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Neck of the World

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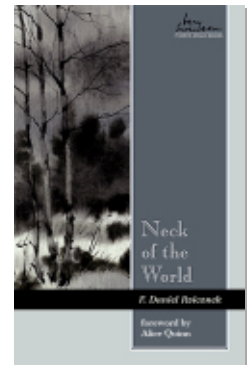
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NECK OF THE WOODS

Hanging the scorched calves
in this plague year, remember
how once we were led here
by our selves, how glow worms
nested in the toughwood,
the knock of death coming
down, every so often, along
the fence, a weathervane
muscling east. Remember
the pines and the blood
in the pines and the dangle
and clack of hooves in the pines
and the blood, and all
of this like green in the bonfire,
the good fire. And remember:
everything acknowledges only
the hanging, the year, and the glint
of earring through branches where
we had marked them, pneumatic
with candor as they were
in the herd's hot center.
How we relish this hanging,
this old way: the hats and chains,
mud dead on the axe's blade,
dolorous winds, and how what
befell them rises heavily up and what
had drowsed in us
stretches, shudders, sets out.