

# Stone work

by [Angela Alaimo O'Donnell](#) in the [January 15, 2008](#) issue

I know the one I want when I find it.  
Turning them over, like tortoises,  
rubbing their ridged underbellies, their curves,  
their pocked histories of love and grief,

I palm the one that speaks my other name,  
the one whom I become this still moment,  
lead-light, soft as chalk, right as spring  
after weeks of needling sleet, the dumb tomb.

I run my tongue along its edges, taste  
the sharp consonants, the gush of vowel,  
the salt that grits the honest surface,  
telling its years in the still pool of tears.

A stone in a heart made of sorrow,  
a node in a kidney (gorgeous agony),  
a missile thrown to break the martyr's skull,  
a stranger at the gates of the body's love.

I press it down hard in the good dirt  
next to the one I loved best yesterday,  
assembling the poem, stone by sudden stone,  
faithful as flesh to its house of bone.