

Two Poems

SUSAN BARBA

Final Letter of Stone

Human gestures.

To pick up a stone to see what's underneath.

To pick up a stone and throw it in the stream.

Stone expelled through air

hits the silence as it's said stone breaks the stream's skin

o where it entered
round echo

of its shape in the hand
of its warmth from the sun
of regret

then the unvoiced

final letter of stone

before nothing
closes over it

no vestige of a beginning
no prospect of an end

e for
the abyssal eons

scribbled
in the roadcuts

the anthropocene's antecedents
abridged

what use is
hope to a stone

forget ferns, moss
forget british soldiers, greenshield
lichens of the hoarstone

red rock has millions of years on them

not the redwall of the north rim
surface red
milkstone
but the epic redbed

redbed

desert diary
of the opening of the atlantic

seabed

sea diary
of land to be

the stories, gods, family trees
all about us

make tuning in
to this time scale
a refusal

but maybe it is a kind of eternity

the earth's

Exhibit 4

In the ocotillo's arms
the red cranes roost.
The desert is creosote
in a clay pot.

The clarity of a single plant,
potted in sand
almost as old as dust,
mulched with pebbles

that remember their late rivers.
The plant is seconds old
green stripling!
in the gnomonic earth.