My Middle Name Is Christian

TY CHAPMAN

Before I could speak, I choked on odd water. Claimed
by white priest & white god. God brought Black by
missionary, fetter, split skin. Odd god workin' strange
magic while wicked men wield it. All power & content
with inaction? Christ. Haven't we had enough white men
idle as brown children die? As queer children die?
Enough young graves & lazy might?

My middle name is Christian. I'll concede there's music to it,
though it feels more brand than name. Evidence I can't escape
his influence. On every continent, a cross. Eachwhere a priest
or holyish man wielding terror in the name of God. I'll admit
I catch myself praying on turbulent flights. Still beg his mercy
when I leave home. I know I'm in his nation, his children
watchful. Halos tighten under pressure. They'll force one
to my neck, string me up in Eden. But listen, please

listen. When I swing in his holiest light, don't let them say
I found God.