Neck of the World

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Published by Utah State University Press

Rzicznek, F. Daniel. 
Neck of the World. 
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/9411.

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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.