

Stones in our Pockets

By Robin W. Holland

From the beginning
We erected stone pillars
altars along the way
for sacrificing
life for life
to honor the God
who gave us life
water
and comfort—

Stones emerging
from rivers
and seas

Like the ones taken
from the Jordan
stacked in remembrance
of the 40-year walk
framed on each end
by passage through water

Like the small stone
Denis Horgan found lodged
in a windshield at the foot
of the World Trade Center carnage
and kept.

We carry them
in our pockets.

It is popular now to
impose
paint
carve
words on them
faith
courage
grace
strength

truth.

Touchstones to remind us
what is solid and real.
Worry stones to hold our fears.

Monuments
mark the dead
and honor the living
stones memorialize events
and never let us forget
our losses.

We measure our space
--a stone's throw away.
We used to measure the man
--how many stones?

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We delight in the stone
found on the beach
just the right size
and shape
to give us strength
and help us hope.

We hold
and finger small stones
on a string
as we pray.
The mere touch
takes us deeper--
silent conversation
with God
reverent contemplation
of God.

From the beginning
we mark our lives
with stones.

And we carry the ones
that make us real
in our hearts
in our pockets.