Museum of Stones

These are your stones, assembled in matchbox and tin,
collected from roadside, culvert, and viaduct,
battlefield, threshing floor, basilica, abattoir —
stones, loosened by tanks in the streets,
from a city whose earliest map was drawn in ink on linen,
schoolyard stones in the hand of a corpse,
pebble from Baudelaire’s oui,
stone of the mind within us

carried from one silence to another,
stone of cromlech and cairn, schist and shale, hornblende,
agate, marble, millstones, ruins of choirs and shipyards,
chalk, marl, mudstone from temples and tombs,
stone from the tunnel lined with bones,
lava of a city’s entombment, stones
chipped from lighthouse, cell wall, scriptorium,
paving stones from the hands of those who rose against the army,
stones where the bells had fallen, where the bridges were blown,
those that had flown through windows, weighted petitions,
feldspar, rose quartz, blue schist, gneiss, and chert,
fragments of an abbey at dusk, sandstone toe

do a Buddha mortared at Bamian,
stone from the hill of three crosses and a crypt,
from a chimney where storks cried like human children,
stones newly fallen from stars, a stillness of stones, a heart,
altar and boundary stone, marker and vessel, first cast, lode and hail,
bridge stones and others to pave and shut up with,
stone apple, stone basil, beech, berry, stone brake,
concretion of the body, as blind as cold as deaf,
al1 earth a quarry, all life a labor, stone-faced, stone-drunk
with hope that this assemblage of rubble, taken together, would become
a shrine or holy place, an ossuary, immovable and sacred
like the stone that marked the path of the sun as it entered the human dawn.

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