Everybody
Needs a Rock
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Everybody
needs
a rock.

I'm sorry for kids
who don't have
a rock
for a friend.

I'm sorry for kids
who only have
TRICYCLES
BICYCLES
HORSES
ELEPHANTS
GOLDFISH
THREE-ROOM PLAYHOUSES
FIRE ENGINES
WIND-UP DRAGONS
AND THINGS LIKE THAT—if
they don't have
a rock
for a friend.
That's why
I'm giving them
my own
TEN RULES
for
finding
a
rock....

Not
just
any rock.
I mean
a
special
rock
that you find
yourself
and keep
as long as
you can—
maybe
forever.

If somebody says,
“What's so special
about that rock?”
don't even tell them.
I don't.

Nobody
is supposed
to know
what's special
about
another person's
rock.

All right.
Here
are
the
rules:
RULE NUMBER 1

If you can, go to a mountain made out of nothing but a hundred million small shiny beautiful roundish rocks.

But if you can't, anywhere will do. Even an alley. Even a sandy road.

RULE NUMBER 2

When you are looking at rocks don't let mothers or fathers or sisters or brothers or even best friends talk to you. You should choose a rock when everything is quiet. Don't let dogs bark at you or bees buzz at you.

But if they do, DON'T WORRY. (The worst thing you can do is go rock hunting when you are worried.)
Rule Number 3

Bend over.
More.
Even more.
You may have to sit
on the ground
with your head
almost touching
the earth.
You have to look
a rock
right
in the eye.
Otherwise,
don't blame me
if you
can't find
a good one.
RULE NUMBER 6

The size must be perfect. It has to feel easy in your hand when you close your fingers over it. It has to feel jumpy in your pocket when you run.

Some people touch a rock a thousand times a day. There aren’t many things that feel as good as a rock—if the rock is perfect.
RULE NUMBER 7

Look for
the perfect
color.
That could be
a sort of
pinkish gray
with bits of
silvery shine in it.
Some rocks
that look brown
are really other
colors,
but
you only see them
when you squint
and when the sun
is right.

Another way
to see colors
is to dip
your rock
in a clear mountain stream—
if one is passing by.

RULE NUMBER 8

The shape
of the rock
is up to you.
(There is a girl in Alaska
who only likes flat rocks.
Don't ask me why.
I like them lumpy.)
The thing to remember about shapes is this:

Any rock looks good with a hundred other rocks around it on a hill.

But if your rock is going to be special it should look good by itself in the bathtub.

RULE NUMBER 9

Always sniff a rock. Rocks have their own smells. Some kids can tell by sniffing whether a rock came from the middle of the earth or from an ocean or from a mountain where wind and sun touched it every day for a million years.

You'll find out that grown-ups can't tell these things. Too bad for them. They just can't smell as well as kids can.
RULE NUMBER 10

Don't ask anybody to help you choose.

I've seen a lizard pick one rock out of a desert full of rocks and go sit there alone. I've seen a snail pass up twenty rocks and spend all day getting to the one it wanted.

You have to make up your own mind. You'll know.

All right, that's ten rules. If you think of any more write them down yourself. I'm going out to play a game that takes just me and one rock to play.

I happen to have a rock here in my hand....