

Senior Division Poetry
E.C. Daley, Goulds
To Split Stone

*To write about age you need to take something and
break it.* Eavan Boland

A stone, split, has a knife's-edge.

Thumbs know this,

call *progress* the taste acquired

since ancestors fashioned crosses from stone—

the impossible redemption

of those bearing old gods disguised as new—

settling an island raked clean by glaciers,
seeded by hard tides.

But already eroding are stories I once thought indelible.

Like the grit of a whetstone drawn across the blade of a scythe at
the edge of a summer.

Or why my grandfather, after long spells at sea,
thought this magic

important to teach a young girl—

the manner of sand

gotten at low tide

left to dry behind the wood-stove
then sprinkled
slow
so as to coat a split made tacky with linseed—

how this never failed to return the edge to the chine to the hand
mowing meadows too steep for horses.

And always that sweetness of hay
finished with salt, kiss enough to last
winter, and beyond.

Voices now only echoes.
The knife-edge of growing old.
The duty of memory,
never to the past.

So I repeat myself over and over
though the old scythe hangs by cobwebs
above a tin rusting with feathers&wedges:
implements of the rhythm and pace of a day
long gone.
And I harden,

to leave those I love
with that moment just before dawn
when the blue gull sirens, again to sea and to sky—
mercurial as a line
a small child draws
in wet sand.

To make clear I have heard the stone singing;
a moan no different for a gull or a woman

having not forgotten how patient the landwash—

tumbling rock
into pebble
into sand,
never settling.

To insist it is no accident waves are called breakers,
that fault-lines can be made portals,
that all lines, seen from a distance, are but tangents of a circle.

To offer memory honed from a stone standing.

To promise,
in hard ground there still grows a pale flower,
its leaves bleeding the same essence as bone,

the plant sturdy, not shy of the cold.

One bearing the name

that means *to split stone*.