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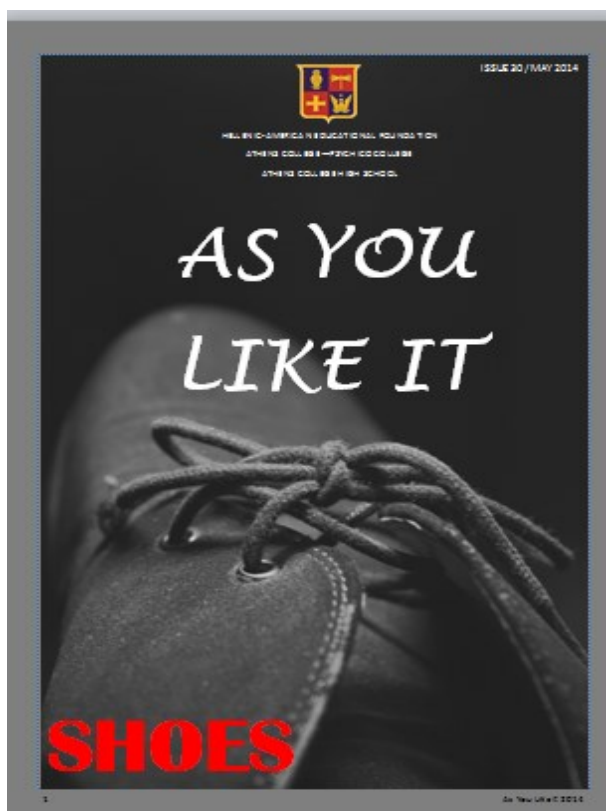
HELLENIC-AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

ATHENS COLLEGE—PSYCHICO COLLEGE

ATHENS COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

AS YOU LIKE IT

SHOES



By Helen Antonakopoulou

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Please note that the ideas expressed in this magazine are those of the students themselves and do not reflect the opinions or beliefs of HAEF or the educators of the institution.

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From The Editor

When the creative team of *As You Like It* first got together to plan for this year's issue, we agreed on one thing: no rules. The team had to forget all they knew about essay formatting, vocabulary choice, and register and dip their pens deep into their heart to produce their own, unique, and unconventional pieces of writing.

Our topic this year was "Shoes" and we all loved it. Because how many chances do we get in our student life to write about something as crazy as that? Nevertheless, every day we wake up and put on our student shoes, which uncomfortable as they may be can also lead us to a better place in the future. We usually write having a good grade in mind, so we are careful to follow conventions or reproduce the points laid out for us in an outline. It is only natural, then, that many students steer away from writing and for many the idea that writing can be fun is absurd. And yet, here is this issue to prove you wrong: this magazine was put together not just by aspiring authors but also by people who simply like writing. What we all have in common is that we have discovered a big secret: writing does not mean "introduction-body paragraphs-conclusion;" writing is yourself, what you think and feel, laid out on paper for others to see and appreciate.

So we encouraged our writing staff to take off their student shoes, slip into something more comfortable, and release their creativity. When I saw the results, I was amazed by the creative power of people who are not critically acclaimed authors or even amateur writers, but who simply forgot all about who they are supposed to be and revealed who they really are. However, this issue would not have been realized without the help of our dedicated advisors, Ms. Basiacou and Ms. Seitanidis, but also Ms. Quirk, Ms. Fotakidou, Ms. Paz, and Mr. Howard. We thank them deeply for their help. And of course a huge "thank you" goes to our writers, artists, and layout team for their contribution.

Now is the time for you, readers, to embark on this journey with us... So put on your slippers, relax, and dip into these pages! You will find facts about your favorite pair of shoes, about society, about the world around you, stories that have not been told before, and poems whose words will remain etched in your mind long after you have read them. Enjoy!

Vassiliki Papadopoulou
Editor in Chief

Part 1

Non-Fiction

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Shoe Fetish

How Shoes Define Us

By **Nayia Kalpini**

From the 5,500-year-old women's moccasins discovered hidden in a cave in Armenia to the 6,000 pairs of Louboutins in American novelist Danielle Steele's closet, one thing is for sure: women have always had a passion for footwear. Even with the current economic crisis, people have not abandoned their lust for shoes as it has been reported that shoe sales have actually risen, in comparison with other products. With our world in such a dire state, how can we think of shoe shopping? The answer is not as superficial as you may think.

As little girls, we were enchanted by Cinderella's slipper and Dorothy's ruby reds. Now as teenagers, we make our own style choices that determine our social identity. Whether you wear Converse, Toms, or Uggs people can tell more about you from your shoes than they can from any other article you wear. In fact, a study by the University of Kansas found that we can accurately determine 90% of another person's characteristics just by looking at their shoes. Bet that made you look down at your footwear choice today!

In fact, shoes can even raise our status, says Professor of Anthropology Helen Fisher. As all other species in the animal kingdom, we relate height with power, and shoes with heels are the means by which we can raise our standing—literally. In centuries past, only wealthy people wore heels because

According to Rachelle Bergstein, author of *From the Ankle Down: The Story of Shoes and How They Define Us*, women came out of the closet about their shoe obsessions thanks to Carrie Bradshaw's televised infatuation with Manolo Blahniks.

the masses were laborers and needed shoes they could work in. According to Fisher, we probably still associate class and status with shoes.

However, this is not the only reason why women are said to endure the discomfort of heels. High heels have always had sex appeal, and switching from flats to heels can change an outfit from casual Sunday morning coffee to nightclub ready. We feel and look more attractive to others when we make ourselves taller and closer to what are considered ideal proportions. In Poland, a study determined that men and women find that the ideal body has 5% longer legs than the average person. When subjects put on a pair of heels, they were immediately described as being more attractive. Researchers there claim that this is why both men and women are so drawn to heels.

But our closets aren't just filled with heels. Why, indeed, are we so apt to buy footwear in so many shapes, styles, and forms? There is a completely reasonable biological explanation. When we go shopping, dopamine is released and we feel the pleasure associated with drug-use. Martin Lindstrom, who wrote *Buyology*, explains that the dopamine high we get from shoe shopping lasts longer than any other kind of shopping. The reason for this is that people don't see shoes as an excessive purchase. When you buy a dress to wear for only a night, you might feel guilty knowing that it will end up staying in your closet, whereas shoes can be worn over and over again, making us feel that we are getting our money's worth.

Buying new shoes can also produce a mini-adrenaline rush because the "collecting spot" of your brain is stimulated. Suzanne Feiriss, PhD discusses this in *Footnotes* and explains that this part of the brain, more commonly known as the prefrontal cortex, is activated when a collector finds something to add to his collection. Although collecting is most often associated with stamps and coins, the average woman has an accumulation of 19 pairs of shoes in her closet, of which only four pairs are

worn regularly, found a 2007 National Consumer Report in the U.S. But not all shoes are meant to be worn. Some have actually become collector's items, with limited editions being auctioned off for top dollar.

All this shoe talk got me wondering about how many pairs I'm guilty of having stashed away at the back of my closet. After pulling out all those forgotten boxes, I am not ashamed to admit that I've got 24 pairs. A far cry from Danielle Steele's 6,000, but being merely sixteen years old, I've still got some time to work on it.



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Shoes - A Privilege or a Nightmare?

By Irene Adam

Shoes are often considered to be a "privilege" in life. Many people in poor countries wish they would own shoes to walk or run in. However, there are some cases in which shoes can be proven to have a detrimental effect on one's health. One of these cases, is the famous "foot binding" which took place in China from the 7th century until the early 1990's.

Chinese foot binding is the practice of modifying a woman's feet to make them about 3 inches (7 cm) long. Having small feet was once considered beautiful for women although it is also considered as a form of female subjugation.

The practice started in the 7th century CE but

was banned in the early 1900s. The physical process of foot binding was extremely painful and usually led to a lifelong disability. Though the practice was primarily restricted to Han ethnic Chinese women, an estimated 2 billion women had their feet bound in the 19th century alone.

"The purpose of Chinese foot binding was primarily cosmetic."

When a girl in China was at the age between three and six years old, her mom would rip up strips of cloth and start binding her feet. The wrappings would be taken off daily and then rewound tighter and tighter. Sometimes the toes would be broken



right away and folded under the foot; on other occasions, they would just be gradually bound in that direction so they would eventually end up there. It was common for the bound toes to develop gangrene due to lack of circulation and fall off. This was thought to be a blessing because it would enable the feet to be made smaller. The girl would never be able to stand again. If, by some chance, she did manage to do so for one second, standing up was perilous and painful. That was considered



insignificant in the pursuit for tiny feet. However, what was the purpose of all this?

The purpose of Chinese foot binding was primarily cosmetic. The tiny feet, called 'lotus feet,' were considered to be extremely erotic. Women with small feet were seen as delicate, aristocratic, and in need of male protection since they were unable to do many of the things a servant would do

"Having small feet was once considered beautiful for women although it was also considered as a form of female subjugation. "

easily. The feet however, might be also characterized as a symbol of gender discrimination since they left the woman unable to go out of the house on her own and therefore be independent. Poorer families would often bind the feet of only their eldest daughter so that she could potentially marry up in society.

What these Chinese women suffered all these years is something that we will never understand unless we feel the pain they felt. Fortunately, this 'torture' does not exist in contemporary societies. However, why did these women have to suffer all this?

"To look beautiful and get married," someone might say. But, isn't marriage supposed to be something pleasant, a happy moment in everyone's life instead of an event which makes you suffer by maiming your limbs and dignity?

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Personality Shoes

By Theodora Boulouta

Have you ever felt like you needed to tie the laces of your life? Or like you needed to change the soles of yourself? Have you ever felt the impulsive urge to slip off your immaculate yet breakable heels, to sink into your old comfortable sneakers, to slip off that projection you've promised yourself you will always be, to sink

in your comfort zone? Has there been a day when you have felt so insecure that you have forced yourself to wear your rain-boots, fearing that if you don't, drops of criticism and disapproval might wet

padrilles full of different shapes and flowers, sparking with spontaneity, and days you felt confident enough to ware your flip-flop personality, not being afraid to expose facets of your true self, not being afraid to get your feet a little dirty. Have you ever gotten tired of constantly changing to fit to the situation?

We all wear shoes because of fear. In the primitive times, before the dawn of civilization, people would walk around barefoot. We are, by nature, prone to do so. Shoes were developed later on to



your feet? Have you ever felt obliged to wear your pumps to appear neat and immaculate, keeping yourself a level higher than the rest? I am sure you have, just like there have been days when you've felt inspired and hopeful that you wore colorful es-

render people's feet resilient to pain, to help them withstand the soreness, to avoid the distortion of their toes and heels. Similarly, as mankind evolved, and people stopped living alone and formed societies, and the dominant human need was not

survival and sustenance but recognition within the community, people started sewing different 'personality shoes' to put on when being with different groups of people, in their attempt to feel accepted. 'Personality shoes' like shoes, were created to provide protection from pain; the pain of not fitting in. Just like regular shoes, their invention stemmed from human fear of acute suffering. But unlike regular shoes, which are worn only in rough or foreign ground, 'personality shoes' have become an essential and unalienable part of life, an overused garment we all seem to be unable to cast off.

