

Like rocks

by [John Forbis](#) in the [June 15, 2004](#) issue

A Desert Father said
that we should be like rocks
in the face of suffering.

I sit on ancient weather-beaten boulders
and hear the wind scraping their surface.
Some have deep crevices, one a crater with a rippling pool.

My face fragments and distorts in its reflection.
Someone has placed small stones neatly around its perimeter,
a gesture of gratitude for an implicit understanding.

Baboons bark in the distance.
I look for them, but I do not see them.
No one ever does in this valley.

I lie back and soak my hand in the chilling water
while rubbing my other hand gently
over the moss-stained roughness of these old silent proprietors.