

Pilgrim prayer

by [Rebecca Edgren](#) in the [July 14, 2021](#) issue

I hold your silence like a small round stone, it goes with me wherever I go.

Waking, I wear it: its bounce on my breast a second pulse, call and response of heart aching, rhythm breaking, the body's drum beaten from both sides.

Or sometimes I clench its stone-cold sphere in the pit of my palm where it steals my warmth. Little Slate Sun, Black-Hole-Born-in-Fire, feed on me.

Then sometimes I take it on my tongue like a tombstone, syllable of silence, bird with furred wings. I do not disturb its perch: I am refuge, I am preserve. I am oak, it nests in my words. Hush, sky. Hush, wind. Trees, heart, *Hush*.

But tonight I'll take and bury it in my shoe and walk like a pilgrim on pierced feet thinking—Maybe this silent stone is the last bone of the body of the person who was your voice, and will one day be resurrected singing.

This ache on the way is your name.