**The Quiet World**

***By Jeffery McDaniel***

In an effort to get people to look

into each other’s eyes more,

and also to appease the mutes,

the government has decided

to allot each person exactly one hundred

and sixty-seven words, per day.

When the phone rings, I put it to my ear

without saying hello. In the restaurant

I point at chicken noodle soup.

I am adjusting well to the new way.

Late at night, I call my long distance lover,

proudly say *I only used fifty-nine today.*

*I saved the rest for you.*

When she doesn’t respond,

I know she’s used up all her words,

so I slowly whisper *I love you*

thirty-two and a third times.

After that, we just sit on the line

and listen to each other breathe.