

Poem with Three Names of God + a Promise to Myself

And in the beginning, I thought my father's hands
looked like old countries. I thought the dried rivers

running through his palms were all that remained
of the land he carried with him. I have been making

a list of the promises my favorite things can and can
not keep. A bridge over the river promises you're not

too heavy. A father promises to eventually be a knot
of electric seconds between synapses called a memory.

Our spines promise to remember their shape, but some
promises break. In the beginning God promised light

but this might have meant fire. God promised his name
but some names break. *Abba* means father, *Elohim*

means something has just been made. A wolf maybe.
A series of rivers to trap it. A group of fathers leaving

because God told them to. My friends are always reminding
me how patient God is. Whether in the form of a sixteenth

century church at the bottom of a river in Mexico
slowly reappearing in the drought season

or as the diamond my grandmother lost at the edge
of the woods while chopping firewood. How

my mother over and over returned to the tree line
to search on her knees, as if she were trying to unearth

one of *YHWH's* misplaced names. Maybe a handful of wet soil
despite a month of no rain. Maybe red fungal spore that somehow

smears gold under the fingernails. Maybe God lost his name
and whispered sounds until it flew back to him in the dark.

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One day, strangers will drink water from each other's
cupped hands. We won't call this a miracle. One day,

we'll build a library that lets you borrow birds
instead of books. Don't call this place heaven,

because you'll want everyone to feel welcome.
You can be lost. Like the diamond from a wedding

ring lost to the woods, we'll tell stories about you
knowing you're somewhere shining. We just

haven't found you yet. One day you'll look
at your open hands and realize how much country

your father gave you. Your rivers. Your dried deltas.
Are you listening? Every bridge you've ever crossed

will eventually collapse, heavy with rust. The miracle
here is that you weren't standing on any of them.