

In the Company of Stone

THE ART OF THE STONE WALL

walls and words by dan snow



With the same care he uses to select and assemble stones Dan Snow has selected words to express his thoughts about the craft of dry stone walling and placed them together to create a well-woven thesis on the subject.

His writing is as clear as morning, a sparse prose which is often poetic without being pretentiously so. His ruminations upon the essence of an archetypal activity will seem familiar to some of

you; they express ever so succinctly similar thoughts and feelings that sometimes float through the mind of the stonemason at work.

At the beginning of certain sections there are words in large type which can be taken as fundamental to the craft: SOLIDARITY, PRECISION, READINESS, INGENUITY, DILIGENCE, and RECKONING.

The book is enlivened by the appear-

ances here and there of various colorful personages such as John Regan, an older mason "with a torso the size shape and density of an 80 pound sack of cement", Mac McAuslan, a retired rigger, to whom is attributed the admonition, "stay out from under the load" (this appeared in a section describing the act of lifting, transporting and placing a large stone in dynamic detail as if it was a dance step or a golf swing), and a Tibetan stonemason, Sonam Lama, who was compelled by traditional belief to bring his day's work to a

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