Jeremiah Growing

My son helps heal my tattoo, scrubs his hands & under his fingernails with antibacterial soap he'll then rub onto the still-raw feather pen sprouting into birds

across my shoulder blade. He cups his bicycle-calloused hands with warm water & splashes me, losing most of the water to the sink. Again & again he'll do this

so I'm reminded of the hotel basin I first bathed him in, waiting for adoption papers in an unfamiliar city, its fireflies I'd never seen, its late-night summer sunsets. Days ago,

before the sunburn of ink stinging my skin, he asked to meet his birthmama, to talk to her. It feels like I have two mamas, he said of his heart. I texted her for permission & she said, *I'd never say no to you*—

He's afraid he'll wash away
my tattoo he's called beautiful, how I was afraid

as she handed him to me—we're bound for life. When she called, when he saw her face across the screen, he clutched me tighter & asked Mama, what should I say?