

On Gregory Avenue

by [Brian Doyle](#) in the [May 17, 2011](#) issue

Down in the basement folding the laundry, towels first to trim the pile,
I realize that I have lived in this house now precisely as long as I lived
On Gregory Avenue, seventeen years! and that warm little house leaps
Into my memory: the ping-pong table where dad laid out the *Catholic
Journalist*, and the hammering of his typewriter in his ostensible study;
The bright yellow kitchen even the radio painted yellow who did *that?*;
The gargantuan fan upstairs; the raft of small boys; the alpine staircase;
The rocks and stones in the yard stolen from national parks everywhere;
The maple tree that rocketed up next to the garage and is tipping it over;
The sweetgums that provided so many thousands of tiny prickly bullets;
The massive pipe by the furnace that has brained many an unsuspecting
Soul, many of them more than once; the workbench, with another radio,
And the lean white pantry for hurricane supplies; a grandmother's room
Where once there was a grandmother, stern and sweet and then returned
To the Mercy. The days after grandma died, our mom must have paused
Down in the basement, standing by the dryer, holding her mom's towels
Against her face, hauling in the fading elegant holy redolence before she
Dries her eyes and plunges into the alps of kids' stuff. Maybe our house
Is always our house even after we leave and someone else is memorizing
The splay of the kitchen so you can get a sandwich at two in the morning
Without waking up the baby. Maybe if your home is always in your head
You can always live there. Maybe that is one of the ways we live forever.