

PETRICHOR

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At the top of a mountain my father seeks child-sized rocks around the rim. Taking a thick scavenged stick he leverages it against the precipice of the cliff and nudges. As these miniature boulders explode into shards of jagged projectiles he claps his hands together and gives a gleeful *whoop*.

Moving along the ridge he locates another rugged clump of compressed earth and chucks it down – adding another layer to the exposed graveyard. Excitement from this playful exercise uncovers the years of his life, and for a moment I can see the youthful man he was before children, trucking, and marriage.

He continues the game until a nerve pinches near his back sending shocks of pain. I gather the rocks that he can no longer bend to reach. He takes them in a firm grip and rolls them granny-style like a bowling ball. The rocks tumble half-heartily and lazily split into a few pieces. I push another with my foot closer to him. *No, he says, you take this one.*

I take the rough lump of marble and shift its weight in my hands. The silica shines as the sky winks back at me. *Look how pretty*, I say flipping it over and revealing a vein of milky quartz. *That's where the gold is*, my dad says following the split. *There used to be an ocean floor where we're standing. Imagine all those fishies and plants floating around us.* I close my eyes and feel the water flowing through my fingers. The rock liquefies in my hands and I throw it away before we drown.

After we are gone the rain will come. The night will settle and clouds with cheeks full of water will hover. This thirsty desert will take it all in, mixing the moisture with fragments of dust. With the slow, soft, wet kisses the smell of earth will percolate from each drop. The aerosols will mist the air perfuming the breeze. In the unmistakable, almost palpable sweetness – the petrichor releases. This divine blood of bottled epochs dislodges from eternity with a playful push.