'Personality shoes' come in many different kinds. Depending on the wearer, they vary in shape and color. People wear similar brands, the distinction between which lies somewhere in the very core of the consumer; somewhere where an unmangled heart used to be, in a place disguised and covered by the abrasion social rules brought. The cost printed on their price tag is high; it is called self-determination and creates a dearth of freedom. The manufacturer of the 'personality shoes' is human insecurity sponsored by a distrustful, repressive society. These personalities that people mold and display in public are visible everywhere today: in the way people dress, in the way they behave, in the way they say "thank you" and "please," in the divergence between what they say and what they think, in the way people pray to gods they don't believe in, in the way people are condescending to others, in the way they give in, in every risk they refuse to take, in their constant need for approval, in every forced smile drawn on their face, in every mask they bear. Overall, people dissent in the ways and the occasions they wear 'personality shoes,' but

they have one thing in common: they all wear them.

As imperative as it is for feet to wear shoes, the absence of shoes is equally important from time to time. If people never took off their shoes, would they ever be able to feel the wet grass in the spring,

or the comforting, warm sand of the beach? Would they ever feel the rocks scraping their feet, and would they appreciate the feeling of waves washing over their wounds? So, am I a dreamer for wanting people to dare to go barefoot? Am I a dreamer for hoping for a future where



people will drop their guard, where communication barriers will not exist, where I will be able to walk up to another person and unlock their soul? Am I a dreamer for hoping that people will overcome the illusion of fear? The fact that even I, a person fully aware of and revolted by the 'personality shoes' I wear, seem unable to release myself from their web makes me believe that I am. Will I always remain one? Probably...

"The manufacturer of the 'personality shoes' is human insecurity sponsored by a distrustful, repressive society. "



What Shoes Symbolize in Dreams

by Ioli Daniil

Have you ever dreamt that you went to school barefoot and wondered how this dream could be interpreted? Many people and scientists believe that dreams can be interpreted one way or another, as they contain hidden meanings. In fact, Freud argues that our dreams represent the expression of unconscious wishes or desires. Also, many psychologists, including Freud, think that even though it has not been scientifically proven, objects in dreams are often used as symbols. Shoe-related dreams are very frequent and consequently, many interpretations of such dreams exist.

“If you dream that your shoes do not fit or that they pinch and hurt, it means that you are questioning your goals.”

It is thought that in dreams, shoes represent one's approach to life. Wearing shoes in your dream suggests that you are well-grounded or down to earth. It also represents your convictions about your beliefs. For instance, if you dream that you are changing your shoes, then it refers to your changing roles, and the fact that you might be taking a new approach to life. If you dream that you have forgotten to put your shoes on, then this kind of dream would suggest that you are in the process of leaving your inhibitions behind, or that you might be refusing to conform to some idea or attitude. Sounds like the nonconformist in you?

Dreams involving uncomfortable shoes are very common. To dream that you

are wearing inappropriate shoes for the occasion or for the activity at hand means that your progress and path in life will be long, hard, and laborious. So,

if you have recently had such a dream, brace yourselves because it looks like you will have to work very hard from now on. This dream may also indicate that you are heading in the wrong direction with your life. If you dream that your shoes do not fit or that they pinch and hurt, then it means that you are questioning your goals, and that you doubt the direction of the path you have chosen to take. My advice on that? Don't second guess yourself!

The goals you set firstly are the ones you actually desire and the ones you should pursue.

Another common kind of shoe-related dreams is

the "shoeless dream." To dream that you are not wearing any shoes indicates that you have low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in yourself. You may even be dealing with issues about your self-identity. It also represents poverty, lack of mobility, or misunderstanding. Alternatively, to dream that you are not wearing shoes may also represent your playful attitude and relaxed, carefree mentality. If you dream that you lose your shoes, then your dream suggests that you are in search of your identity and finding yourself. Are you reading this wide-eyed, thinking, "Wait a second... That's exactly what I dreamt of last night... So, does this mean that...?" Yes, your dream might mean that you are in search of your real self... You thought you knew yourself already, right?

Dreams involving new and old shoes are very

common as well. To see old and worn shoes in your dream indicates that you will find success through hard work and diligence. You have come to terms with who you are. Good job, dear reader! On the other hand, to see new shoes in your dream suggests that you are overconfident in your success. Have you just had a dream of the shoes of your dreams? Be wary; you don't want to be making mistakes by being excessively confident! Alternatively,

you may be on a life path that is unfamiliar to you. To find shoes in your dream suggests that you have regained your foothold on life and that you are back on the right path again.

As it is evident, shoe-related dreams have

been interpreted in a variety of ways over the years. Sometimes, interpretations even contradict themselves. This might be because different people and cultures have their own ways and traditions, as well as perspectives of seeing and interpreting objects. However, we all agree on the idea that there is more to dreaming than one might initially think. Dreams, we all seem to agree, contain hidden messages that we have fun trying to unravel.

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Life in the Shoes of a Pilot

By George Ampatzis and Nectarios Kourtis

In our quest to gather information about the life of an airline pilot, we headed to the Headquarters of Hermes Airlines to interview Capt. Xifaras.

Given our shared enthusiasm for the aviation rules that apply to the country, we wanted to find out tries he flies over, such as official protocol in what being a pilot entails. Capt. case of loss of communication, emergency Xifaras described his day to us: procedures, and all information regarding

"The day before the flight, the pilot the departure, destination, and alternative must have everything concerning the flight airports.

ready. The biggest part of the preparation On the day of the flight, the pilot for the flight actually takes place at home. makes his way to the airport. There, the first At this stage of the process, the pilot plans thing he does is to check in with the dispatch office, where the second part of the to-destination route so he is fully aware of preparation takes place. The pilot checks the geography and ground morphology, to the flight plan, receives all weather



information regarding the route and airports, receives necessary documentation, and calculates the fuel required for the flight. Then, comes the briefing, which is attended by all flight and cabin crew members. During the briefing, they discuss flight details and plan procedures the cabin crew and the pilots need to plan together.

Approximately one hour before departure for international flights and 45 minutes for domestic flights, the crew board the aircraft. Once on board, they check the so-called 'Technical Log Book' or TLB, in which anything that happened during the previous flight is reported. Therefore, should a problem on the airplane be discovered, the next pilots to fly it will know. Then, pilots go through the airplane's checklist in order to make sure that the airplane is safe to fly. At the same time, the cabin crew proceeds with the cabin checklist. After all checks have been completed, the passengers are invited to board the plane. Once everything is ready, the pilots contact the Airport clearance delivery to obtain permission to depart. After confirmation has been

Captain Napoleon Xifaras is a flight instructor at Hermes Airlines. He started his training in 1974 in the Sierra Academy in Oakland, California. He has been working as a pilot for the past 36 years, starting off in Olympic Airways in 1977, joining Alitalia in 2003 and Hermes Airlines in 2011, and logging at least 18,000 flight hours in his long-haul career. He has flown many types of aircrafts including; Boeing 727, 737, 747, Airbus A300, A320 and A340. Today, he spends most of his time overseeing the work of the airline's 60 pilots.

received, they request clearance to start the home base or move to the next destination. engines, and the aircraft is taxied to the For example, if there is a flight from Athens edge of the departure runway where the to Paris, once in the French capital, the most critical part of the flight takes place: plane will have to fly back to Athens with take-off. only a 50-minute interval between the two

During the flight, the pilots are not boardings. When the two-leg trip is completed, most pilots have done their job for very busy, as the autopilot does it all. Pilots mostly play the role of the observer. However, in the event of an emergency, the pilots are always ready to take control. Before the day and can now rest.”

From our discussion with Capt. Xirafas, we came to the conclusion that pilots have



landing, once the crew has made sure that a very challenging and demanding job. First all passengers are seated, the pilot makes of all, a pilot needs many years of vigorous sure that the plane is fully functional. Ad- training and intensive studying and has to mittedly, landings are the most exciting part pass many exams to qualify. Moreover, air- of the flight, especially when the weather is lines require all new pilots to have had not good. It is the only time when pilots can completed a significant number of flight actually intervene and take control of the hours so as to keep mistakes and accidents, airplane. to a minimum. Furthermore, it is a very tir-

Pilots have literally no time to rest after ing job, as pilots have to cope with flying the flight, as the plane needs to return to long distances and jet lag. Also, they do not

get to have enough time to rest.

When we asked Capt. Xifaras what kind of person could be considered as an ideal pilot since it appears to be such a strenuous, hard, and demanding job, he responded that, "it takes a good deal of responsibility, managerial skills and, above all, love for the job in order for someone to become a pilot. Therefore, I can assure you that every pilot is prepared to face all the adversities that may appear." He went on to say that he

Overall, I believe it expands your horizons.

You see, everyone wanted to become a pilot back then. I was once flying to a destination while working for *Alitalia*, and I was speaking to an 80-year-old man. While we were talking, he said to me 'Captain, it is a great honor to be able to talk to you'. I must admit that I really like the prestige which comes with my job."

Finally, we asked the captain how rewarding he felt his job was. He responded confessing the following, "In Greece, the job of the pilot is absolutely not rewarding in terms of income. However, the income of the pilot abroad is more than adequate. The true reward of the pilot, though, is not his income. It is the opportunity to live such an adventurous life and to be able to fly the plane on his own. Flying is like a drug for the pilots, and being a pilot, constantly fuels their addiction. It really is difficult to put the way we all feel about this profession into words."

chose to become a pilot as, "it really was a childhood dream. I knew exactly what I wanted to be from a very young age. It seemed so prestigious, so great to be the captain of a huge metal bird that travels at speeds nearing the sound barrier. You travel the world, see different places, countries, people, cultures... And you're paid to do it while others actually would pay to do it.

We would like to thank *Hermes Airlines* for making this fascinating interview possible, as well as Captain Xifaras for spending time with us and answering our questions.

*Flying is like a drug
for the pilots, and being a pilot
constantly fuels their addiction.*

Airline Full Name	Hermes Airlines S.A.
Country	Greece
Founded	2011
Fleet Size	6 Aircrafts
Types of Aircrafts	Four A 321, one A 320, one 737-500
Official Website	www.hermesairlines.gr



IT'S ALL IN

By Nayia Kalpini

"Comfortable as an old shoe"

Those favorite sneakers of yours have some wear and tear, but you've broken them in and that is what makes them so comfortable. That's why this cliché is used to describe anything that is comforting and familiar to you.

"If the shoe fits, wear it"

When Carrie responds to Big with this proverb, she implies that the insulting comment he made is applicable to him. So, the next time your friend says, "only a stupid person would do that," just respond with this proverb to be more indirect when insulting him or her.

"Fill someone's shoes"

If you have older siblings who were all-around students and are now off at college, you know what it feels like trying to take their place and live up to the expectations they set.

"In someone else's shoes"

This expression refers to trying to see things from someone else's perspective.

"For want of a nail the shoe was lost"

This old proverb means that if you overlook minute details, then you might meet with disaster. So, pay close attention to directions!

THE SHOE

"To be shaking in your boots"

This idiom means that someone is extremely scared and frightened, but it is usually said in an ironic manner to mean that the other person is definitely not scaring you. Next time your mother threatens you, use this expression, if you dare.

"Waiting for the other shoe to drop"

When you're waiting for the unavoidable conclusion to a situation, you'd refer to this figurative expression. Usually, this expression gives a sense of anticipation for a negative outcome to situation.

