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Neck of the World

F. Daniel Rzicznek

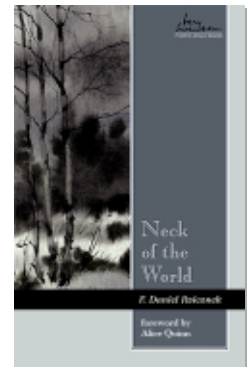
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BLOOD REALM

The tall rushes wait to be parted
and then conceal, when
into the black, muscular length
of marsh the walking becomes
splashing, a tiding that carries
the steely odor of death into the air.
This morning, as we drove,
the first thing our eyes met
was the headless flowering

of a fat deer left in a ditch, until
this final, inked out landscape
where our tiredness is a sound—
a heavy steam escaping the throat
on an east-west road our walking
grinds gently before dawn.
When digested, the land loses
its birdcalls and dens of mud,
turns to a low-pitch rumble:

a water-logged revolving
of trees and necks—the middle
of the mind gone under to a fast
and constant silence. We turn
our numbness to the wind, which
is the sound of a hand in the dark
pulling dark brains from between
antlers, out of the skull, and the eye
that sees them shine, shines.