

Stone Soup · *Lisel Mueller*

So easy to stir up a feast
with only a random, unmagical stone
or, in some versions, the nail
we happen to carry around in our pockets.
It takes nothing more than hope
and, being persuaded, our natural gift
for persuasion to bring out the neighbors
with carrots and onions and parsley
and finally even with meat and salt.
We are standing in front of the window
behind which a nurse lifts you up,
newborn. We are holding
the ingredients for your future.
Already you have been given a name,
a second skin, more durable than the first.
Now your father is adding his vision
of you in twelve years, your beauty,
a long-term stowaway, hinted at;
your grandmother offers her trust
in your resilience, your aunt her assumption
of your genius for love.
And you, our odd-shaped, sea-worn stone,
our gleaming, crooked nail—
you let it happen, let the savor
of your life begin to simmer.