

Lost Shoes

Forsaken footwear – Dress Shoes and Sneakers –
litter the lonely locations. By busy roadsides
and distant reservoirs, Slip-Ons and High Heels
converge on the verges. On riverbanks,

along the margins of lonely ponds, fishermen
haul-up rank Gumboots and Deck Shoes, missing
Brogues, a puzzling Stiletto or Kitten Heel, as though
they've stumbled on an ill-dressed scene, a crime.

And sleeping there above the flotsam line
amongst the husks of dried-out fish, discarded nets,
the bladder wrack and ocean's castoffs,
a lover may notice a Flip Flop or Mule,

or stumble across the rarer find of a single
Sling-Back or Jazz Shoe, dropped over the bows
of some expensive yacht as it slooped its way
across the waves in New Year's reveries.

Or yet still on building sites, in car parks
or subways, a solitary Oxford or an Espadrille
lingers in the grime and debris, calling to its other.
And who has not passed through a summer field

to find, decaying in the corn, a Sandal or a Ballet Flat,
a Moccasin or Work Boot that some farmer,
startled by the presence of the overlooked
scarecrow, lost in his retreat through the stubble;

or the scarecrow himself, loping away from
his hitch-post at midnight, who kicked a leg
and shucked off a Runner, a Track Spike, a Clog
forever abandoned to yield a home to mice?

There's a Glass Slipper on every palace driveway.
New shoes, old shoes, leather shoes that linger
for forty years beneath suburban bushes. A Blücher
in a park hut. That Snow Shoe jutting from a bin...

ten thousand shoes misplaced or chucked on purpose,
tossed by their laces to hang from the branches of trees,
to dangle over power lines at crossroads.
Your empty Wellington Boot, lolling in the hall.