



PROJECT MUSE®

American Husband

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EACH FOOT AS FEET SHOULD

I say blue
but what I mean is
blonde braids
bleaching on the beach, one straw stuck
in a waxed paper cup,
her name the way her hair hangs
and how she holds her shoulders high
between the tight sleeves
of her white blouse. Blue
but with salt
and the sound of one boat
dragging its anchor just offshore.

I say church
and I wait.
What I get is a white face
conflicted with the signs of the cross
like trees
constricted with the first frost
on the streets of the walk I take
so often it's not a walk
but where I pace,
where I watch the moon
like my own blemished face
and then the moon again
like the memory of my left hand
slapping a glass of water across a tabletop.

We're at the coast. The water is here
and the gulls and white boats.
The sand is trashed with children.

I watch the water break
on a boat and I know:
the closest you can get to the ocean

is to get into it.
And all day her body
has been the only body
on the beach:
legs like
her legs.
The small of her back
small as the small of her back
can be. Wet hair the color of her hair
wet, the color of cut wood. And her feet:
both her feet
just like two feet should.