

For Black Women Who Experienced Genocide When The Police Murders of Their Sons Was Too Much
by Keith A. Wallace

When you tell me of my son's murder
You come clean.
You do not make me wait.

After you learn of his death
The time
The cause
The place
You do not gather evidence.
You do not get your story straight.
You come clean.
You do not make me wait.
I am his mother, and you do not make me wait.

When you knock on my door
You will know who I am.
Yes.

You will know me.

Look me in my eyes.
Shake my hand
And tell me who you are.

When I invite you in
If there is room
You do not stand.
You sit.
Or crouch.
Or kneel.

If there is time
You greet everyone
And learn their names.
Yes.
You will know if there is time.
There will always be enough time
for this.

When you tell me he is gone
You will not say that he was killed.
That he expired.

You will say *you* murdered him
You will say you are sorry.

You will use my name
You will use *his* name
His first name.
You will not say 'ma'am' or 'your son.'
I know that he is—
Was—
My son.
You will say his name.

When I collapse, do not hold me up.
When I vomit, do not turn your head away in disgust.

You wait.

When I ask if there was pain
If he suffered
You do not lie.

You tell me what you know.

Do not tell me that his pain is over, when mine is just beginning.
Do not say he is in a better place now.
The best place for him to be
Is here
With me
His mother.

I may scream.
Let me.
When I weep.
Let me.
I will curse.
Let me.
You do not police my language.

You do not tell me how to behave.
I am grieving
And I am his mother.
Let me.

When I ask for the officer's name
You will report it.
When I ask for the videotape
You will release it.
When I ask to see his body
You will escort me.

When I have been patient all night
When 12 hours have passed.
You do not tell me I cannot see his body
You do not conduct an investigation first
You let me

see

my son.

Do not make me wait
When I am grieving.

I am his mother
And I do not wait.

Bio: Keith A. Wallace is an actor, playwright, filmmaker and self-proclaimed 'actorvist' who has written, performed and directed for both stage and film. As a Philadelphia, PA native he has an equal passion for artistic expression and community engagement and advocacy. Select university credits: Movers + Shakers, The Cherry Orchard, Death of Driver, Venus, Golden Boy, In the Crowding Darkness. Select regional. credits: JUNK: The Golden Age of Debt, Blueprints to Freedom (La Jolla Playhouse), Dance of the Holy Ghosts, Hoodoo Love, The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, Comedy of Errors, Hairspray, Passing Strange and The Tempest. Directing credits: The Brothers Size (Theater Bay Area Awards: Outstanding Production, Outstanding Ensemble), The Last Days of Judas Iscariot. His La Jolla Playhouse commissioned solo play, THE BITTER GAME, premiered in the International WOW Festival in October 2015 and was a semi-finalist in the 2016 Sundance Theater Lab and the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference; 2017 Under the Radar Festival at The Public Theater. Education: MFA UC San Diego, BA Morehouse College.