

Rocks

ROCKS

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For Robert Grenier

between lines, spaces
meaning what
sound a thought makes

once it is gone, one
doesn't know
where it went or why

like a shooting star
say, as if
in meaning that

part of a planet
that's broken
off, so long ago

meaning it gets dark,
Perseid
meteor erupts

in a little bit
as if it's
finished, on this line

how the stars come out
after sun
sets, meaning the west

that is, sky against
this place as
counter-rotation

lights in the valley
where the car
stops, one who isn't

someone else being
occupied
say, the other who

walks down the road, waits
by the car
stopping beside it

how the person looks
up, as if
which way the Dipper

the simplest of words
meaning that
point, thinking of it

as if to say now
the sky is
like a curtain, ripped

in half, the longest
meteor
being itself one

then another, how
the person
in the second car

is missing, almost
as if it's
getting colder now

as the line about
being cold
echoes, like the sound

of water, one's ear
hearing it
answer gravity

which the meteor
also felt,
apparently drawn

toward extinction,
Perseid
the name a person

one doesn't know gave
to it, how
it makes the night go

more quickly, as if
time isn't
meaning to do that

much in itself, not
the same say
as what others mean

looking at the watch
whose hand falls
off, which one fixes

once the car stops, so
it isn't
always in motion

until the next one
happens, not
before or after

this sound is this sound
itself, one
person making it

as if it happens
now, the car
in the road sounding

as if it won't stop
or turn in
meeting, the person

photograph by Peter de Jung



Rocks was written on a backpacking trip in the Sierra Nevada between South Lake and Whitney Portal, 120 miles over six 12,000-foot passes August 10–18, 1993. I wrote in three-line stanzas (five syllables in first line, three in second, five in third) as a kind of walking meditation.