

## If We Are All Unremarkable Angels

by [Anna Elkins](#) in the [June 2024](#) issue

*The Remarkables, New Zealand*

After a long morning of hiking and getting lost,  
I walked to the pebbled edge of the lake to wash my feet.  
When I looked up, a toddler with a smile of pure  
and fearless joy was running up to me. He stopped  
short, bent down to select a stone, and handed it to me,  
his face full of a hope so bold it was a knowing—  
that I'd think his gift as rich as gems. I smiled back.  
Like he had bowed to choose his gift, I bowed to accept it.  
I held the stone in my open palm to give it proper honor,  
loving not just the gift but how it came *after* the thought  
to give. He'd approached me empty-handed, found  
what he needed just when he needed it—nothing  
planned or stockpiled, as would be my way.  
I said, *Thank you*, and put the stone in my pocket.  
He ran back to his father, mother, sister.  
A beauty suffused the whole family. Maybe  
they were angels. Maybe we all take turns playing  
angel. Maybe I did earlier, for another child  
who'd come running down the mountain, crying,  
*Can you help me? I'm lost!* So we all are, so often.  
And then we're found—someone appears, leads us  
back up the path or offers us a talisman of praise,  
and once again, we're good enough for now.