

## Stone Rising:

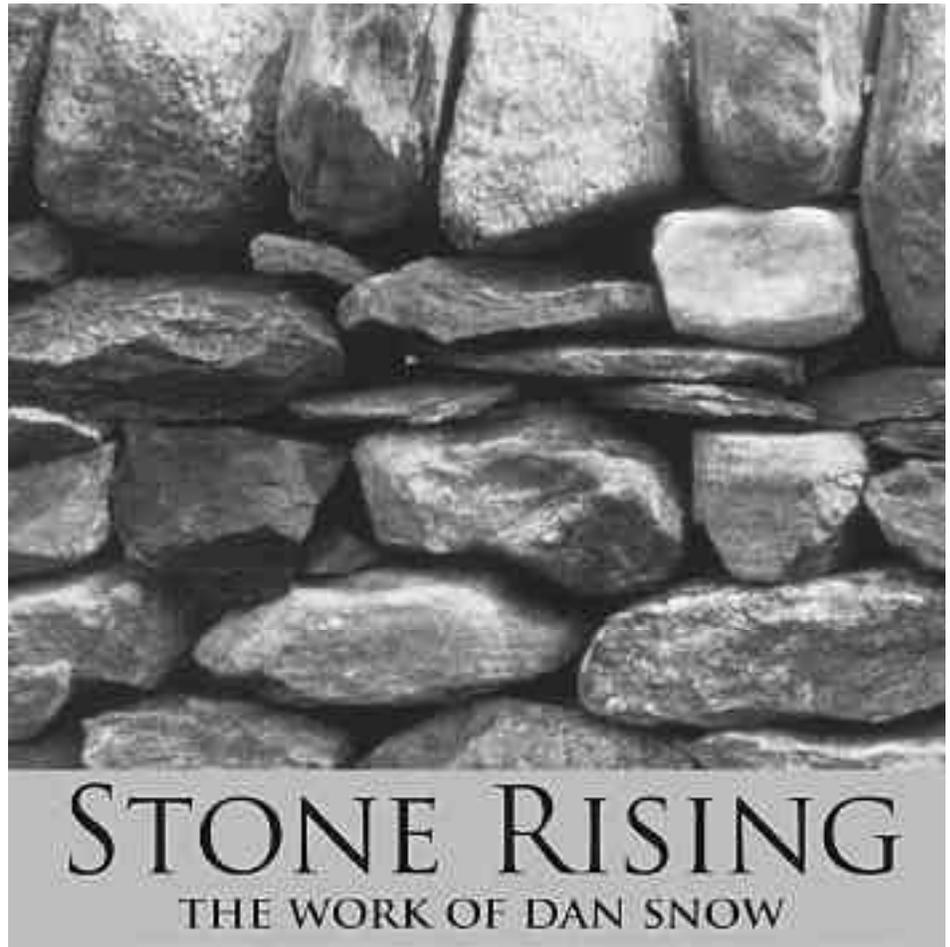
A film about the work of Vermont stone waller, Dan Snow

Dan Snow has been building stonewalls along the roads and fields of southern Vermont for thirty years. His work has been the subject of articles in numerous publications including *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *This Old House* and *Garden Design*. In STONEXUS II, we reviewed *In the Company of Stone*, the book he authored (with photography by Peter Mauss). Now, for the first time, Snow's stunning work is explored through the moving image. A one hour video, *Stone Rising: The Work of Dan Snow* by Burlington, Vermont filmmaker Camilla Rockwell, will soon be seen in venues around the state.

When her husband received a copy of Snow's book as a gift, Rockwell found herself returning to it again and again, drawn by the depth of the waller's devotion to his craft. She and her crew spent eighteen months gathering digital video footage of Snow's work in every season and conducting interviews with Dan and his longtime customers and associates.

Rockwell quickly understood that she was not being allowed into Snow's world lightly: "Dan relishes his privacy and works to the accompaniment of his thoughts and the sounds of nature." She first imagined a brief meditative piece documenting the design and construction of a single project but soon discovered that Snow rarely works on one project at a time and his larger endeavors may extend through multiple seasons. Finding that his clients—many artists themselves—spoke with such insight, humor and deep respect for Dan, she decided to include their voices and expand the program to an hour.

"Dan says that when he writes, he never worries that he will be able to find what he needs," says Rockwell. "Building stone walls, he's learned that the right stone when he's walling—and the right word when he's writing—will be there when he needs it. That's the approach I learned to take with this project." What unfolded was an introduction to Dan's creative process: his practical considerations in building with natural stone, the daily challenges of working in nature and his playful experiments in collaboration—all of which Rockwell shares in scenes that shift seamlessly between seasons. The appeal of the program, Rockwell finds, is widespread. Not only are artists and craftsmen drawn to Snow's work, she says, but "all of us seem to carry an innate attraction to the power and beauty of



stone. Everyone has a story about the place of stone in their lives."

Some of Rockwell's favorite stories about Snow's work in *StoneRising* are told by Archie and Win Clarke, excavators from Newfane who are always on the lookout for stone that might interest Dan for his unique projects. Usually busy digging cellar holes and septic systems, they respond enthusiastically whenever Dan calls for their services. Working with him, they say, has not only helped them look at stone anew but inspired them to create their own stone and landscaping projects.

Snow's own inspiration often comes from his travels in Europe. Many of his recent projects look as if they've been standing for hundreds of years. He seems almost egoless about his work, preferring to focus on his appreciation for the gardens people plant around it and his gratitude for being able to do what he loves. Dry stone is a medium guaranteed to undergo constant change caused by the seasons and Snow delights in the mystery and surprise that result. Often reclaiming stones from derelict walls, he envisions the material in his work being used in the creations of a future generation. "I like the idea," he smiles, "that it just keeps being passed along."

*Stone Rising* is due to air on Vermont Public Television in 2005 and will be available on VHS and DVD. Copies may be ordered through Rockwell's website: [fuzzyslippersproductions.com](http://fuzzyslippersproductions.com).



