

ENGL 3000  
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THEMATIC INQUIRY 2 - SUSAN MUSGRAVE'S "HIDDEN MEANING"

(In class)

Below, you will find a poem by the Canadian writer Susan Musgrave (1951-). As we did with Bukowski's "the trash men," I would like you to do the following:

- List at least *three* features of the poem that you believe are important to a discussion of the poem's meaning. Check to see if any of your features fall into the categories we used when discussing Bukowski's poem.

Susan Musgrave  
Hidden Meaning (1991)

Imagine hailing a taxi  
and the driver is a poet.  
You could say, "Tell me a poem  
and take me to Costa Rica."  
5 As you drive away.

Imagine getting into a taxi  
where the driver is a real poet.  
You could quote Robert Penn Warren<sup>o</sup>  
without feeling ridiculous: "Driver,  
10 do you truly, truly know what flesh is?"

Imagine getting into a taxi  
and it's snowy Saskatchewan  
and the poet has not made a dollar.  
The snow goes on falling  
15 and now you're stuck in it; poetry  
gets you nowhere faster than anything.

Imagine breaking into a taxi  
and finding two poets frozen together.  
You'd look at one another as if the world  
20 had meaning for the first time, hidden  
meaning, and wouldn't it be a kind  
of terrible occasion.

<sup>o</sup> American poet, novelist, and critic (1905-1989); first poet laureate of the United States (1986). Next session, will see that the quotation is from Warren's 1968 poem "Driver, Driver." Musgrave's use of this quotation suggests a more general question: What are literary authors doing when they quote from or refer to another author?