"Wouldn't want to be in someone's shoes"

If someone else is in a bad situation, you'd use this expression to indicate that you wouldn't want to be in that person's place. Say, your friend did badly on an exam. Although you might feel bad for her, you certainly wouldn't want to be in her position.

"It's ill waiting for dead men's shoes."

This proverb is for those who are greedy and waiting to cash in on their inheritance. Essentially, this adage warns that it's bad luck to wait for someone to die to inherit his money.

The History of Heels

by Tatiana Anastasopoulou

Heels. A symbol of fashion, a symbol of femininity. A type of shoe that is widely valued in our society nowadays. But did you know that heels weren't always worn just by women? And did you know that they had been banned at least three times in the course of history?

Firstly appearing in Egypt in 3,500 B.C., heels can be considered an 'ancient' type of shoe. Based on evidence found in murals and a tomb in Tebas, high heels were popular among people of both sexes who enjoyed a high social status. They were mostly worn in ceremonies to show power and wealth, but as heels were engraved with the symbol of Ankh, the Egyptian goddess, they also symbolized hope and longevity. Another group of people who wore heels in Egypt were, surprisingly enough, butchers. The reason for this was that they needed the height in order to avoid contact with the blood of dead animals splattered on the floor.



Further north in later centuries, the Greeks and the Romans utilized heels in a drastically different way: as theater costumes. Heels were worn by actors, and they showed the characters' social status according to their height.

How did other Europeans wear heels? As a matter of fact, during the Middle Ages, both women and men of upper classes would wear a wedge heel, a wooden sole attached to the bottom of shoes, in order to protect the designs they bore and keep

their footwear from getting soiled from the muddy ground. Later on, another type of heels prevailed: Chopines, which were first made in either Italy or Turkey. These were extremely high heels primarily worn by women who wanted to show beauty and wealth. However, wearing them required the use of walking canes or an escort, as women could not walk in them unassisted.

“Based on evidence found in murals and a tomb in Tebas, high heels were popular among people of both sexes who enjoyed a high social status.”

In Asia, heels were a woman's "chains" rather than a fashionable part of her outfit. It is said that in China and Turkey, rich men forced their many wives to wear uncomfortable Chopines not only for them to become more attractive but also to deter them from escaping the harems!

It was not until the beginning of the 16th century that heels were a built-in part of shoes and were not just an accessory that could be attached to them. They also became a very useful accessory to a horse rider's outfit, as they helped his stability on



stirrups. Heels, as the fashionable accessories we know today, were “invented” by Catherine de Medici in 1533, in France. Being quite a short aristocrat, Catherine wanted to enhance her bearing and therefore started wearing heels that were too fashionable to be comfortable. Nonetheless, these heels became the most prominent trend of her era and were worn by most rich women.

However, their popularity didn’t end there. Men also started wearing heels to show their financial and social power. The peak of this movement was when, in the beginning of the 18th century, King Louis XIV of France adopted heels as a symbol of clout and banned everyone from wearing higher heels than him and even forbid anyone besides the nobility from donning red-soled heels altogether.

“Heels. A symbol of fashion, a symbol of femininity.... But did you know that heels weren’t always just for women?”

The supremacy of heels did not last for long. In the next century, the English government and the Massachusetts Colony made heels illegal altogether. As women often wore them to seduce men, one could be at risk of being tried and hung for being a witch if they were caught wearing them.

Heels faced another threat of extinction



during the French Revolution when Napoleon abolished the manufacturing of heels so as to eliminate inequality amongst citizens, as they were a marker of class. They were revived in the 1860s thanks to the invention of the sewing machine, which enabled the creation of a wide range of designer heels.

Heels have an eventful history as they were discovered, adopted, rejected, and recreated. Despite their rivals who prefer comfort over elegance, nowadays, the immense popularity of heels is evident in the great number of shapes and designs lining store windows season after season.

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SCARPE DIEM

By Marianna Alipranti

Mahatma Gandhi once declared, “I cried because I had no shoes, then I met a man who had no feet.” It is quite evident what Gandhi was getting at: humankind always craves what it believes it should have whilst forgetting what it already does have. A characteristic example of this claim is embodied in a seemingly innocent item: the shoe. How has it taken on such an influential role in contemporary society? Let’s take a closer look at this indispensable article of clothing.

“Nowadays, these seemingly everyday items have come to represent the socio-economic level of our own society.”

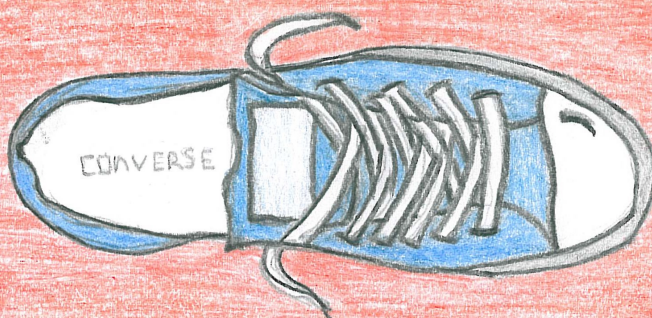
The shoe, an object that we normally take for granted, has an intriguing background. It is something we probably never seriously think about, yet what would we do without it? It is an item of footwear, which comforts, warms, and protects the human foot from the harsh terrain: sharp rocks, hot ground, and freezing earth. As a matter of fact, the first shoe was invented more than 9,000 years ago in a cave in North America by primitive men, but little did they know what this object would become. As the centuries passed, the shoe (the etymology of which is derived from the old English word *scoh*, from the Proto-Germanic *skokhaz*) became a symbol of class distinction and wealth. In the 1st millennium B.C., the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen took with him to his tomb exquisite sandals, which were engraved with splendid golden pictures of gods and religious symbols. Much later, in the 17th century, Louis XIV, the King of France, used shoes to display preferential treatment; he only allowed some privileged few to have red heels on their shoes. This practice identified and labeled the aristocrats, who were in the highest social circles.

As we have seen, the shoe has reflected the microcosm of society throughout history. However, the shoe’s symbolism has also affected literature. The famous English children’s rhyme “There was an old woman who lived in a shoe...” was written in the early 1700s. It is a poem about a woman who had so many children that she could not feed them and they lived in a “shoe.” Apparently, the shoe is a direct metaphor for the dire conditions of that era. Nowadays, these seemingly everyday items have come to represent the socioeconomic level of our own society. As in Louis XIV’s time, the red heel of Christian Louboutin can cost up to 5.000 €, highlighting the fact that only the privileged few can acquire this footwear, thus displaying one’s social status.

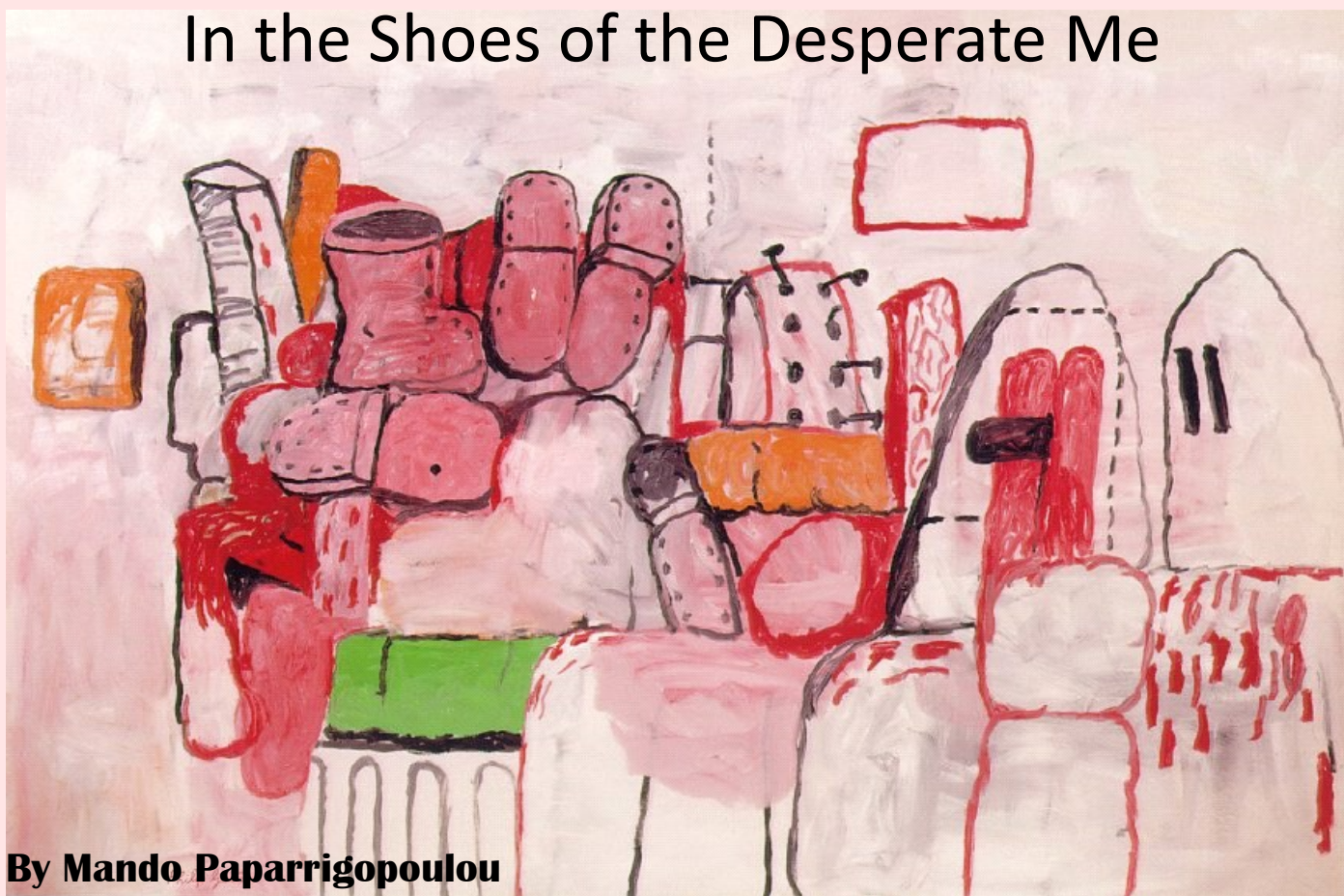
The shoe has had a very long and illustrious history. What started off as a piece of skin simply tied around the foot has come to represent one’s culture and socioeconomic class. However, let’s not forget that shoes were made for walking. No matter what their size, color, or brand, they are all created for the same function: to improve our lives. It is up to us, then, to remember what Gandhi urged us to do: appreciate shoes for what they are instead of viewing them as an reflection of ourselves.

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In the Shoes of the Desperate Me



By Mando Paparrigopoulou

When I started researching to find ideas for my article, I thought that the best meaning I could get out of the topic ‘Shoes’ was the idea of different points of view, mainly because of the common phrase, “To put yourself in someone else’s shoes.” I also wanted somehow to connect my article to art.

God bless the Internet; one day before the deadline for my piece, I came across a painting, called “Shoes,” by an artist named Philip Guston.

What a coincidence, right? At first sight, the painting was just an old pair of shoes, but I really wanted to know why Guston had chosen to depict a pair of ugly old shoes. Imagine my amazement when I realized that almost every painting he had created after 1950 had at least a pair of old shoes in the background or hidden somewhere in the painting.

