**Maybe It Was Something about Trolls**

Having spilled coffee on the first few lines of a nascent

poem, I am attempting to re-create what I can.

There was an excellent first line, as I recall, full of surprise,

making promises I would try to make good on.

The sort of line you write on the back of a pharmacy

receipt and carry around for a week, letting it work,

letting yeast bubbles form around the edges, the words

just beginning to sugar and fust. I can make out three

words—two-and-a-half—like hillocks of high ground

in a dark-roast monsoon. There’s “petrichor,” a word

I have vowed never to use in a poem, so I can only assume

I meant it ironically. I mean, think about the sort of person

who would use that word in conversation. And I thought

I was done with the word “Ginny,” but there it is again,

the nickname I used for my ex-wife, Virginia, because

the full name carries with it no warmth at all, especially

when you know she was named for Virginia Woolf, and when,

toward the end of our time together, I really could picture her

walking into a river with her pockets full of rocks.

What had I meant to say, though, what illuminating thread

had I found between the two words? Beyond that, only

the partial word, “rivu—,” which must have gone on to be

“rivulets,” and which I hope had nothing to do with tears,

though perhaps with the steady work of rain on sandstone,

how it carves around harder rock, leaving, after millennia,

a stand of resilient hoodoos, like surprised trolls who once,

only once, saw the sunlight. I can work with that.