

The Stones

Any rockslide's bound to leave a mark.
Boulder fields tell stories
of old adjustments made to mountains
you can read them just like
you read the rings of trees or ponds.
I heard about a boulder field
in North Carolina once where people came with
hammers 'cause the rocks would sing when you
beat them.
I have made adjustments too
thanks to gravity and late winter
ice, but I have yet to hear
the song my rocks might sing. I'm not in
charge of this shift in my face, only
responsible
for being brittle enough to come
down. I take on a new name
with each rockslide, each
new face, names as arbitrary as clouds
because I do not do
the naming. People project their dreams
upon a silhouette, they call
me *Fortress*, they call me *Thunder*,
they call me *Old Man*. In South
Dakota once, they jack hammered
dead politicians into
the sides of mountains, and now faithful
pilgrims lay gifts there
at the base of the rockslide, buy
trinkets to clasp later as they mumble
their prayers. I'll not
be shaped by jack hammers, even
if you promise me gifts
and worship. I am
the work of another, faults in my granite
bright with potential. Ice and gravity
wind and water know best
what I will be when I am done.