It’s that spiritual adrenaline rush you get when you think you are close to a revelation that will shock humanity. Then, I found what a friend of Guston’s had said about the abstract objects he painted:



“Some are generic Guston objects, but some objects in the generic-Guston modes of meta-object -- objects that could be one thing and another. You’re painting a shoe, you start painting the sole and it turns into a loaf of bread; you’re painting the bread and it becomes the moon.” This information might seem meaningless to you, but it completed the picture for me. I had found an artist who drew shoes which could be analyzed from different perspectives! All I had to do was connect the pieces and answer my first and most crucial question, “Why?”

I decided to dig into Guston’s personal life. He was born in 1913 in Canada from Jewish parents who had fled from Ukraine because of persecutions. He began drawing when he was 14

after experiencing his dad’s suicide. He is mostly known as an abstract expressionist, but after 1950, he quit that style and began drawing representationally. Shoes were a motif in his paintings after World War II. Apparently, Guston was deeply influenced

by the aftermath pictures and documentaries of the Holocaust. In an interview, a friend of his said, "The level at which these horrifying documentaries entered Guston's consciousness was deep enough to mark his work for the rest of his life." That is why a pile of old shoes frequently appears in his paintings."



Shoes also appear a lot during the Chicago riots in 1968 that makes us think that he uses the same motifs to describe human tragedy in his own way. Apparently, he drew tangible things, objects, which he would give different meanings to. Even with this, I didn't feel like I had solved the mystery. A man and a woman sleeping with their shoes on, a man who has a pile of shoes next to his bed, a shoe, the sole of a shoe, a coat with shoes attached to it, and many others. Why were there so many shoes in



his painting, though?

According to another theory, Guston's purpose was to present objects in a realistic way and to underscore the strangeness he saw in everyday things. It was as if concentrating so much on a single object and putting it in a position you wouldn't

normally find in it, would transform it. His final years of painting were described as "a threatening universe of unmeaning" probably because he painted everyday objects that meant nothing in particular but, to his eyes and in the way he combined them, they depicted chaos and they symbolized the decadence of his era. After all, he did experience both World War I and II.

I think I understood him more when I read his explanation that "Painting is an illusion, a piece of magic, so what you see is not what you see." For me, this meant that he never wanted to clearly give us a message; I could translate his paintings one way and someone else could see something completely different. Questions like, "Was the artist's plan all along to fool us or to make us see things from different perspectives?" were swirling in my mind.

I decided to be content with my interpretation. With the aftermath of the Holocaust, Guston would have been exposed to gruesome images of amputated legs. So maybe, seeing shoes on an



everyday basis might have made him think how different an object can be depending on the environment in which you place it. Representations of shoes took Guston to the place he wanted: somewhere away from the reality of the aftermath of the Holocaust, to a place where shoes were not merely shoes. Will I ever fully understand his obsession with them? No, but, at least, I got the chance to express my thoughts on his technique. Case closed, then.

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Is Western Civilization that Innocent?

By Anastasia Ioannidi

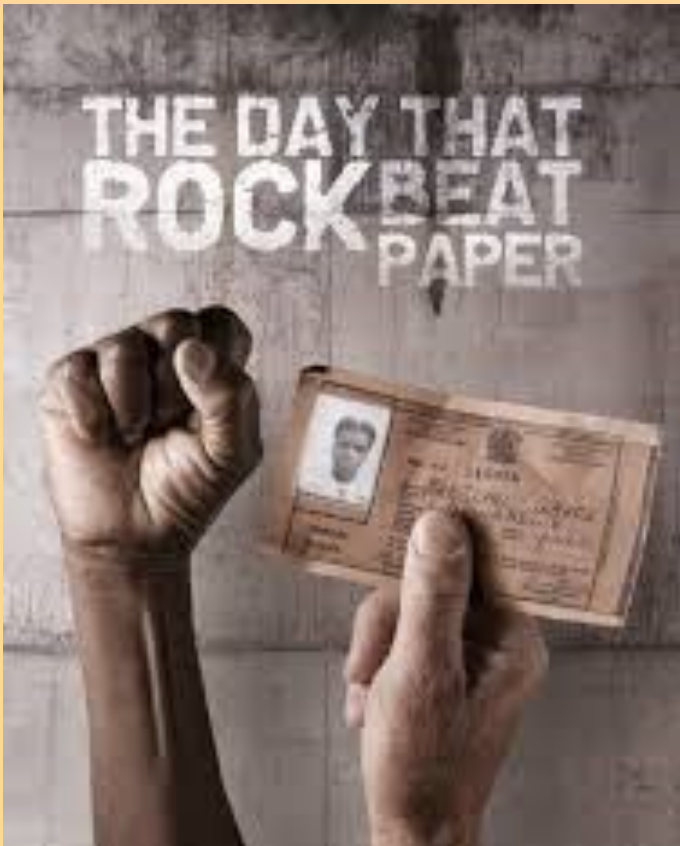
Who would not marvel at the view of the imposing Atomium, contemplate the divine beauty of the Eiffel Tower, or shudder at the sight of imposing and grandiose Big Ben? These are merely a few symbols of the thriving Western world, the region of the globe that has had the privilege of extensive economic growth during the past few centuries; the region that has been considered the hub of education and the fearless protector of human rights. However, have citizens of this prosperous region ever thought about the cost of all that development on African subjugated peoples of colonial times? Have they ever wondered if there are two sides to globalization? Or have they ever wondered about the provenance of the shoes they are wearing?

History has demonstrated that there is no progress without someone else footing the bill. This fact accurately depicts the fate of the colonized African population, having been under English, Bel-

gian, and French rule for a great deal of time. Between the 17th and 20th centuries, nearly 30 countries of the African continent lost their sovereignty and were set under the surveillance of European powers. As a matter of fact, influential European countries set off a journey in quest of new materials and new markets, to render their economies more competitive. Consequently, the motive to colonizing undeveloped countries was not fuelled by humanitarian ideals and the vision of ecumenical peace but rather by profit and wealth. In other words, seeking financial opportunities as well as installing European populations in the subjugated countries was an important parameter to expansion. This inaugurated a new era for African peoples, one marked by centuries of oppression where they were subjected to grueling slavery, discrimination, and violence.

In effect, Africa's rich natural resources were extracted by the natives and were sent to industrial Europe, only to be sent back to the colo-





nies in the form of commodities to be sold and bought by Africans. That is to say that not only did the European colonials loot the natural wealth of this continent, but they also did not share the profit gained. The generalization of this phenomenon impoverished the natives and reduced them to a state of absolute dependence from those who were violating their rights. Indeed, serious violations of human freedom were detected in this part of the continent with apartheid being its culmination, preventing the locals from having a share in the economic boom.

Apartheid was one of the biggest segregationist crimes, separating people of colored skin from people of white skin, not allowing them to attend the same schools, use the same buses, or eat in the same restaurants. That is to say that irrational restrictions and limitations were imposed on African people, who became second-class citizens in their own country until they spoke out and gained their national independence in the 1950s. Although several positive European groundbreaking elements have been ingrained in African society, the unarguable damage and pain inflicted on the people and their cultural consciousness does not compare.

Likewise, in modern times, the process of globalization is another example of how superpowers often make headway at the expense of poor and marginalized countries. Globalization, a

phenomenon that is thriving and is considered to be a boon for economic growth, stands for an arena where people and goods flow freely, opportunities are abundant, and technology never ceases to develop. Nevertheless, this point of view belongs to the citizens who live in developed countries with upscale infrastructures and influential economies, who can afford education and have capital that uses globalization in a constructive way and thus accumulate profit as a result. Although globalization's innate characteristic is its global idiosyncrasy, a considerable amount of the earth's population does not benefit from it. Admittedly, the protagonists of this ongoing drama are Western countries, as well as some other developing nations, who have found self-enrichment like never before while others are struggling to survive.

Consequently, the strongest and developed countries use cheap labor, people whose living standard is humiliating and who come from places where children work in factories and do not attend schools. In fact, according to UNICEF, approximately 250 million children, predominantly in third-world countries, do not have access to education. Even countries that have signed international conventions and swore to defend human rights, have not kept their promises. In the least developed countries, approximately 30% of children are sent

“Although globalization’s innate characteristic is its global idiosyncrasy, a considerable amount of the earth’s population does not benefit from it. “

to work every day. However, the most tragic aspect of this situation is that their struggle is alimentering the West. For example, Adidas, one of the world's leading companies in sportswear shocked the world when it was revealed that children were fabricating Western-orientated exported goods for as little as 60 dollars a month. However, it is not merely Adidas and all of the thousands of other companies that contribute to the vicious circle of violation of human rights; it is also the unsuspecting citizens who

As You Like It

buy their products. Although slavery and colonialism were officially abolished quite a number of years ago, globalization has facilitated the perpetration of a new form of slavery. It may not be in the form of chains and punishment, but people of the developing world are reduced to such unacceptable conditions by the westerners' desire for profit and their intentional or unintentional ignorance. While students in the West go to school, children on the other side of the earth, who have never touched a school notebook because their role is to serve the needs of western despotism, dream of our reality.

This contradiction between Western countries and the developing countries did not arise suddenly or out of nowhere. It is due to the way in which civilizations tend to develop: by taking advantage of other subjugated civilizations and other less influential countries. This is what happened to the African peoples when they were colonized and it is what is happening to impoverished nations who have become the West's cheap labor.

There are always two sides to a story and both have to be taken into consideration since

the countries who make headway view their progress in a different way to those who help them get there, unable to enjoy it themselves. This is why companies like Adidas and many others attract millions of buyers who do not realize they are part of a system of outrageous manipulation.

