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Neck of the World

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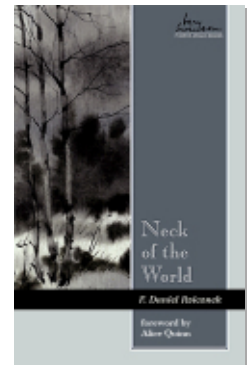
Published by Utah State University Press

Rzicznek, F. Daniel.

Neck of the World.

Utah State University Press, 2007.

Project MUSE.muse.jhu.edu/book/9411.



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TICKETS FOR A FIRE

He leaves the speckled horse
by the river. Sounds of town
fade like tin as the horse
and he start in opposite
directions. *You are the brow
of wind awake in fervor, in
jungle, in egg.* He stops, casts
a fly to the current. Steelhead,
their berry gills spreading,
waver in the slimed grass.
The sun stays on his hands
and burns. *Selling tickets for
what sermons deem a name
you have defiled, you who
scrawl a map.* And hoofing
slowly, in the way a horse will,
away from the bank toward
a cluster of young birches,
the horse recognizes the sweep
his tail interrupts the flies
with, the rhythm of withers,
the grains in the meadow.

*Snow graduates in skeins
drawn across a land hidden
within the hidden craw,
snow now blurring in the chest
around a foursome of stones
not carved from your parent
but the air's blue gristle.*

*The meathouse's turning
under your decades, a clutch
of great auks rising black
as captains through the ice.*