



PROJECT MUSE®

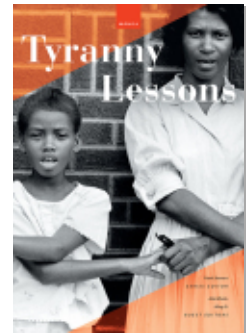
Offenders

Lü De'an, Ming Di, Frank Stewart

Manoa, Volume 32, Number 1, 2020, p. 160 (Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/man.2020.0051>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/761406>

Offenders

I've watched the secret migration of stones.
They roll boldly down from the heights.
Some rush ahead into oblivion—
those that stay behind become rubble.
Nothing can be more degrading than
to be a stone that remains in a heap of long shadows.
As I leave through the gate in the daytime,
I see them skittering about the courtyard—
they are doing nothing unusual.
But at night, their black whirring,
though only an illusion, is frightening:
one stone overpowering another.
In an instant its strength could crush you.
As in the beginning, someone was expelled
and Heaven erected a gate. Oh the work-weary stones,
the oval eggs—but what was hoped for
has never hatched.
At first, we only hear them, then we see
the stones rolling—rolling into our line of sight.
We feel the land shifting,
the earth loosening as their rolling begins.
The intensity of their clambering makes you feel empty.
Yes, it's the decisive moment.
We only happened to be passing by, not knowing
where to stand. Like the stones,
some of us stayed, others continued to roll forward.
Those who stayed behind became a forbidden city of souls,
and those who rushed ahead were condemned...

New York
1995.10.29

Translation from Chinese by Ming Di and Frank Stewart