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Illustration by Mary Tzoannou

PART II

FICTION AND POETRY



Walking Down a Hallway

by Eleana Diamanti

There once was a Miss
Who was kind of weird
Deep in the abyss
For that she was feared

She wanted to feel
Awake and alive
Fuelled with zeal
Yet hard to survive

She walked down the halls
And tried to fit in
She hoped to belong
And talked with a grin

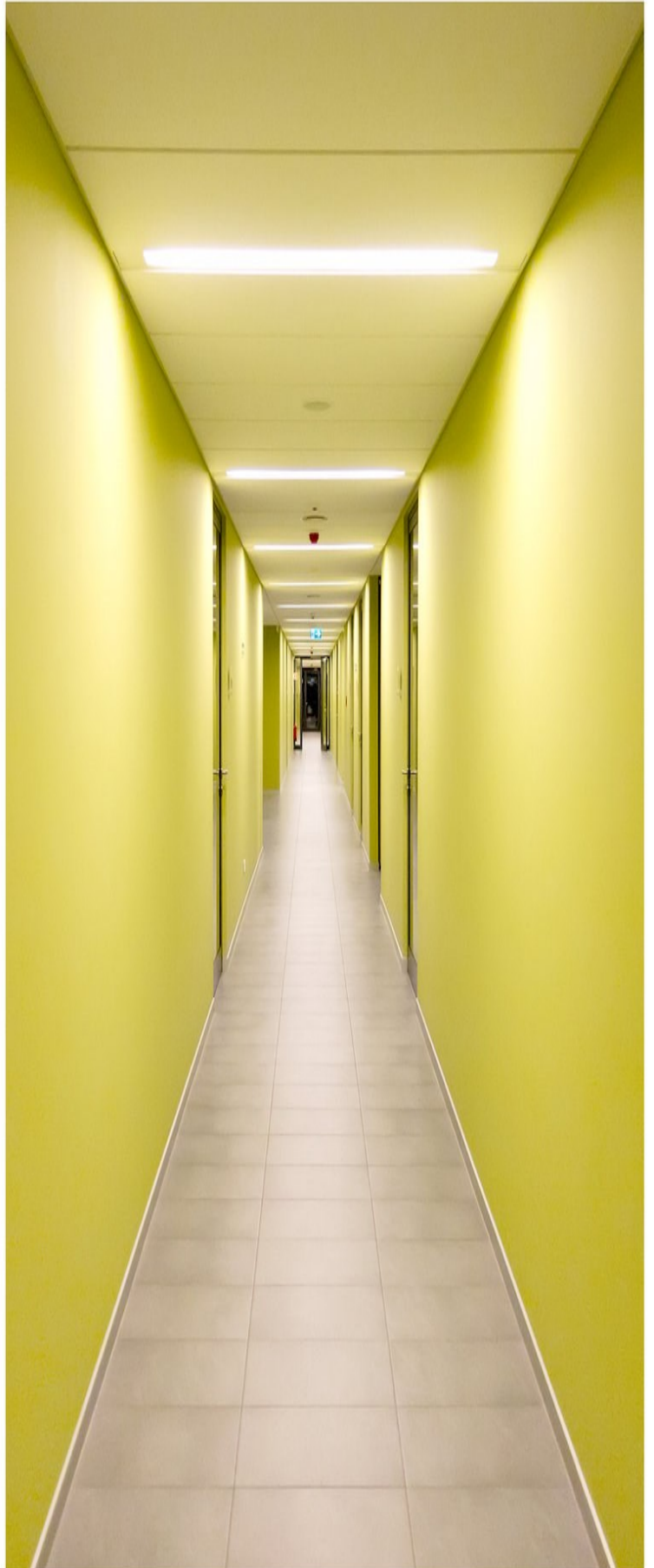
But all seemed unreal
And nothing was true
Lost in the ordeal
She had to get through

One day at a time
She struggled and fought
And while on the climb
She never forgot

But there came a day
When a light shone at last
She made her escape
The curse was uncast

The hallway ends here
There's nowhere to flee
She's somewhat sincere
And finally free

And now she can live
She's able to cope
It's hard to believe



A Pair of Boots to the World and by the River

By Spyros Capsalis

Le Tour Eiffel was silent,
silent, dark, or even dreary,
a puppy must have barked so weary
to fluster all the glory of
the long-past-midnight-hour;
At least that's what he thought of
passing by on his way
Just by La Nôtre Dame
A woman dying in the alley
Flies buzzing all around her:

And he was on his own.

Heading as it seemed
towards some cosmic bridge –
the lamposts on the rue were also dimmed
from his falling shadow –
gazed the sky for one last time.
Thinking of the house he left behind
his solidarity and the world, he decided
he would do it.

He hated, hated, hated;
hatred in his blood;
life and death—and people—
and all of them in one.
Once he could have loved,
not any more, when everything
we thought of must be gone.

War and peace, the dying fish
Truth or lies; no power unleashed
not even when his boots – last
of decency on him –
lingered in the darkness
and in time of mind.
Nothing really mattered,
not even that ol' bridge he finally
was walking on – his boots
clinging on the stony path –
there is no god and all
one day'll die – so what does
it matter that he's lost?

He went in for the jump
hesitated just in time
leaning over to his feet
saw his boots and started whispering.
That fine Canadian leather,
the straps, even the dirty soles,
what had been their fault, their crime
what were they paying the price for?
Just a pair of boots they were
nothing to their minds apart
from alleys to their heart.

He took them off so carefully
placing them side-by-side
just close enough over the edge.
The sun leaving its first and only rays
to light the silver buckle.
What fine a combination to the cobblestone
with the morning stars still over their heads.

Now; feeling no remorse for nothing
but the night
took his last though lightful breath
and jumped –
the water seeming dark or ominous.
He grew pale as sinking down
freezing or dying; just the same.
One could tell when he was
found next morning
floating a few miles away
he died a happy man
just as one would be when lovin' life.

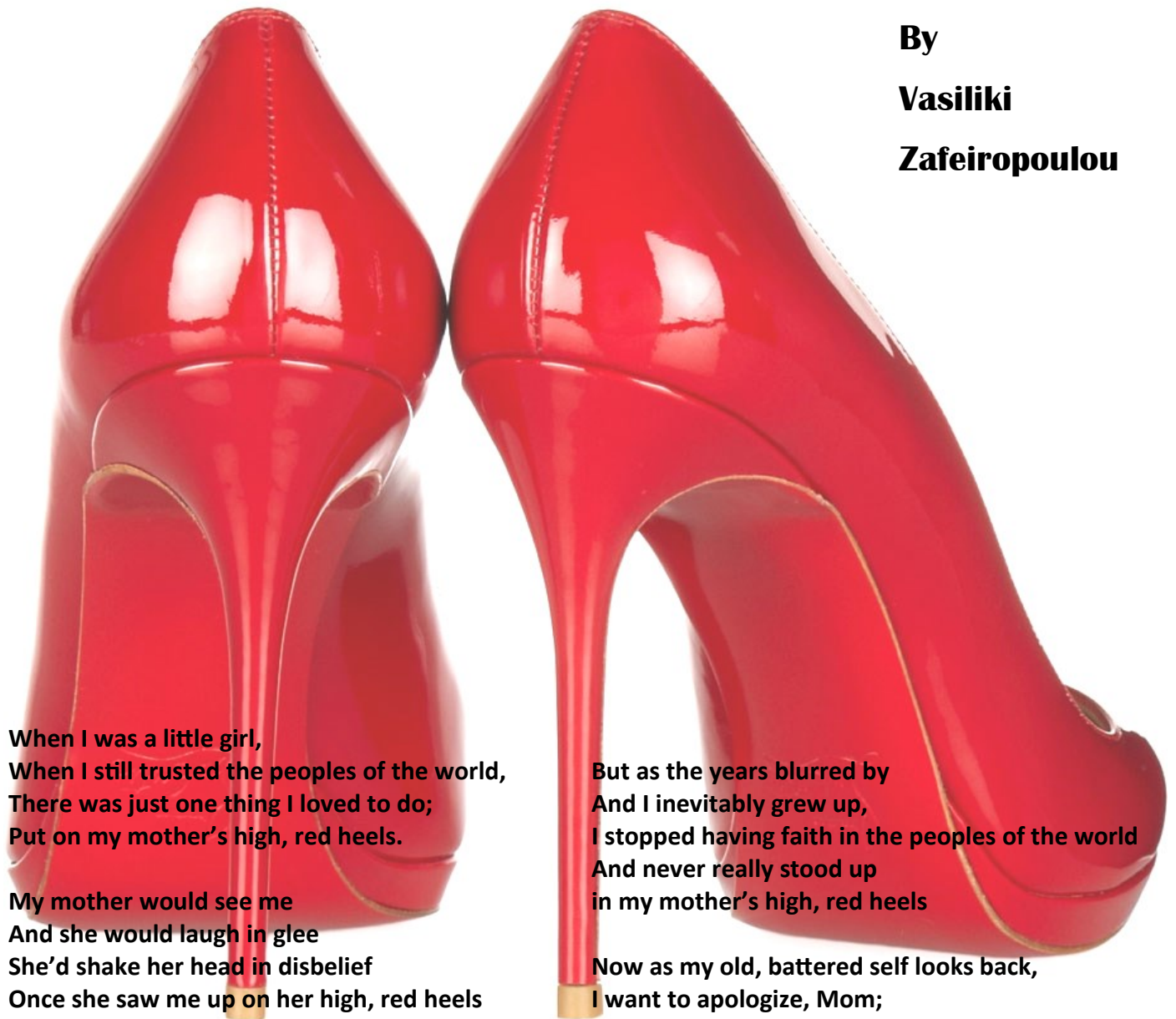
Only things that would remind
of his existence:
his filthy hat falling off his head
by a mistake –
like Javert did once, resisting to nothing
but his life –
now landing miserable and lonely
at the side of the road,
and his boots, restlessly waiting in awe,
maybe playing their part,
as Jean Valjean
with the illusion that they would
be no fuzz –

with the illusion that life could
continue as it was.

Photograph by Helen Antonakopoulou

High, Red Heels

By
**Vasiliki
Zafeiropoulou**



When I was a little girl,
When I still trusted the peoples of the world,
There was just one thing I loved to do;
Put on my mother's high, red heels.

My mother would see me
And she would laugh in glee
She'd shake her head in disbelief
Once she saw me up on her high, red heels

And so I'd grin at her
"Mommy, look at me," I'd entreat
"Nothing can stop me
Up on your high, red heels!"

All at once, her face would turn grave
And she would ominously advise me;
"When people wish to pull you down,
Remember to stand up straight
in my high, red heels"

I never really understand what she meant
So I'd just bob my head docilely
And tell her: "Yes, Mommy; I will.
I will always stand up straight
in your high, red heels"

But as the years blurred by
And I inevitably grew up,
I stopped having faith in the peoples of the world
And never really stood up
in my mother's high, red heels

Now as my old, battered self looks back,
I want to apologize, Mom;
I let others pull me down, I let you down,
And didn't quite remember
to don your high, red heels

Alas! How can I possibly excuse myself?
You warned me, yet I inconsiderably ignored you.
And now there's nothing old-wrinkled-me can do;
Only regret I did not fulfill my promise.

Only regret I didn't stand proudly up
in your high, red heels
When others tried to make me cry,
When others hurt me,
When others heartlessly betrayed me.

Shoe-Whisperer

By Marina Deffner

They say that you can guess someone's personality just by looking at his shoes. And no one knows that better than I do. That is because most of the time I stare at people's feet instead of their faces. It's like a game, a game I play when I'm bored in public places. I look at others' shoes and try to guess what they might be like. Are they male or female? Shy or sociable? Outgoing or reserved? Do they have a high or low income? Can they make compromises, or do they always get what they want no matter what? Yes, I can make assumptions about all of these things just based on shoes. Amazing, isn't it?

I'm in the perfect place to play this game, sitting cross-legged on a bench in a busy pedestrian street downtown. It is a beautiful day; not a single cloud streaks the light blue of the sky. It is quite warm for winter as well. Who wouldn't want to be outdoors today to enjoy the sun? This means that hundreds of shoes will stride past me, offering me hundreds of chances to play my game. Perfect.



First I notice a pair of shockingly high red heels that seem pretty expensive. Oh, this is easy! I imagine a beautiful young woman in her late twenties or early thirties. She's confident and...wealthy? Another thought crosses my mind

and I chuckle. Maybe she's not that wealthy. She just saw those heels today, and she *had* to have them, so she sacrificed a month's salary to purchase them. Little does she care that she will have to eat canned tuna and beans for the rest of the month. Right now, all she wants is to show them off. Just before the heels disappear from my field of vision, I look up. Indeed she is beautiful and young, long golden waves hang down her back. She holds a brand new designer bag in her slim hand, and she's talking on her iPhone. So I guess she is wealthy after all, unless she decided to spend her year's salary in one day!



