THE SOUL'S GEOLOGY

Field Notes

for your own terrain



Six formations from the earth,
each with a question for your own ground.

Carry them beside your journal.
Begin where you feel steady,
and return as often as the terrain asks.

CRYSTAL ANZALONE · ETCHED FROM THE SOUL

The Soul's Geology–

field notes for your own terrain.

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Writing, concept, and visual direction by Crystal Anzalone.

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The Soul's Geology was created as a contemplative companion for those exploring the relationships among inheritance, lived experience, and the life still taking form.

This work approaches generational transmission through the language of landscape. What has accumulated, compacted, and become embedded within a family's life can be approached with compassion and discernment. Metaphor offers a way to recognize those layers, examine their influence, and participate in what is carried forward.

Within these pages, six geological formations and processes offer patterns for reflection. Each brings a geographical place and one question into conversation with your experience. The accompanying online memoir deepens each inquiry through lived story, family teaching, three questions, and a Further Bearing. Sources and further reading are listed at etchedfromthesoul.com/the-souls-geology/sources.

The strata may feel familiar. Other formations may give language to experiences that have remained difficult to name.

There is room here for your own account: the ground you inherited, the streams that nourished you, the places where life cut deepest, and the relationships through which new possibilities emerged. Space has been left for your markings—a thought, a word, a question, something you want to remember.

Carry these field notes beside your journal. Begin where you feel steady. Let the landscape help you find words for your life—and room within it to become more.

Written from the threshold
between silence and expression—
where soul finds its voice and light becomes language.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

These pages follow one river through your life,
from bedrock to the open sea.
At each turn, the earth offers a formation,
and the formation offers a question.

You are welcome to borrow
the pattern for your own story.
Choose a landscape that feels like yours.
Name its bedrock, its source,
the streams that fed it,
the place where it cut deepest,
where it changed course, and where it opened.

Begin where you feel steady.
Parts of this ground are best walked
with a trusted companion, a counselor,
or a circle of people who can receive what you find.

The full story behind each movement lives at
etchedfromthesoul.com/the-souls-geology



BEDROCK



SPECIMEN NO. 01

Entrenched Meander

Goosenecks of the San Juan, Utah

collected in memory

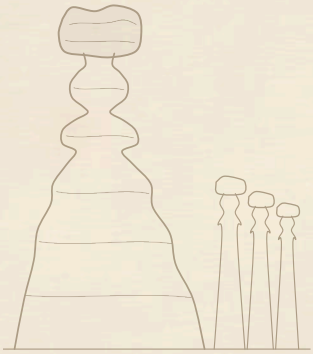
ENTRENCHED MEANDER

A river's winding course can remain
as the land rises
and the water cuts deeper into rock.
At the Goosenecks of the San Juan River in Utah,
the landscape preserves the shape
of a course established long before.
Landscapes hold the consequences
of what has passed through them.

So do we.

What channels run through your ground
that you did not carve?

HEADWATERS





SPECIMEN NO. 02

Caprock

Bryce Canyon, Utah

collected in memory

CAPROCK

A resistant layer of rock
can shelter the softer stone beneath it.
At Bryce Canyon in Utah, caprock protects
the pillars we call hoodoos.
What appears strong may be sheltering
what remains tender.

So may we.

What hardened over
the tender places in you,
and does it still stand guard?

TRIBUTARIES

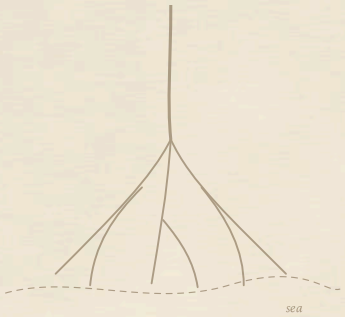
SPECIMEN NO. 03

Sediment

The Nile Delta, Egypt

carried thousands of miles





SEDIMENT

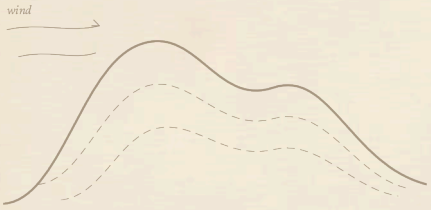
A tributary carries particles
of soil and stone from along its course.
For millennia, the Nile carried sediment
from upstream landscapes to its delta.
What arrives downstream
carries a history from elsewhere.

So do we.

What have your family's streams carried—
and where do you notice them
converging within you?



THE GORGE





SPECIMEN NO. 04

Loess

Loess Hills, western Iowa
along the Missouri River

GORGE

A river moving through resistant terrain
gradually cuts a deeper channel,
carrying away the rock and sediment
loosened by its passage.
Over time, a narrow valley forms,
its steep walls revealing layers
once concealed beneath the surface.
The landscape bears evidence
of the forces that shaped it,
and of the passage
that continues through it.

