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Relics of War

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Relics of War

after Vladas Slaitas

I didn't have time to take a thing, even a handful
of earth from where I was born.
Nothing but the strong scent
of the black earth of Aukstaitija— odors
of grassroots,
earthworms
and little clouds.

And the twilight
of the quiet cross
as the sun sank behind our village church.
Or
the insect whirr
still ringing in my ears.

No, I didn't have time to take a thing,
a single bundle,
nothing but this fragrance when spring plows
mix black earth and sky.
And this music from the village with the small church
when, all night long, the insect choirs sing.

William Pitt Root