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## *The Broken Tablets*

The broken tablets were  
also carried in an ark.  
Insofar as they repre-  
sented everything  
shattered  
everything lost, they  
were the law of broken  
things,  
the leaf torn from the  
stem in a storm, a  
cheek touched  
in fondness once but now  
the name forgotten.  
How they must have  
rumbled, clattered on  
the way even carried so  
carefully through the  
waste land,  
how they must have  
rattled around until  
the pieces  
broke into pieces, the  
edges softened  
crumbling, dust collected  
at the bottom of the  
ark  
ghosts of old letters, old  
laws. Insofar  
as a law broken is still  
remembered  
these laws were obeyed.  
And insofar as  
memory  
preserves the pattern of  
broken things  
these bits of stone were  
preserved  
through many journeys  
and ruined days  
even, they say, into the  
promised land.

—RODGER KAMENETZ