

JEFFREY TUCKER

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While Reading James Wright, I Think of an Old Friend

There is a thin drawer in my chest  
and I stuff it with scenes of you

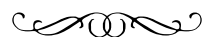
sprinting your dry lawn, then vaulting  
the brick pillar fronting the ranch house  
the jump no more than a step for you,  
legs and arms always flight-flexed  
like you sprang straight from a Grecian vase

or driving downhill when you swing your car  
sideways, fill the dark air  
with rubber and asbestos and I taste it

or when I left the country for two years and you were already gone.

I did not see you chase the girl in her Volkswagen  
down James Street on foot, but it is no surprise.  
I imagine your changing face, the months  
starting a landslide: first clean-shaven  
then pebbled, then pressed against your baby's cheek.

We will not be the same, as we should not be  
but still. I see you now  
if only through my scribbling hands.  
I pull you near and stare into your kaleidoscope show  
but all is dark.



## ABOUT JEFFREY TUCKER

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Jeffrey Tucker, a graduate of The Center for Writers at The University of Southern Mississippi, teaches creative writing at Hampton University in Virginia. His work has previously appeared in *Inscape*, *Poetry South*, *Tapestry*, and elsewhere; forthcoming work will appear in *Jabberwock Review*. He enjoys running, often with deer, through the Virginia forest. The deer always win.

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