

Lateef McLeod: Poetic Perspectives

This poem is part of A Declaration of a Body of Love, a collection written by Lateef McLeod, a patient of Don's since 1989.

Absence of routine

Slender grey lines
on jacket sleeves
that musty smell on my clothes
drool is all over me
and you think it is disgusting

"Just swallow"
you say to me
and I really do try
catch and force down
pools of drool
from coming out of my mouth
cuz I be wearing tight fits
like Rocawear jeans, bick Ekco
shirts, Gap hoodies
or fresh to def in tailor-made
suits
and drool does not go
with tailor-made suits
you know I try to look suave
24/7
so at a party I can get my
grown man on

So there shouldn't be a problem
with me swallowing, right?
Well I have to remember to
swallow
every minute
every hour
every day
that means when I roll down
the street
swallow
whenever I talk to someone
swallow

when I exercise
swallow
when I go to school
swallow
cuz I don't want anyone to see
me drool, especially you
you always say that
it makes me look gross
and it is not my intention
to disgust you
so I try to swallow
like a mad man

I
(swallow)
try and
(swallow)
consciously do something
(swallow)
that everyone else
(swallow)
does unconsciously
(swallow)
and you still
(swallow)
can't understand
(swallow)
why
(swallow)
can't I
(swallow)
learn
(swallow)
to swallow all
(swallow)
the time

(swallow)
it is like
(swallow)
to toss you a tennis ball
(swallow)
telling you
(swallow)
to throw it
(swallow)

in the air and catch it
(swallow)
every 15 seconds
(swallow)
and yell at you
(swallow)
when you drop the ball

—Lateef McLeod



Lateef McLeod has a budding career as a writer. He's earned a BA in English from UC Berkeley then completed a MFA in Creative Writing from Mills College in his city of Oakland. He joined the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center Writers Brigade in 2006, writing technical articles about the AAC community.

Lateef has joined the ranks of all the great poets listed at poetry.com, and his poetry, essays and literary criticisms have been anthologized. He expanded into technical writing and technology, contributing articles to the Assistive Technology Network. Lateef's expertise led to his current position as a consultant for Dynavox. Some of his more recent activities are traveling to South Africa and publishing his poetry book. You can purchase *A Declaration of a Body of Love* from cafeypress.com/lateefsbook, although it is about to move from the self-published realm to mainstream publishing. Read more material by Lateef at his blogsite at teefdabiggafigga.blogspot.com.