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Neck of the World

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HAPPY

to coax the shining hair
of dusk down like a rope,
to map a new route
from the wintered forest to
the stadium of rubble,
to fill a stone cup
with the dust that once
was a gladiator's knuckle,
to harbor certainties
about the fish of candlelight
stewing on the ceiling,
to know the inner mouth
as sleek with star noise
among craters and plaque,
to trace the dead man's
handwriting that lopes
with a river's reason,
to witness the river climbing
muddy in its banks,
to know both as breathing.