

## SHOE-MAKER

I make you a *cost-the-earth* pair of shoes  
blessed by a spendthrift Pope,  
tightrope-walker stilettos, all your sins forgiven

You just yawn, like Imelda Markos

I make another pair of shoes,  
pumps white as January in the north of the world,  
good for dancing in a moon garden

But Jacqueline Onassis won't dance

She stashes them in her walk-in shoe-closet  
big as an aircraft hanger

It pains me  
to hear her sighing in the big dark  
like an angel  
realizing she's left her shopping list in heaven

I make a third pair of shoes,  
out of broken glass and spite,  
one-size fits all,  
try them on

Next I make a big sturdy pair of shoes  
with a simple Velcro strap at the instep,  
easy to do-up and un-do,  
except for the slowest learner

I make yet another pair of riding boots  
for the Queen of the Night  
She insists I use only softest leather  
made from the hides of poets and dreamers

I make a pair of trainers  
for the Emperor Nero,  
he wants to get fit...

I make his trainers out of fire and venom -  
watch him run

I make myself a pair of shoes,  
I use scraps of leftover leather,  
mismatching laces, cardboard soles

(how wise am I...)

they'll last me a lifetime

I wear them on days like these  
when I'm glad I'm dead

Penelope Shuttle