

PEBBLES FROM TEREZIN

Outside the solitary cells
I picked up a dark red stone
that cowered when I touched it,
like a small child who doesn't trust.

I held it in the palm of my hand
turning it over, watching its creases glint
in the same sun that cooked it for years,
the same sun that watched it live and rot
in the gates of Terezin.

I dropped it in my purse. Gravel cracked
beneath my feet. And I wondered
if rocks from Terezin could talk,
what would they say?
And my heart fell to my ankles.

I picked up another later,
prying it from the ground
because I didn't want the first to be alone.
I heard them clang together in my bag.

I wondered what details they left out
when they whispered to each other,
how many they watched pass through.
And I thought that if each were a pebble
that the camp would be nothing but rock.

I left,
my heart harder than a boulder.

(Terezin Concentration Camp, Czech Republic)