



PROJECT MUSE®

American Husband

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WORDS FOR THE WALTZ

All night long I've resisted his help.
What is the opposite of *fast*?

Forcing a kid who's throwing a fit
—you standing thing you never sit!
You'll run us all aground!—Help

has water
just like this: to get us
turned around.
But this kid kicks when you pick her up so

there: throw her down.

* * *

—and we have arrived. We have
arriven. My minions
push down the plank of my neck
and back.

We stand on four legs like a makeshift table
until all hell's dispatched.
So into the itch! Into the thicket!
The careful course is cast.

We make emotional revisitings.
On the hills of impassioned ants.

* * *

Snail snail glister me forward,
bird my back to the wall.
God begot me from my father
and delivered the hospital home.

* * *

All day long I've resisted that red
while I tried to make it match.

I've taken the ax of my effort like a paddle
and I'm hacking at the shadows
of my feet.

I've taken the ax of my effort like a paddle
and I'm dragging this raft
through a lake

made of concrete.

* * *

Oh hell, oh well. Admit
you made a mess.
Now you must tear up the carpet.
Now you must repaint the walls.
The color says nothing but there is a judgment:
everything but the garbage can must go.

* * *

Often stranded in the middle of a feeling the feeling
of wanting so many is more.
Snail snail glister me forward trail the trailing
translucent cord.

* * *

Think of it! A sycophant!
A guttersnipe! A gripe!

Good help has rivers
filled with fish—*sidelong pickerel*

*smiles. Would with the river and would
with the fish. His red face*

the same from behind.

* * *

All day long I've insisted on help.
In the basement
I'm like a bad cramp.
The sun is against me the moon would not have me
my tantrum matches the lamp.

* * *

I've taken
the ax
of my effort
like a paddle
and I'm hacking
at the shadow
of my throat.

I have taken the ax
of my effort
like a paddle
and I'm dragging
this lake

through a hole
in my boat.

* * *

There's a mirror

next to the window and a window
on the wall. Smile, he says
in the middle of the fuss. Eat it.
Now swallow.

* * *

'Twas a lovely dive, my lively dove
What's winter for? To remember love.

Good help has daughters
just like this: "My father
invented water."
God help us daughters just like this:
I with no rights in this matter.

* * *

The body's a closet
with cats in the back.
The sea's grown woolen
and white. I am
his consolable widow
now—one syllable
bigger than wife.