

**Nikki WallSchlaeger**

**Sonnet (31)**

Keeping pieholes filled with magnificence  
sometimes a horse will lie down on the ground  
to make the rider get off. That's compassion.  
"The skin of the air," we breathe in moons.  
I've interrupted their purview for the 32<sup>nd</sup> time.  
A poodle mix wearing a lampshade fights with  
reflection, swans chase brides into puffy rivers.  
I don't think wearing radish pants suits my knees  
so I'm going to wash my face. Water works with  
mace where jail cells used to be. Except there's  
a name on the hardware, a dynasty of bathroom  
fixtures. I wonder if they ever hate themselves  
because they're rich. I help carry their waste into  
the river, where the swans are getting pissed off.

### Sonnet (33)

Quit looking at me as if the cotillion sky will give you strength.

The sky is a) slave ship b) mandatory swim cap c) innocence

People are rowing their boats across the sky & men are following me

so I pull the velvet rope & I'm on a jet plane wearing a guard's uniform,

serving water to passengers in orange jumpsuits in transit to Terra Haute

in a no fly zone over international pie in the sky waters. He asks me how

much I charge per hour. Another man is following me in a sky blue boat.

children are learning how to surrender their hands to the air in schools,

& the people are angry. They are trying to stop traffic on the skyways

some of us couldn't make it. Some of us have been black mermaids

for centuries, born in underwater laboratories where we confiscate

their latest skyward mistakes, all Imperial Bloodhut nuclear submarines

will be deactivated & beached where we have singed our glowing wings

we are so powerful that even space junk orbiting the earth disintegrates

## Sonnet (35)

*For Brian*

“Let me whistle a ditty for you  
from out of these refurbished  
catheters,” whispers the city.  
He loves me. I’m a dressed  
Rabbit sitting by condoyurts  
On blanksick river. Today is  
Day 2 of gratitude challenge  
I decide that the rowers are  
laborers producing colons  
of teamwork that state farms  
cultivate as cheapy fertilizer.  
I don’t find wisdom desirable.  
Accrued by elevated slaughter  
there is no ground just growth,

PT cruisers that nobody drives  
through the middles of woeful  
strip malls. At least you’d be  
awake for the disease. Boats  
as one of the original clocks  
playing college level empire

twister. I need help getting  
up. We are long songs that  
we've memorized, dress barns  
with broken script dance hits.  
I am gynecologic neon with  
renewable heels that you skip  
across water. You know better  
than anyone how I came to be here.

## Sonnet (23)

I think about deer all the time. We both do  
babes called fawns in the English language  
you just learn how to live with sickness  
people who call seagulls rats with wings  
cleaved on a tree Fawn's gentle father  
troughs of brazil nuts called nigger toes  
I think about water calling in the sirens  
methadone & emotional labors of dying  
e.coli compressed in an overflowing lake  
you just learn how to survive with drought  
music by Pa Kettle & the New Evangelicals  
a book of inspiration porn left in the rain  
So they can embalm Fawn's gentle father  
"I can't read my own handwriting," he says.

## Sonnet 12

I didn't push you enough in conversation.  
From the ice fishing shack on icefish lake  
I warn the sparkling fish about performance.  
Free creamers are handed out to the bright  
student fauna snowshoeing across the water,  
all those sadbloom faces dripping with bunting.  
The iris is one of the proudest bodyflowers  
with a meaty chest, you know what that does  
to people while wearing your goodhair up  
to prevent yourself from pulling it out  
mouthing a teenage prophylactic spell  
you know what that says about the sea too

ghost nets will kill lazily  
in the dimmest of morning light

Nikki Wallschlaeger's work has been featured in *Spork*, *Horse Less Review*, *Storyscape Journal*, *Coconut*, *The Account*, *Fanzine*, *Elective Affinities* & others. She is the author of the chapbook *The Frogs at Night* (Shirt Pocket Press) and the chapbook *I Would Be the Happiest Bird* (Horseless Press). Her first full-length book of poems, *HOUSES*, is forthcoming from Horseless Press in 2015. She's also an Assistant Poetry Editor at Coconut Poetry. You can reach her at [www.nikkiwallschlaeger.com](http://www.nikkiwallschlaeger.com)