brush past me, beaming,  
the snap and pop of grocery sacks

against their backs overwritten  
by covers some street musician  
I cannot see wails on a sax.

Outside, below the market, ferries  
stream in and out of Elliot Bay,  
trim, white, heavily-manned vessels

surrounded by swooping, swiveling  
gulls that mooch whatever they can.  
I haven't seen a single Asian all day.