

American Engines

W. K. Buckley

*Fierce-throated beauty!...
Law of thyself complete...
-Walt Whitman*

While I wrenched to replace
a fuel pump
on an F-150, straight-six,
an engine easy for 300 thousand miles,

I thought of Plath's cast iron
imagination,
its vision in blue fuel,
as if it could write for a thousand years.

And when I slammed down the hood
I thought of how Plath
slammed down her life,

giving us a voice
humming on asphalt,

a voice
in its own mechanics,

this
steel pump for American poetry.