I turn my eyes to the ground once more, and this time I focus on a pair of sports shoes. They look kind of new; they are neat and clean, and the soles are intact. Their color is dull grey. Next to them appears a pair of sports shoes, whose color I would guess once was neon yellow. They have turned faint yellow from use while the soles have melted into a thin slice. These shoes were surely bought a very long time ago. The grey shoes belong definitely to a man; they look too sturdy to belong to a woman. On the contrary, a female owns the elegant neon yellow ones. I guess they are a middle-aged couple. What surprises me is that they walk in sync. No, now that I look better, I see that they do not have the same pace. The neon yellow shoes are slightly quicker than the grey

ones. A cheerful woman appears in my mind's eyes; an athletic woman who wants to convince her husband to exercise more. He is kindhearted, and he wants to please her, as I see from his effort to catch up with her. I look up, and I catch him heaving like a steam engine, while his wife, who resembles a bird, pulls his hand to urge him forward. I see him smile reassuringly to her before I lose sight of the couple.

Now I spot a pair of Oxford shoes, whose owner is surely a man. Black, shiny, and polished, they probably belong to a mature man, perhaps in his late thirties. I imagine him holding a briefcase. It is lunch time at the office, and he is rushing to the place across the street that makes these amazing sandwiches. His shoes look like they are brand new. How much time did he spend polishing them? Just like he wants his shoes to look perfect, I imagine he is quite productive in work, too. He is serious, reserved, and calm. From the way he walks, with small, careful steps, I assume he is decisive as well. When I look up at him, I'm left disappointed. Instead of the tall, mature man I imagined, I see a short man in his seventies with grey hair and creased skin, carrying grocery bags. I sigh. My guesses about him were completely wrong.



After that I find plenty of other pairs of shoes, and my guesses about them are mainly correct. A pair of leopard platforms that belong to a woman in her twenties with orange hair stands out. There is also a pair of shabby shoes which are owned by a student with long hair holding a banner that says "Free education for everyone!" But then I notice the most confusing shoes I've ever seen. I have a hard time describing them. They are not athletic shoes, casual, nor formal. They are a mix of everything; plain and brown with laces, they don't seem to fit any of the existing categories of shoes. They're not dirty, nor do they shine like the red heels I first noticed. And they are not moving, meaning that the person who wears them is standing still.



Well, they could belong to a mature man like I thought of the Oxford shoes. No, that seems wrong. No one would wear these shoes at work. Maybe to an elderly man? No, they are too...alternative for an older man. Perhaps they belong to a teen, like me. No, they seem too out of fashion...I furrow my eyebrows in confusion. These shoes are too difficult to read. Suddenly, I realize that the shoes are now moving. And they are pointing to my direction. Is their owner coming towards me?

My gaze lifts up immediately, just before the mysterious owner of the shoes stops in front of me. He is a teenager, about one or two years older than me, with blond hair a few shades darker than my own, and sparkling brown eyes.

'Hi,' he says.

I open and close my mouth without making any sound, like a fish, before answering, 'Hi.'

He smiles. 'You've been staring at my feet for quite some time. What do you find so fascinating about them?'



I blush. All of a sudden, my game seems stupid and immature. What am I supposed to say now? I tried to guess your personality just by looking at your shoes, but I had no clue what it might be?

‘I was looking at your shoes,’ I admit. ‘They are... peculiar.’

He laughs and sits beside me at the bench. He brings his feet on the bench, so I can take a better look at them. They don’t look like they’ve been bought from a store, but rather...

‘Are they handmade?’ I ask.

‘Yes!’ He answers proudly. ‘My father is a shoemaker.’ He then looks up at me. ‘James,’ he introduces himself.

I shake his hand. ‘Samantha.’

‘That’s a nice name.’ He pauses for a while. ‘I noticed what you were doing.’

He noticed what?

‘Excuse me?’

James clears his throat. ‘You were looking at people, but you were looking at their shoes first. Why?’

He has left me no other choice. I quickly explain to him the game, trying to make it seem less silly than it actually is. To my surprise, when I finish he looks kind of...impressed.

‘I cannot believe it!’ James exclaims. ‘That’s exactly what my father says! Shoes *do* betray your personality.’

‘*Your* shoes don’t,’ I say shyly. ‘That’s why I was staring at them for such a long time.’

‘I wanted them this way,’ he admits. ‘I pleaded my father to make a pair of shoes for me that show nothing about my personality when I heard him say that.’

‘Why?’

‘Because I did not want people to know me just by looking at my shoes. They have to try.’

I laugh. ‘It worked.’

James grins at me. ‘I know. Do you know what my father calls people like you and him, people that understand the deeper meaning of shoes?’

‘What?’ I ask. I have a feeling that I would like his father.

‘Shoe-whisperers!’

I laugh out loud again. ‘That’s weird!’

James shakes his head so his toffee-colored hair flies all over his face. ‘No, it’s not. It’s like shoes whisper information about their owner to you without them realizing it. It is a skill few people possess!’ he adds pompously.

I nod. Samantha, the shoe-whisperer. It doesn’t sound bad.

‘Can I see *your* shoes?’ James asks.

My body gets tense, and I’m self-conscious again. I shake my head in negation. I don’t want him to see my shoes.

‘Come on!’ He insists.

I reluctantly uncross my legs, and my grey clogs are in common view. James is silent.

‘What do *these* shoes say about you?’ he asks confused.

‘They say that my family can’t afford better ones,’ I say.

I glance at him, waiting to see the familiar expression of pity people shoot at me when they realize my family is poor, but all I see is concentration. I don’t say anything, and neither does James until, suddenly, he smiles

and hops off the bench. He extends his hands to me.

‘Come,’ he urges me.

‘Where?’

‘To my father’s shop. We are going to get you some new ones.’

I cross my hands on my chest. ‘I don’t like to be pitied.’

He pulls my hand. ‘It’s not called pity. It’s called caring. Besides, shoe-whisperers can’t wander around with shoes like that. They need special ones.’ He raises his foot in front of my face. ‘Like them.’

This time, I let him pull my hand.



In the Shoes of a Romantic

By Theodora Boulouta

If in this place you seek
the absolute harmony
of being utterly alive inside a neon mind,
Take your glasses off and look at a blurry world.

Blood can be roses,
Bullets can be birds,
And the aging of time will be nothing
but a blossoming flower.

Mistake cry for laughter,
Interpret pain as sweat for bewitchment,
And don't you ever, ever lose hope.

Unachieved goals were only fate
protecting you from derailing off your course
People dying only fledged
because they had felt life
in an overwhelming manner,
and their hearts exploded
out of fondness for the world.

Let your clock run a little bit faster
and you'll see that people linger in the streets
to take in beauty,
And if they are hurrying,
they are just in a rush
to pick up the love they forgot right by the sidewalk,
so that they can have their clocks running faster, too.

And the stars are consistently sparkling,
and whenever they aren't
they are just lonely
and strive for you to miss them,

so that you can be lost
in their tender embrace next night.
And slits in wrists
were made from a rose's thorn,
never from a knife,
And when the sun is not shining
it is just busy undusting and rearranging the sky
And it is always, always going to shine brighter.

Be drunken by smells
Be drunken by thoughts
Be drunken by people,
be drunken by the blue or the orange or the gray
in the sky,

Let the noise in the city be music,
Let smoke be a perfume that drives you mad,
Let the world be a work of Art
And be unfailingly drunken
by unexceptionally everything.

And pretend
that people are your harlequin fabrication,
And when the world is freezing
Slip under a blanket
and pretend that surrounding you
is a pair of lush arms.

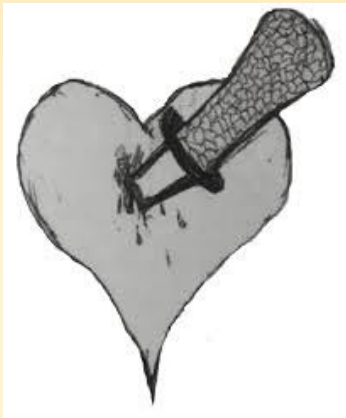
Let nothing be what it seems,
but make it what you want it to be
And you will be lost in an everlasting fantasy
And you will be an absolute romantic.

CINQUIANS

THE GREATEST FEUD

Feud born
by the river
Souls lost for no reason
People's stubbornness between us,
needless

By Nicholas Doumanoglou and Stephanos Zachos



STOP THE FEUD

He said,
Give me a gun
and I will start a feud,
Only what's worth fighting for
What's worth?

By Anna-Maria Mavromichali and Alkis Lampropoulos



ETERNAL LOVE

This love was meant to be
what our parents couldn't see,
but it all ended with a knife
No life

By Nikonas Machairas and Persefoni Likourglioti



THE LOSS OF A FRIEND

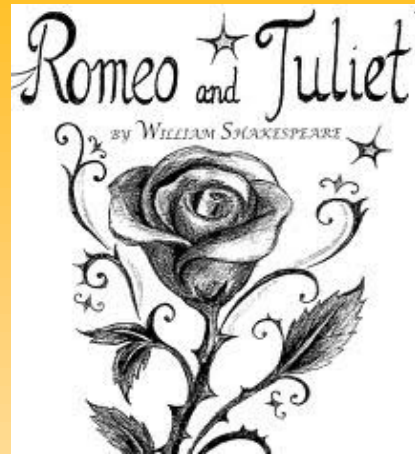
My friend,
Our friendship is
gone and will never be
as it used to be, so farewell,
my friend

By Lydia Sokou and Paris Spiliopoulos

ROMEO AND JULIET

Our love,
within the sky
As I watched you pass by
My dear, you knocked me off the ground
I'm yours

By Claire Zavradinou and Salome Dermati



THE PIG

A pig
was stolen; a
juror killed; the feud began
Blood was spilled and people wondered
Why death?

