

*Earth, Fire*

*after Yvonne Reddick*

As children, we'd washed your stories off in the river because we didn't know what else to do.

We did it the same way you hid them under the pillow every night after we were asleep — tucking your hand in first, softly, and then, just the act of letting go.

We were told that you'd be the one to never leave; and then, *if you keep looking, the dead don't leave.*

So, once we'd kissed your name on the surface of water, we left you there — we'd think of you later, occasionally.

Like, that night, once the fire was out, we'd wanted to take you back home, your ashes implying just about everything: *life; loss; love.* After you, we'd wandered until dawn — hoping there'd be no sun.

Today, we're in need of a story again. Perhaps one in which there are three kind men and nothing evil happens?

Perhaps your stories will be sad anyway now.

Perhaps we should have looked back.

*(for Grandma)*