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Neck of the World

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PRIMER

The white crane
hooks backward through town
to a pond reddish with soot,
wraps broad wings
around its pumping body,
eases to the bottom's murk
silent as snowmelt. Bells
of ancient air collect
in the ears of the man
thought long dead
who emerges now
from his ramshackle house,
who steps lightly
through the rusted gate
to which feathers
have been stapled as a warning.