LOESS

Fine silt carried by wind
can accumulate in deep deposits.
This loess holds steep faces when dry
and becomes vulnerable when wet.
Ground that appears firm
can give way as conditions change.

So can we.

What did you learn to do
when the ground became uncertain—
and where does that response take hold in you now?



CONFLUENCE

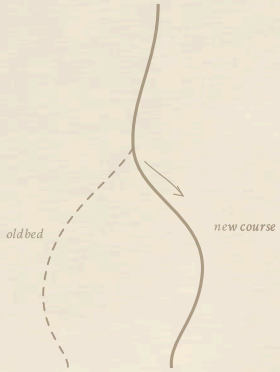
SPECIMEN NO. 05

Avulsion

The Yellow River, China

its course changed many times





AVULSION

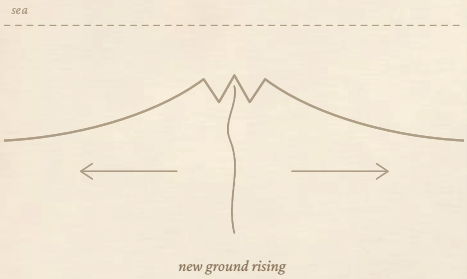
A river can shift from an established channel
into another course across its floodplain.
In China, the Yellow River has repeatedly
changed course as sediment accumulated.
The course a river has followed
can cease to be the course it carries forward.

So can ours.

What keeps returning across the seasons of your life,
asking for another expression?



OPEN SEA





SPECIMEN NO. 06

Seafloor Spreading

The Mid-Atlantic Ridge

the length of the Atlantic

SEAFLOOR SPREADING

Along mid-ocean ridges, plates move apart,
magma rises, cools, and forms new crust.
Along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge,
this continuing formation has widened
the Atlantic over millions of years.
Even in the depths, the earth is making new ground.

So are we.

What becomes possible as you learn
to inhabit your own life—
even with questions still unresolved?

YOUR OWN RIVER

Choose a landscape that feels like yours,
and walk it from the bedrock to the open sea.

ITS BEDROCK

ITS SOURCE

THE STREAMS THAT FED IT

WHERE IT CUT DEEPEST

WHERE IT CHANGED COURSE

WHERE IT OPENED

The next page is left blank on purpose, a place for a guest: a friend, a companion, or anyone you invite to add a line to your river.

A WORD FROM CRYSTAL

My own field notes began in 1990, with a writing assignment
I titled "Black Sheep and Kissing Cousins."
On the page, thoughts I had struggled to express acquired a voice.
I could recognize myself in my own sentences.

I have continued returning to that ground through
journals, photographs, family records, art,
and the memories held within my body.

With each return, relationships became visible among experiences
I had carried for years.
Compassion for those who preceded me
grew alongside a clearer understanding of my own life.

These field notes extend that practice to you.
A formation, an image, or a question may offer
an opening through which your own experience begins to find expression.

With warmth,
Crystal Anzalone
Etched from the Soul



THE EXPANDED WORK

A fuller edition of The Soul's Geology is taking form. It will bring the memoir and its accompanying reflections together in one volume, following the passage from Bedrock through Headwaters, Tributaries, The Gorge, Confluence, and Open Sea.

Within each movement, you will find:

The lived story
Passages from my life, revisited through the understanding that the intervening years have cultivated.

The geological formation
A formation or process explained through an actual landscape, giving visible substance to an inward experience.

Within a Family
Reflections on how patterns become established, how we learn our places within relationships, and where a different response becomes possible.
These passages attend to inherited strengths,
the people who enter our lives later,
and our participation in what we carry forward.

Three questions for your own terrain
A sequence that invites you to recognize what took shape, attend to what it holds, and consider your participation now.

A Further Bearing
Another observation from the earth that deepens the inquiry—revealing how protection, persistence, support, and new formation operate
within a landscape and resonate within a life.

Room for your own account
Writing space in which to gather memories,
trace relationships, follow a question,
and return to an earlier understanding with a further thought.

Geological sources
and psychological influences
will accompany the work,
offering further reading for those who wish
to explore its foundations.

My hope is that these pages
help you discover language faithful to your experience—
and recognize where you can
participate in the life still taking form.

Stories beget stories.
I would be honored if mine helped open a passage into yours.

Sources for the work: etchedfromthesoul.com/the-souls-geology/sources/
Visit etchedfromthesoul.com
for new writings, art, and news of the expanded edition.