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