

The Stranger

By Paul Constant

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Sitting in Circles with Rich White Girls: Memoirs of a Bulimic Black Boy Brownbox Theater at Rainier Valley Cultural Center

Chad Goller-Sojourner is a poet and self-described "spoken word performance artist." Many of his poems have been incorporated into this hour-long solo show. There's certainly been enough drama in Goller-Sojourner's life to warrant autobiographical treatment: He's an African-American gay man born in 1970 in Tacoma, adopted by white parents, and raised in mostly white schools. Things get even more complicated when he develops bulimia, and school officials send him to a support group full of white girls to talk about it.

The stories are fascinating, and it's still refreshing to hear a man speak candidly about his body-image problems—Goller-Sojourner is distressed by his "boy tits"—and the race politics are moving. At one point, he proudly lifts his head into the spotlight with a beatific grin and announces: "I am white because the first people who loved me were white." That moment is touching and troubling and has the clear, true ring of an idea being articulated for the very first time.

Goller-Sojourner is obviously nervous onstage, and possibly a little uneasy with Tyrone Brown's direction, which mostly involves standing in different spots and talking. Aspects of the play, like a powerful meditation on the near-OCD thinking he brings to his daily weigh-ins, and a hilarious explanation of how a Hawaii trip that happened to coincide with the 1984 Olympics resulted in an epic fast-food binge and purge, are sharp, but the whole feels more like a character sketch than a defined story arc. *Sitting in Circles* is an outline for a groundbreaking play. PAUL CONSTANT