

MEGAN MCHUGH [TO LIVE AND STAY]
THIRD PLACE WALLACE STEVENS POETRY PRIZE

If home is a rock
I want a list of ingredients,
official documentation
of all that is contained
within these sheetrock walls,
all the colourful particles
that cling together to form
this domestic monolith.

Oh god, the minerals
that are held in drawers,
in kitchen cabinets,
the dirt that falls from
the sole of our shoes,
burrows into the rug
and hides out like a
thief behind the living
room curtain -

The minerals that
comprise this aggregate,
the clear quartz of your
eyes, solid enough to
make me stay, but
softer than the marble
of the cold foyer floor,
a runway that ends at
the front door, a slippery
path to the great outdoors

covered by miles
of lawns and origami
shrubbery with roots
held intact by the
persistent weight
of little rocks, dedicated
anchors

that hold and clutch,
press and push roots
into an earth that sometimes
tries to uproot, sometimes
tries to say

a home is where
you live without
pressure to hold you
in place, home is
water bubbling contentedly
on the stovetop,
and never feeling
the urge to quit
the cast-iron confines
and boil over.