

Ray Gonzalez

MY BROTHERS

My brothers lie under the darkened stones.
When I wake them, they ask my name.
When I answer, they disappear
and I keep polishing the stones.

My brothers sleep under the stones.
When I interpret their dreams,
the cracks in the ground grow flowers
and I am no longer alone.

My brothers travel under the rocks.
When they pass under my feet,
I move out of the way and they pause,
wait for me to take the wrong step.

My brothers tell stories under the rubble.
When I am left out of the legend, tree roots
grow to the horizon, their underground
roads never crossing my path.

My brothers hold hands under the stones.
When they grip tighter, the world wants to end.
When they let go, I run to stand under
a huge cottonwood in an open field.

My brothers are missing under the rocks.
When I build a house where I last saw them,
no one wants to visit because there are
always voices coming out of the walls.

My brothers are tired of being mistaken for stones.
When I throw another armful in the pile,
their widows take years to select one pebble
in their hands before walking away.

My brothers seek justice under the stones.
When I start digging with a shovel,
they shift their skeletal bones to trick me
into thinking I have dug out their hearts.

My brothers rattle the space under the rocks.

Their history will be uncovered someday,
but there are too many rivers that
flow without a name.

My brothers lie under the darkened stones.
When they tell me to join them,
I say I am finally coming and a new
continent rises out of the earth.