

words
under
rocks

by sam deleo

Whatever words we said in this long walk
Were said on top of each other's words
Layer after layer, each a riper
Claim to rightness than the last,
Setting up their own posts under the sun,
Sentinels of their own light and breadth,
Shaping their own pace and independence,

Until we reached this wall of rock
Hanging from the sky, creased red and tan
By its generations from line to line,
Sedimented in itself and of itself,
Home to the single letters of rain
And the wind's smooth phrases,
Deaf to action and its rest.

Since, what led us here is
What we and all who made us said,
Brittle, uncertain, full of holes,
Easily reduced to an inch of stone,
There'll be no soft erasure, no playing dead.

And yet these frail sounds
Somehow survive in the open air,
One after another and another, like so,
Somehow round our days like ghosts,
Against the odds of our poor use,
The stones we've made of them now,
Against our ever tracing their sound.