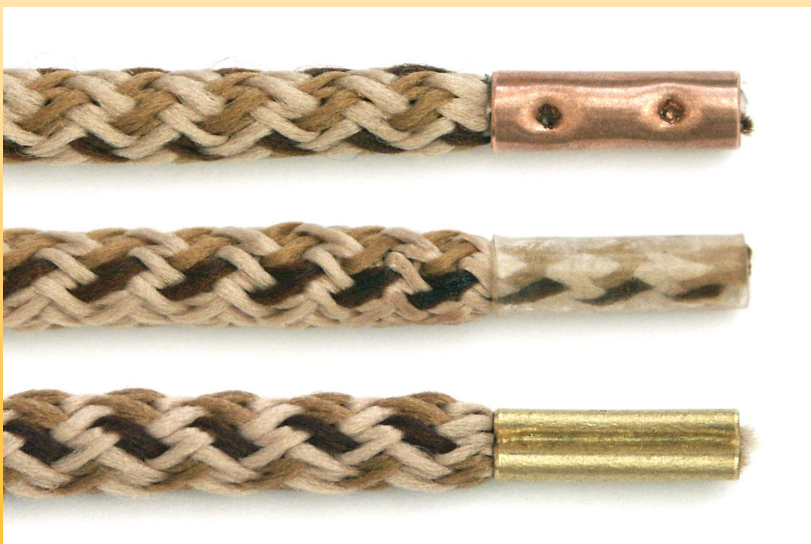
By Panos Sotirellos and Nikos Chantzopoulos



OUR LOVE

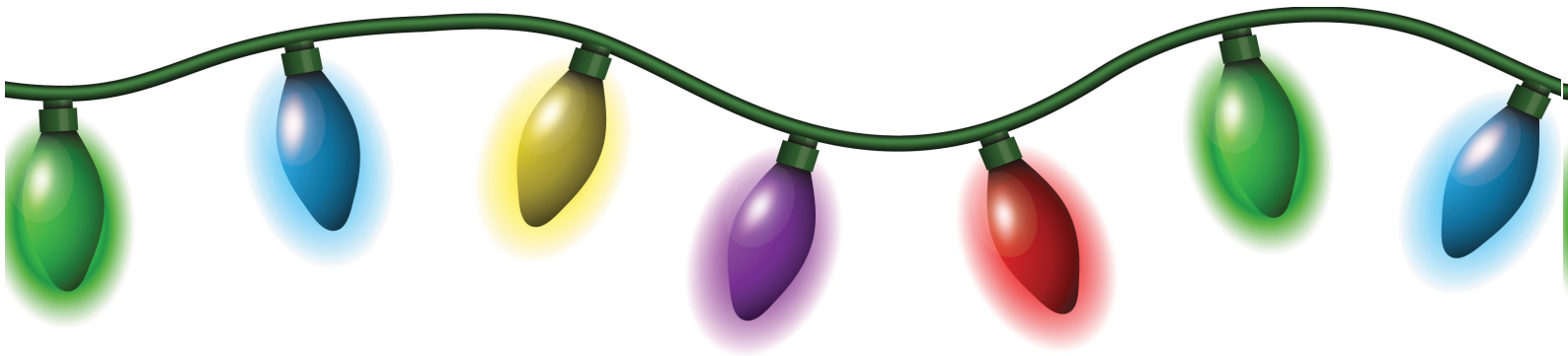
My dear,
our love will hold
Even if I won't be here
because you are my lovely world,
My dear...

By Daniella Halioti and Nick Filippakis



Aglet
Plastic, metal
The end of a shoelace
Crucial to put lace through eyelet
Aglet

By Alexia Paschou



A Miracle of Simplicity

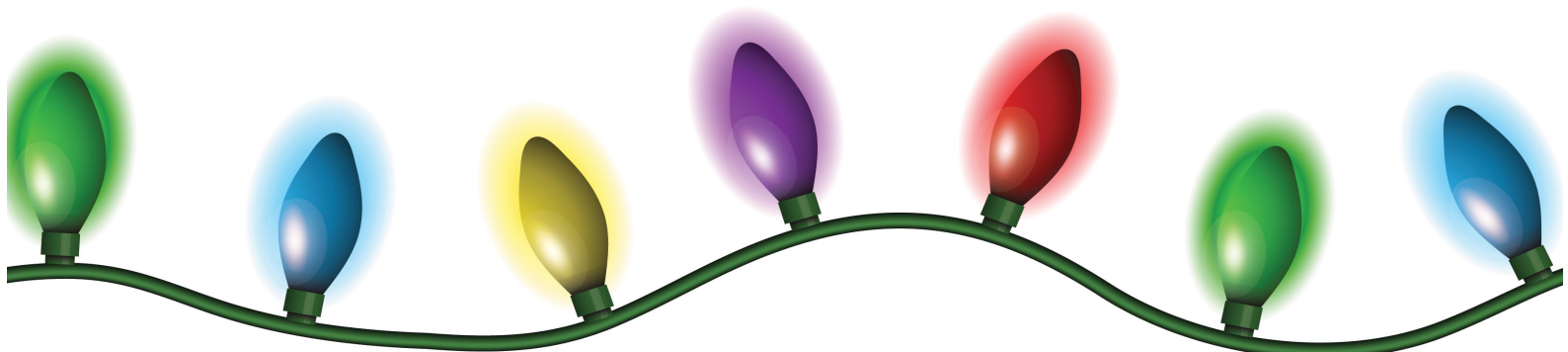
By Christina Lewis

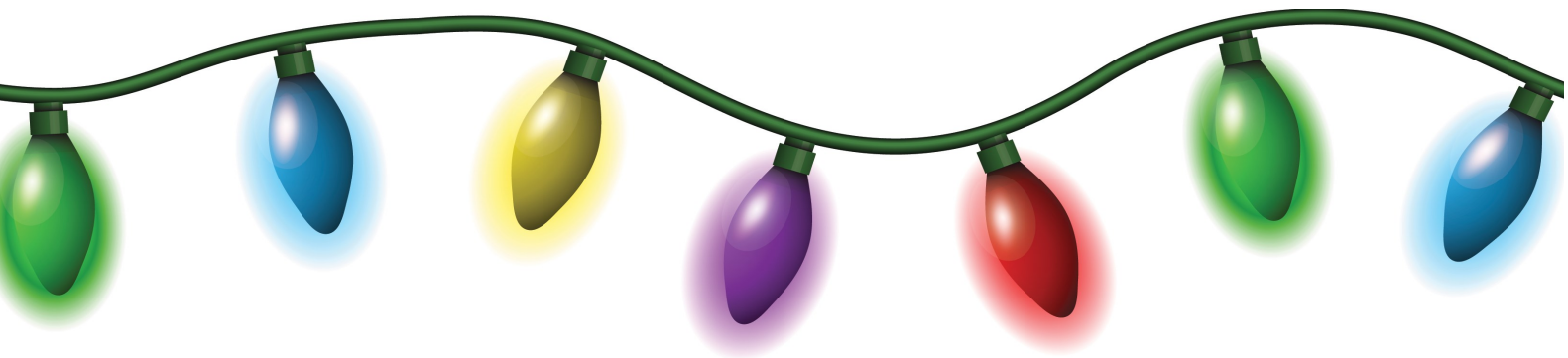
She was a poor, homeless child. Well not exactly homeless. She lived in an orphanage, a home where love wasn't dished out with a hefty ladle. "So many children of different ages who, just like me, have no one to belong to in this world," she realized on a snowy, December night. The blizzard outside brought such compassionate thoughts to mind not just because December is a month with snowstorms. It is also the month of Christmas, the month of gifts, family gatherings, good cheer and sharing your love. But these were joys unknown to the children of the orphanage.

Every night, before going to bed, she would make a wish that this Christmas would be the best Christmas she had ever experienced. She wanted this for everyone. She wanted this for the children in the orphanage, for the cook, for the cleaning lady; she even wanted it for that mean woman who would scowl at them every time they dared to look at her. Most of all, she wanted it for

herself. "I will be a good girl," she had promised herself. "Maybe then my wish will come true."

Every morning as soon as she woke up, she would quickly tidy her bed and then assist with the rest of the beds so the other girls could all go down to breakfast sooner. After every meal, she would promptly finish her own cleaning and then help with everybody else's clean-up as well. And, without anyone asking her to, she would always pick up the shoes that the other children had left strewn on the floor. Outdoor shoes were supposed to be placed into cubby holes in the cloak room next to the big front door, but usually the other girls just left them about. After every walk, she would clean up the shoes rubbing them so fervently that, with a little imagination, they looked almost new. Then she would arrange all the shoes according to their brightness from faded and worn out to burnished and shiny. The shoes were the most colorful items in the whole house, so for her, this was not a chore but a labor of love.





“How enchanting,” she thought, “the way shoes can be so simple but so amazing at the same time.”

Some were so big and others petite.

But whatever their size, they always were neat.

Some were for sunny days and others for rain.

Some were ornate. Still others, just plain.

As plain as this house, she observed, as she composed the little ditty in her head. Nothing about the house had anything that even came close to suggesting it was Christmas. The children were quite sad. The orphanage had no money for a tree and no Christmas decorations. The mean lady wouldn't even give them colored paper and glue to make their own decorations. It was Christmas and, while every other house in town was gaily decorated, the orphanage was grey and dreary.

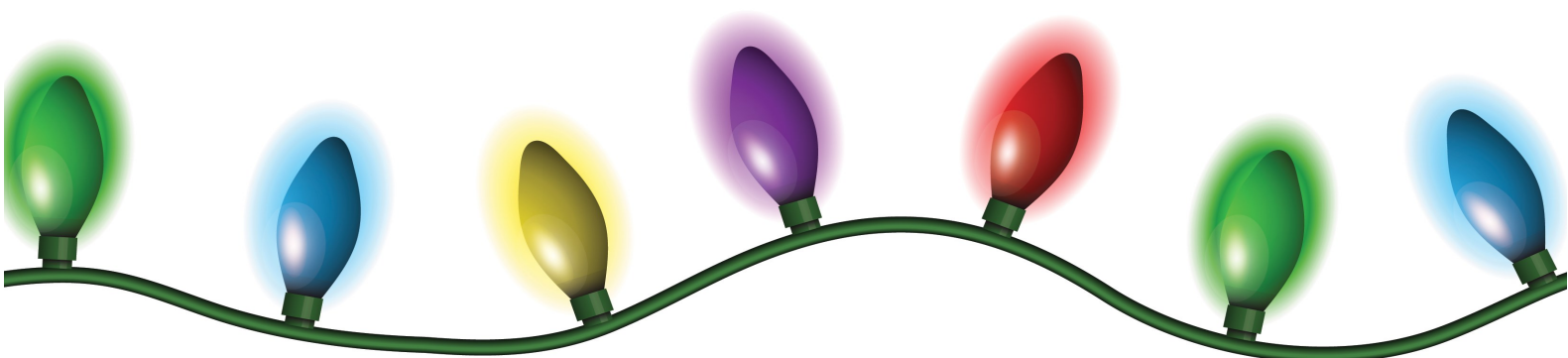
Her wish for the best Christmas ever seemed like a pipe dream – it would take nothing short of a miracle if it was going to happen. “But Christmas is coming soon,” she worried, “and I definitely don't feel like any kind of miracle is going to happen.” That's when it hit her. She wouldn't wait for the miracle to happen. She would *be* the miracle.

But how? How could a dreamy orphan like herself bring Christmas cheer to the drab interior of the aging residence hall? There was nothing remotely glitzy, colourful, or shiny in the entire house. She

had nothing to work with. Christmas was supposed to be ornate but everything in the dormitory was exceptionally plain and simple. That evening, when the girls came home from their walk, she went to pick up the shoes as usual. Her gaze drifted out the window as she daydreamed about a Christmas tree loaded with ornaments. About that time, a family walked by outdoors dragging their new Christmas tree behind them. She felt jealous that even if the orphanage had a tree they wouldn't have anything to decorate it with. And at that moment an idea leaped out of the cubby holes and into her mind.

She spent the next few days working out the details of her plan. She took an inventory and made detailed drawings. She didn't tell anyone, but secretly she felt like the architect of Christmas. Or at least, like one of Santa's elves. Christmas Eve arrived and she knew that she had to get started. She would start working that night after each and every person in the orphanage had fallen asleep. She just hoped that she would have enough time before dawn.

Christmas morning finally came. As the sun arose, echoes of giggles and gleeful laughter could be heard throughout the orphanage. She sprang from her bed only to realize that everyone was already in the living room staring mesmerized at what was before their eyes. Although some Scrooges might say it looked like a disaster area, it was truly a miracle -



a Christmas miracle. Shoes decorated the fireplace and the tables where the girls used to play their games. There were shoes hung along the staircase banister, shoes lining the window sills and shoes leading to the dining room. There were even shoes laid out to form shapes; one was clearly a snowman and there was a reindeer too. Oh, what a sight. You could see joy beaming on the girls' faces as their eyes danced from shoe to shoe.

