

stories in stone

*when we lose our parents
we lose our bearings
as islanders we go to the shore
to rediscover our horizons*

I never was a collector
before my mother died
but walking the beach to clear my head
I began to pick up heart-shaped stones

the day after my father died
I found my feet on sand again
hands reaching for stones
the first was large enough to fill my palm
heavy
heart-shaped but knocked about
impacted hard by tides

the hearts I collected were not like the ones
gathered for my mother
smooth, gently sublime, softened
they were weighty
solid and damaged at the same time
allegorical
stories in a language that explained to me
how it felt
to be this daughter
loved by that mother and that father

I could pick almost any stone on this beach
and viewed from the right angle or perspective or elevation
what an astronaut might call *attitude*
every one of them
between the stain of water and shadow of the sun
could limn a heart
or the broken off part of a heart