



PROJECT MUSE®

American Husband

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

REGRET RED

This is slow going, this paling
of what's worse than purple
into some dumb lesser version
of lavender or black:
a much less lustrous pick
of what could be called my color
if I were better bred. Red,

as if regret were in love with love
and rejected it,
bound the bare foot I kicked hard
through your guitar until it bled
blood red, as if I were a river running
on my river bed.

I choose the hours between dread
and dread, when I'm free
from feeling anything, like an extra finger
I forget and remember. Regret

as a red crab holed up in a hot rock
half in and half out and *goddammit*
cursing quite a bit, that word *worse*
irritating the inside of his hot head.

Red as a red car
irrevocably in reverse
on a day that drives away without a back bumper.
That moment: as many times as I can make it. The black fabric
of the convertible top pleated in a neat pile
in front of the trunk as if

regret were the age
my daughter would be.
Red as a bee-keeper's face.
Red like a lot of things.