

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 32nd 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