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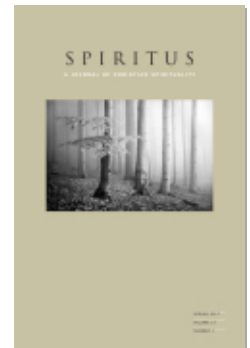
## Dreaming of Stones

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# Dreaming of Stones

CHRISTINE VALTERS PAINTNER

In the world before waking  
I meet a winged one,  
feathered, untethered,  
who presses in my palm  
three precious stones,  
like St. Ita in her dream,  
but similarities end there,  
her with saintliness and certainty,  
me asking questions in the dark.

All I know is  
I am not crafted from  
patience of rock or gravity of earth,  
nor flow of river,  
I am not otter with  
her hours devoted to play.  
I am none of these.  
At least not yet.

The stones will still be singing  
centuries from now,  
made smooth by  
all kinds of weather.  
If I strike them together,  
they spark and kindle.  
Do I store them as treasures  
to secretly admire  
on storm-soaked days?  
Or wear them as an amulet  
around my neck?

When the angel returns to me  
in the harsh truth of last morning,  
will she ask  
what have I endured,

treasured, and sparked?  
Will she ask what have I hidden away  
and what made visible?