

Shoes

Claire Rosslyn Wilson

The kilometres creased the leather
that flaked where the toes pushed over
his steps. He always lifted his feet
in spite of the roads
and everything else.
Every morning he brushed his brown shoes
clean again, tin by his side
wasted muscles folded up on his stool
strokes slower each day
as thick joints took longer to warm in the sun.
He serviced his shoes like an aging car
driving the bristle into the creases
to chase out the dust from yesterday,
scraping the gap
between skin and sole, flicking dirt
onto the stones outside his door.

Walking holes in the underside
he took them to see his city.
He showed them the park where he first met his wife,
dancing one Sunday afternoon.
He showed them the markets,
now lost under plastic-wrapped meats
in florescent aisles.
He showed them the places
that cast long shadows in his memory.

Unfastening their thoughts with him
on remembered routes
they grew weary, as he did.
They grew tired
of the city's dirt
accumulating on either side of his door
turning the morning sun to a grey wash
that fell through the windows
and onto his carpet while they were out.
But still they walked,
man,
polished shoes
and echoes.