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Stone: A Symposium

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Stone: A Symposium

Adam

In Eden I hardly noticed rocks—
the parted stream,
the occasional stumble.
But outside I collected them,
named them like beasts,
trusted them like bones.
In spring I piled them
waist high,
wondering at night
what stone across the fields
waited to be scrubbed
and chiseled
with my name.

Moses

God said, tell this boulder
to become a spigot.
But I kept stone silent,
my tongue stiff as a tablet
from all the hardness of hearts
and the seasons of death by stone.
For that God took me
as I sat on a cliff,
remembering aprons
full of manna,
imagining smooth cakes
in rivers of honey
and running milk.

Satan

Stub your tongue
on stale clay.
Break the crust
and let the shards
settle in your
own dark well.
You will pray for bread,
but expect stone.

Jared's Brother

Clean rocks the size of figs
 heaped in my cupped hands
 became portals of light
 even the sea could not quench.
 Geology did not teach me this;
 it is only a prism,
 a rainbow of adjectives:
 igneous
 sedimentary
 metamorphic.
 But the soul of
 every rock is a lamp,
 a tongue of flame
 that speaks to the heart.
 When I found that fire
 I learned the hard truth:
 show God a rock and he
 shows you himself.

Joseph Smith

Because my father's meadows
 were full of them
 I had to rake all day,
 combing the soil clean,
 my hatfuls of pebbles
 spilling like seeds
 across the path.
 Small wonder
 I have seen
 so much
 in stones.

—Michael Hicks