I HATE TELLING YOU HOW I REALLY FEEL

NIKKI WALLSCHLAEGER
I SHARED MY PAIN WITH YOU because I thought you were a friend (you wanted me to validate you as one of the good guys) I SHARED MY PAIN WITH YOU because I thought you were my mother (I’ve watched you destroy yourself for decades) I SHARED MY PAIN WITH YOU because you were supposed to be my father (when we first met you were preoccupied with showboating)
WE SHARE OUR PAIN WITH YOU because we’re supposed to be sisters (white feminism) I SHARED MY PAIN because you are my grandmother (the house of repression) I SHARED PAIN WITH YOU because you were my grandfather (your father was lynched when you were a child) I SHARED MY PAIN WITH YOU because I thought you were a teacher I SHARED MY PAIN WITH YOU because I thought you were a mentor (you were not inspired you were stealing)
WE SHARE OUR PAIN WITH YOU because we are part of the world (you kill us in thousands of ways daily).

I HATE TELLING YOU HOW I REALLY FEEL

It’s a risk I take when YOU WON’T BELIEVE ME
I HATE TELLING YOU HOW I REALLY FEEL

NIKKI WALLSCHLAEGER
EVERY BLACK GIRL’S FIRST WESTERN BOYFRIEND

TIME IS THE LOWERING MEAT CLEAVER OF THE WORLD

EVERY BLACK GIRL’S FIRST WESTERN BOYFRIEND
ALL THOSE SAD-BLOOM FACES

DRIPPING WITH BUNTING
I HAD A NICE TIME

SO WHY AM I ANXIOUS
DOES THIS DRESS

MAKE ME LOOK LESS OF A PERFECT VICTIM TO RALLY AROUND
The thing is with alcohol

You are nicer to people who really don’t deserve it.
A CIRCLET OF MURDERED BOYS MARCHING OVER YOUR HEAD

JUST LIKE THOSE '50s CARTOONS WE WATCHED AS CHILDREN
WISH YOU WERE A BEER

INSTEAD OF A COLORBLIND MANSPLAINER
I USED TO WAIT ALL DAY

FOR AN INVISIBLE PHONE CALL
FROM BOYS LIKE YOU
I DO HAVE AN ABNORMAL AMOUNT OF DREAMS
YOU’RE KILLIN ME BROET
READY TO ETERNALLY TALK OVER YOU

FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE
IT'S EASY TO LOVE SOMEONE INCOMPrehensible

IT MEANS YOU NEVER HAVE TO APOLOGIZE
I HATE TELLING YOU HOW I REALLY FEEL
must be nice

to have that luxury

I wake to sleep and
take my waking slow
THAT HOPE IS ANOTHER BLOATED MOAT

ARE YOU WORTH THE RINGWORM
OBLIGATIONS
PEOPLE WHO THINK FEELINGS ARE FOR LIBERALS
I AM USUALLY BETRAYED

BY TEACHABLE MOMENTS
IN THE VALLEY
DEVASTATION
WHAT ABOUT EMOTIONAL POVERTY
LIKE ALL GOOD HOUSE GIRLS

I AM GROWING MANDIBLES UNDER MY SHIFT
QUIET AND PLEASANT

SAD

ON A PAYDAY AFTERNOON
EXHAUSTED FROM GIVING A FUCK
Some of the lines from this project have appeared in the following publications as appendages inside of other poems, as part of a bigger body in progress called *Crawlspace*:

**Time is the lowering meat cleaver of the world every black girl’s first western boyfriend** is from “Sonnet (40)” in *P-Queue 12*

**All those sad-bloom faces dripping with bunting** is from “Sonnet (12)” in *Dusie: Ecopoetics* guest-edited by Marthe Reed

**The thing is with alcohol you are nicer to people who really don’t deserve it** is from “Sonnet (38)” forthcoming in the *Electric Gurlesque*

**A circlet of murdered boys marching over your head just like those ’50s cartoons we watched as children** is from “Sonnet (28)” in *Elective Affinities*

**I used to wait all day for an invisible phone call from boys like you** is from “Sonnet (37)” *P-Queue 12*

**It’s easy to love someone incomprehensible it means you never have to apologize** is from “Sonnet (34)” in the *Brooklyn Rail*

**I am usually betrayed by teachable moments in the valley** is from “Sonnet (28)” in *Elective Affinities*

**Quiet and pleasant on a payday afternoon** is from “Sonnet (8)” in the *Account*

*Nikki Wallschlaeger* is the author of *Houses* (Horse Less, 2015), and the chapbook *I Would Be the Happiest Bird* (Horse Less, 2014).

*I Hate Telling You How I Really Feel* is the fourth chapbook in the 2015 series from Bloof Books. Each chapbook in the series is released in a limited edition of numbered copies, followed by a digital release, and a year-end combination volume called *Bound.*

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YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT I’LL SAY NEXT