

by CHRISTIE ANN REYNOLDS

'O Public' considers the public and private actions that we as (public) citizens encounter in our daily (public and private) lives. I'm intrigued by the ironic implications of the everyday world that require public citizens to have to strive to live very private lives and vice versa. This is the same experience one will find say, while going to a private university but finding one self in a very public predicament concerning student loans, library collections, parking spaces, etc. I've also always been curious about those private driveways at the outskirts of my public suburban neighborhood... Although this specific idea does not appear in the poem, it still contributes in some way to the situations in the poem. My poem basically faces off between my own experience growing up in the media-inflated generation and for the very public fight for private knowledge and experience to stay private as well as the exploitation of public (and private) property.

O Public

My very private hair swaying in the breeze of a public fan.
How all my public problem(s) are kept very private. All our public people in their private cars on public roads. The headlines: Public throws bananas at private cage of endangered orangutans! Private eye files suit for soup spill In La-di-da restaurant! (La-di-da restaurant very private but open to the public at lunchtime.) On my public lunchtime hour I drive a private car to the private university being paid for by public dollars. I read very private collections of books in a campus-wide public library. Slip into silk gloves and turn the pages of public Bibles from their private shelves. I rinse my face in the public restroom—private to one sex and one

sex only (sometimes.) In the evening I sip coffee in a public waiting area of the train station and think privately to myself. All my private parts completely public when it comes down to it—all public to the Man's private staff. My private taxes paying for public people to piss in public corners or puke on public curbs. I exclaim: O holy dollar, O public law-making mouths, O public school-educated girls and boys, O critical mass of public companies in search of private investors, I invite you into my bedroom! Watch me sleep—broadcast publicly and nationally—fully syndicate the breathing patterns of my mouth and privately consider my dreaming, O peaceful dreaming state. It will be the only real living record, the only time we can publicly be alone.