

The State of the Self

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Rudy Perpich Center for the Arts

Thank you for inviting me to share this day with you and all of the Rudy Perpich community, staff, faculty and administrators.

Just recently Martin Espada spoke about the *Republic of Poetry* as he delivered the commencement speech to the Hampshire College Graduating Class of 2007: He delivered the following:

You, the graduates of Hampshire, are the poets of this republic. I do not mean that you must act like a stereotypical poet. You do not have to borrow money from your friends and pretend to be in a coma the next time you see them. You do not have to wear a coat three sizes too large so you can shoplift books. You do not have to drink until you lose control of your bladder. You do not have burst into tears at the sight of a mayonnaise jar because you love the letter M. You do not have to lock yourself in the bathroom and refuse to come out because your haiku is too short. You do not have to speak in riddles like Woody Allen's fictional poet, Sean O'Shawn...

Just as Espada welcomed the Hampshire Graduates to the Republic of Poetry I welcome you to the *State of the Self*. I welcome you to think about the deepest part of yourselves that guides you to be honest, moral and kind.