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Neck of the World

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SPEAKMAPLE

When there was town here
I sprouted. As the humans
bound a baby, dropped it
to the freezing river, I knew only
that the child levitated, lucent
in some quick vein
of the air's dark sugar.
Now pheasants stitch the edge
of terrain, the pagan wheat
cast beneath itself by sky.
My leaves pause around me,
brittle boats unanchored
to the seething winds.
Loose stretches of cloud ripple
like banners of a bloodrich
city overhead. I place my mark
on the screech owl, the vole,
every heart under my motion,
though the river rules this place—
bones nestled in the alleys
of its trout-flashed bottom—
and I touch the names of arrows
all through this one-eyed sleep.