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Neck of the World

F. Daniel Rzicznek

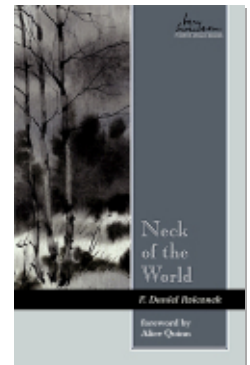
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A BEAR IN HIS MADNESS

There's a burnished violence
ignorant in the leaves,
gilded to the hillside where I sit.
The land has begun holding me
trial for the murder of a sapling
tall as my smallest finger, its leaves
two spots of fire beneath my boot.
The air whirs a mouth foreign
like the speech of far-off bells
in the dark borough of my ear.

There, the lines of brick-lined
streets become sharp
and on a hill beyond the chimneys
(their smoke a thought like this)
he idles, black fur a mass
of gloss, licking himself. Wait.
The land is proclaiming
him king. He rises, bristles.
Treefuls of giant minuscule crows
shake through my eyes like sun.