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Neck of the World

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NIGHTYARD

The darkened schoolhouse has
 given me this thing to say:
the dry lips of a man part
 as a candle is lowered
through a glowing block of fat.
 In the top there is a hole
for air to feed in, whipping
 the light. This is the system.
I can feel the cold panting
 inside my navy sleeves.
Outside the butcher's, a mutt
 pisses, the steam ascending
like a ghost after its name
 has been mentioned. But what
is it asking me to tell?
 Our leaders stride sienna halls,
their lilac-scented hands
 flexing. In the grass, a tiny
chant musters itself: *I know*
 you. I know you. This is how
the first, classical speeches
 begin. Then the fat shifts, sings.