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Three Witnesses

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Three Witnesses

erin tuttle

In the very middle of a field of dirt
Three palm trees stood abreast in Honduras
And I from a bus window,
Two afternoons a week,
Passed them on the cracked road home.

In that distance between us,
The aching heat made illusions of their forms—
Softening and stretching them
To brown and green memories of dreams
While I watched,
My eyelids falling in indiscernable blinks, exhausted,
The same way darkness does in the late afternoon,
Unable to be blue or gray but hovering under nighttime's black
Until vision and reality are subjective and
Solid ground exists only directly under foot.

Two years removed now,
The past comes in threes
In the short blue-gray blinks between asleep and awake;
Me and them and the sky
Or God and them and me
Or just them,
Or just God—

Their anomalous stance,
Half illusion, half parental,
Swaying there in the middle of nothing,
Calls me to the place where I walked
On a line under their gaze,

Between the cracked dirt of a road and a mind
So remote, a cool breeze could not find it.