

Five Poems · Naomi Wallace

AN EXECUTION IN THE COUNTRY

The sun is above us now, watching.
I scoop the dirt away, handful by handful.
Contras stand over me with guns.
How many times have I done this, prying
open the earth, on a day just like today?
Around this time I might hear the voice of my son
pivoting over the fields, *Come home*,
or in the distance, the figure of my daughter.
With my thumb I could blot her from view,
then make her reappear—such miracles!
Or my wife, floating across the fields towards me,
swinging like a bell over the furrows.
When was the last time I kissed her?
Yesterday, the day before? I must remember.

They force me to lie down in the hole I've dug.
One of the soldiers, the youngest, squats on my stomach.
His chin is like my daughter's. He holds a knife.
For the first time in my life my thighs are heavy
with those of another man—such miracles!
I want to touch him just because he is there above me,
press my mouth to his chest, suck at the heart.
He raises the knife. He grits his teeth.
I close my eyes and think hard. Suddenly
my thighs swell with a terrible light:
There, by the door! I am sitting there,
yesterday, on the porch. The work is done.
She leans over me and I kiss her open throat.
She tastes like nothing but herself.
She whispers, *Come inside and rest*.