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Poem to a New Wife

David Passey

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Two poems by **David Passey****Poem to a New Wife**

Maybe you don't know
 but a man has more than blood
 ticking in his machine;
 he has fear. With women

it is not the same. The thickness
 of his wrists, the dumb strength
 of his hands and heavy shoulders,
 he wonders what next
 will crumble beneath the pressure
 of his fingers.

The sandstone of his jaw—
 this is not the oval face,
 the quick wren of a boy who spoke
 your name from the lilacs
 of your seventeenth birthday.

The stuck lid of the pickle jar
 stayed stuck in his fists,
 but the jar, the very jar itself,
 shattered. Just yesterday

he bent his back and heaved
 your car from the hissing ditch,
 and the strength of him—
 that back, the thick legs.
 It is this he fears.

And so, when he circles you in love
 and your ribs strain like timbers,
 do not cry out.

Instead, pull his face
to your neck, feel the wool
of his breath on your throat
and speak to him in murmurs
of the highways you see rising
from his palms, the cities from his bones.