



PROJECT MUSE®

## Neck of the World

F. Daniel Rzicznek

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## NORTH OF NORTH

Let me attempt to describe: dusk air  
follows the scaremonger's flock  
of rumors, his blind horse and black  
carriage rattling in the scrambled light  
across the only bridge out of town.

Or the morning air: voluptuous gallons  
of it between each tanager  
perched among frozen fingers of trees—  
ruby feathers quietly burning,  
the preening of those stuffy coats.

The river changes direction  
and the townspeople paint their blue doors  
bluer. They junk the lacelike white  
of patio furniture, loose their mastiffs  
to hunt the potbellied bearcat  
to her den near the territory's edge  
where there is a chance to mask  
the self from all but its mask.  
Still, the town floats lost like a hat  
in the wilderness that carries it.

We'll need to go before the beginning:  
combing the bogs for an oath,  
the destruction of the last red  
sports car, the scaremonger's clamor,  
the barely breathing tanagers.