

## Wilderness House Literary Review 11/3

*Sandra Kolankiewicz*

### **Paternity**

He had to make a decision. How  
many families can a man have?  
Now everyone who knows the truth is  
dead. I have a brother somewhere. This  
is the way we make our bed, make our  
bed. Early in the morning. Later,  
I wanted the purse and shoes, but not  
the helicopter. Even when you're  
rich, death follows you, appearing  
next to you in the more recent shots  
where jowls are beginning. She lived in  
a neighborhood where there was no snow,  
while we were bound at the end of a  
long drive. I dream of her bag and pumps,  
hear the blades turning overhead. We  
don't choose our parents; instead, they pick  
the child they know will disappoint them,  
anxious to make quick advances in  
suffering to even out the wheel.  
The last one who could enlighten  
me is a retired judge who drew  
up the papers. After that, no one  
knows what happened, how the story ends.

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### If People Are Stones

I may be limestone or gypsum, made from  
skeletal fragments of coral and foraminifera —  
or evaporated mineral deposits and liquid  
brines—good just for plaster and fertilizer,  
chosen for building veneer and trim —  
radiating even in virginity a sense of being  
spent, strong as dust. No smashing for me.  
Bang, and I clog your living room and lungs.  
If people are stones, I long to be tektite, dull  
glass said to be formed by planets colliding,  
small as a pebble and controversial, rumored  
to be merely magma. I imagine a better state  
then, given enough pressure, evolving to  
meteorite so my origins are never questioned,  
my category clearly defined, my calling to  
be pallasite, composite of nickel, iron, and  
olivine created when asteroids smashed together,  
clearly from a place where space is outer,  
spotted like a leopard falling from the sky.