



PROJECT MUSE®

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## American Husband

Wayson, Kary

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➔ For additional information about this book

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

## I TURN MY SILENCE OVER

I am in the tenth month of the ninth life  
of my silence.

My baby's grown fat enough to feed me.  
I turn my silence over. I turn it  
towards my mother. It wears  
the expressionless face of an oscillating fan.

Each day, at intervals, a bell brings  
enormous horses to the middle of my alphabet.  
I turn my silence over.  
I'm not speaking to my mother.  
My mute has balloons for hands.

O Underbite!  
With your mailbox of a jaw.  
O Nothing! When I ask what's wrong.  
I turn my silence over: an astronomical number.  
O, How I could go on!

Market to market I go and come home.  
My silence runs parallel to the direction of my travel.  
My silence makes a district with just one  
constituent. I am the legislator of my mother.

My silence doesn't ask, doesn't eat, doesn't act.  
I am sick on it, celibate  
and exhausted. Each night  
I am up with it: Sublunary Thing! My silence  
is an insomnia.

Let's ask the throat what the mouth wants tonight.  
I've grown fat on my refusal to say a word. I turn my silence over  
and there's a doubling of my mother. I've been doing  
little sit-ups with my sense of reserve:

I'll wait. I'll waste my turn. I have my way—my one!  
I turn my silence over. I'm not speaking  
to my mother. Like God, I guess  
I've already come.