



PROJECT MUSE®

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## American Husband

Wayson, Kary

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Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/27772>

## CRUELTY MADE ME

Love came along and said what: *What?*  
without even a single word.  
Said *wait* by the far side of the river  
and *when* by the black limb of the crow tree  
growing through my kitchen window.

Love came along and said *let me*  
(and let me say she'd let me)  
but cruelty made me  
with my back turned. Grew me  
according to a twisted line of light  
so I've grown twisted, like the light,  
shaped  
like a staircase  
and run with a long red rug.

Love came along and flashed me her badge,  
said her name rhymes with *test*  
and keeps to the meter of bare legs  
in a loose dress. But cruelty made love sleepless  
and sleepless, made me cruel:  
each tooth in the tracks  
of all my zippers latched, belts all  
buckled and button  
by button, I'm done.