

April 27

Poems About Shoes

Let shoes somehow walk into your pedestrian poem today.

Poem

Every morning I forget how it is
I watch the smoke mount
In great strides above the city.
I belong to no one.

Then I remember my shoes,
How I have to put them on,
How bending over to tie them up
I will look into the earth.

Charles Simic
in *Selected Early Poems*

Shoes

In the shoe store storage closet,
the smooth brown eggs of new shoes
lie glowing in boxes, nestled
in christening gowns, their eyelets
already open and staring
but their laces still tightly folded
in dark little fists. Let us
not tell them just yet
that they will all too soon
be just like the others, waiting in rank
by size and sex and color
at the secondhand store—
old shoes with cracked faces,
with sore hands fanned out on their knees,
their toes turned up from forever
walking uphill in the rain.

Ted Kooser
from *Weather Central*

My Shoes

Shoes, secret face of my inner life:
Two gaping toothless mouths,

Two partly decomposed animal skins
Smelling of mouse nests.

My brother and sister who died at birth
Continuing their existence in you,
Guiding my life
Toward their incomprehensible innocence.

What use are books to me
When in you it is possible to read
The Gospel of my life on earth
And still beyond, of things to come?

I want to proclaim the religion
I have devised for your perfect humility
And the strange church I am building
With you as the altar.

Ascetic and maternal, you endure:
Kin to oxen, to Saints, to condemned men,
With your mute patience, forming
The only true likeness of myself.

Charles Simic
in Selected Early Poems

Inaction of Shoes

There are many things to be done today
and it's a lovely day to do them in

Each thing a joy to do
and a joy to have done

I can tell because of the calm I feel
when I think about doing them

I can almost hear them say to me
Thank you for doing us

And when evening comes
I'll remove my shoes and place them on the floor

And think how good they look
sitting?...standing?...there

Not doing anything

Ron Padgett
anthologized in *The Poetry of
Impermanence, Mindfulness, and Joy*
edited by John Brehm

A Donation of Shoes

They're on their way to Goodwill
in Destiny's old cardboard carton,
the flaps folded inside, lending its
scuffed shoulders a look of authority,
the box knowing the route, the shoes
badly lost and confused, their toes
starting in every direction at once,
clambering over each other, laces
entangled—wingtip, slip-on, work-
boot and sneaker—every pair
trying to get one last, lingering look
at the closet before settling down
into their smell. What's the saddest
about this is seeing those insoles
floating up naked, pale flounders
beat flat and then dried, no longer
to swim through the ocean of days,
led on by plump dolphins of feet.

Ted Kooser