She, on the other hand, just stood on the stairs with a smile as bright as a shooting star. It was at that moment that the doorbell rang. Suddenly the trance broke and the children's eager eyes all became glued to the big front door, full of expectation. In came four families, all of them loaded with sacks full of mysteriously unknown content. The headmistress lost her scowl and welcomed them with a smile, ushering them into the living room. The children chattered animatedly and squealed as they tore open the sacks. Colorful toys and mouth-watering food came out. The families joined the girls opening boxes, unwrapping gifts, and playing games. Her smile became one of satisfaction, as she realized that her small miracle had become a much bigger one. But, she didn't know, there was one more miracle yet to happen.

When the excitement subsided, the visitors had a chance to look around and notice the elaborately laid out shoe designs. They were fascinated by this unique décor. Some even commented on it in a complimentary way. But it was one woman who, as if recognising the creator, looked her in the

eyes. Instantly a bond was created. Not the kind of bond that is shared between two friends or two lovers, but that of a mother and a child.

As one may have understood by now, that meant one thing: adoption, that sweet word that kept the girls hoping that one day they would belong to a family. This miracle was for her. Papers were signed, congratulations were offered and best wishes were passed around. She exchanged hugs, kisses, and promises to visit soon. As she left, she gave her friends a few words of advice.



“Remember to believe in simple things because it is simple things that can show us the beauty in what's plain, and it is simple things that can be the beginnings of miracles. For me, those simple things were shoes.” And with that, she left.

Author's note: I would like to share a few more words with you.

You must trust that which you love.

And believe in what you see

Because miracles do happen

As in the story of shoes and she.



Back to Being

By Nefeli Ioannou

BAREFOOT

I am halfway through this Physics exercise. Something about how the energy stocked in an inductor changes when we double the electricity current passing through it. I can say with certainty that we've all experienced these moments: moments we wish we could escape just for a minute or two and leave everything behind, forget what others expect from us and what we expect from ourselves. So, just for a minute or two, I put my pencil down, and I left my friend the inductor do whatever it wants with its currents and energies and complicated formulas. I close my eyes and travel back. I travel back to the long summer days of my early childhood, when our only clock was the sun and the only hard choice we had to make was what ice-cream flavor to have on that day. It's late in the evening and I'm strolling on the pedestrian path by the beach. The sun has long since set and the sky is dyed a deep purple. I'm casually chewing on my hair, tasting the salt from the sea. We will stay at the beach until the early evening, not caring about the salt on our skin until late in the night when we will finally head home. That's the summer timetable. My little hand is deep in my father's large palm. Most importantly, I have nothing to worry about. Nothing. I am truly free. I look down at my feet as they make their way along the tarmac that is beginning to cool from the scorching heat of the day. I am barefoot, of course.

Barefoot: A feeling we've long since lost, a freedom we miss, a memory we cherish. It's a feeling restricted to the long days at the beach, when it was just the sun, the sand, and the sea; restricted to those days when if you're not barefoot, you're overdressed. The feeling of the warm sand grains tickling your toes. The smell of childhood when there was no pedicure to ruin, no one to judge your fashion choices, nothing to agonize over. The feeling you get where you can be your true self, where there's no need to pretend, no need to wear a mask. In the era of "barefootness,"

there's no dress code, there are no rules. There is no fashion and no social standing. There are no MUSTs, no DON'Ts, no obligations. It's a brief return to our childhood memories, a short trip of finding ourselves again. Try to think about it, about how at work you have to wear heels or moccasins, in the gym you have to wear sneakers and at school you have to wear what fashion prescribes — even when it is ugly sheep-like boots from Australia. But when you're barefoot, you're just, well, you.

Interestingly enough, being barefoot is a concept that the realms of religion and culture have dealt with. For example, anyone entering a mosque or a Hindu temple, including visitors, is required to take his shoes off since being barefoot is seen as a sign of humility and respect. At the same time, though, being barefoot has been integral to most slave laws, which mandate that slaves not wear shoes, as an indication of their lower social ranking. Many countries also oblige their prisoners to be barefoot, completely contrasting the sense of freedom most of us feel when we are barefoot. So, free or not?

Well, according to the Society for Barefoot Living (SBL) —yes, that actually exists! — "Going barefoot is the gentlest way of walking and can symbolise a way of living — being authentic, vulnerable, sensitive to our surroundings. It's the feeling of enjoying the warm sand underneath our toes, or carefully making our way over sharp rocks in the darkness. It's a way of living that has the slightest impact, removing the barrier between us and nature." The SBL tries to promote barefoot living and helps its members find barefoot-friendly jobs and assert their right to simply go barefoot!

The world has gone completely crazy, most of us will think. And maybe it has. Regardless, though, of whether we admit it or not, we all wish we could be barefoot a bit

more often. Maybe find some more moments within a day, or some more places within our surroundings where we feel content and feel ourselves. So at the end of the day, it's really up to us to create these moments and these places, or to find these people, in the presence of whom we can be truly barefoot. Let's not lose who we are in an attempt to construct what we think we should be but will never become.

So before going back to my inductors, I just want to say that in the frenzy of our everyday lives, we need to remember that it's okay to find these moments to relax. It's okay to find these moments when we can stop thinking and overthinking, stop agonizing over the present and the future, stop trying to be perfect, stop trying to fit in the mould. It's okay to find these moments when we can be our true selves. It's okay to find these moments to be barefoot.



A Pair of Prada Shoes in the National Garden

By Mara Stamelou

It certainly was an exceptional day in the National Garden. It was seven in the morning, the weather was cloudy and very cold. It was unusual for the National Garden to be so loud and crowded that early in the morning. There were the police, an ambulance, and people who were looking on curiously, whispering and waiting to hear some news from the policemen, if there was any. And there he was lying on a bench, frozen still, and so alone. It was the 26th of December, 2013. No one knew who he was. He was a man without identity, a John Doe. He was one of the homeless who wander around Athens. The only things they knew about him were the obvious ones: he was tall, battered up, thin and fragile with a messy beard, dirty long hair, a ragged jacket, trousers, and an old pair of Prada shoes. All his belongings, along with a bottle of water and a notebook, were found in a small plastic bag. The deceased man was transferred to the mortuary. His case was taken over by Police Officer, John Papadopoulos. The notebook was the only source of information for him.

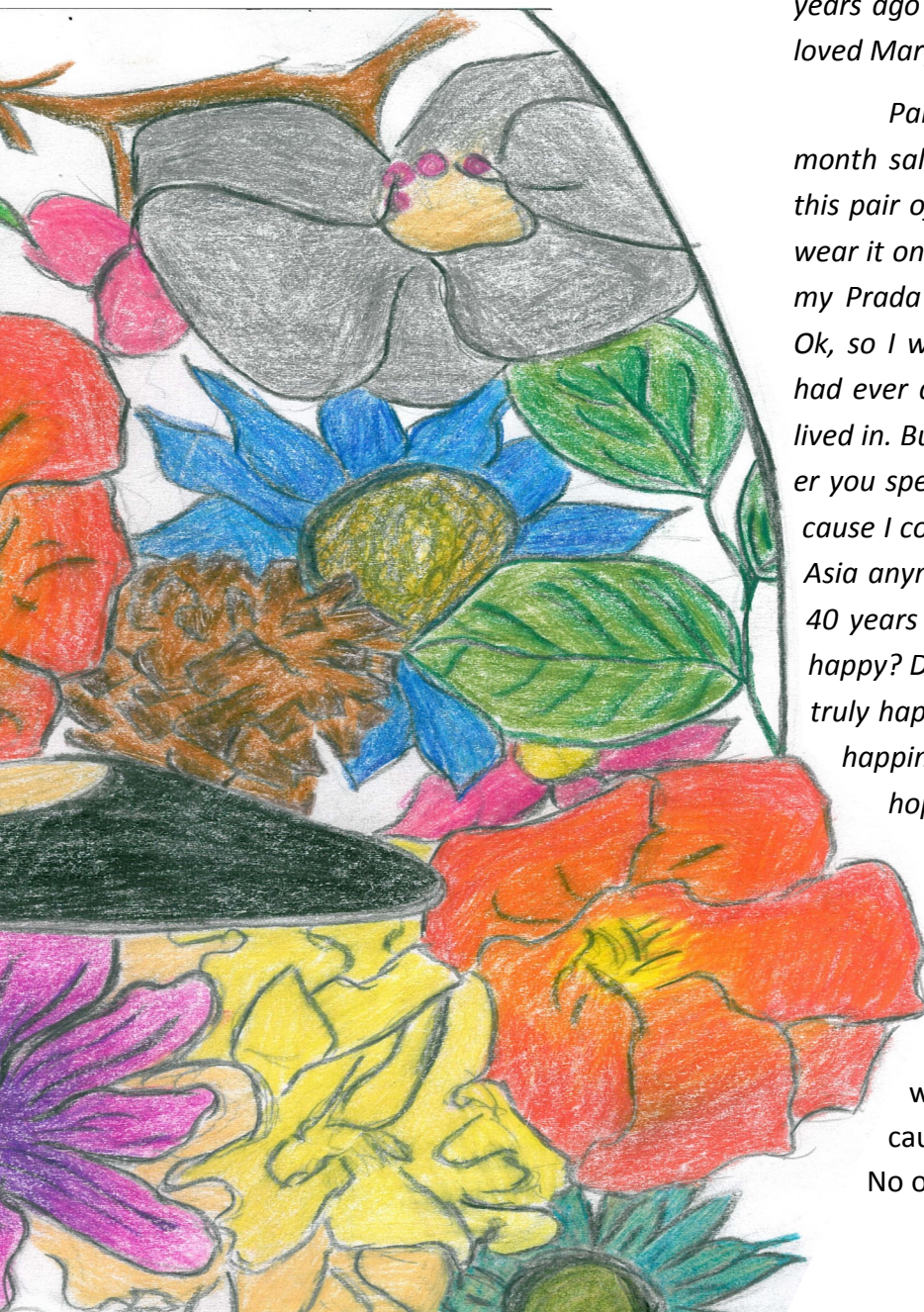
The police station in downtown Athens was where John Papadopoulos was going to end his career. He had been working in the Hellenic Police Force for almost 30 years. The police station was crowded and loud, as always. John turned on the small heater and sat at his desk next to the window. For the last 2 years, his office had been located on the second floor of an old building near one of Athens' central squares. This office was a catch, you see, he had been promoted. He took the notebook out of the plastic bag and start-

ed reading it. At first glance, it was just another story about a homeless man who had been found dead in the streets of Athens. He had had enough of the crisis. He was so tired of dealing with suicides and homeless people. But upon closer inspection, this story was clearly unusual. It was the first time they had found a notebook, the first time the body had Prada shoes on.....He started reading.....



"25th December, 2013, almost midnight....

It has been almost a year that I have been wandering around this city, but this is the first time I feel the need to write. I have been carrying this notebook with me for so long. It was one of the few things I took with me when I left my house in Ekali, a year ago. What a day that had been! I sold everything to pay some of my debts I was trying to find a new job, it was impossible, there was nothing for me. Nobody gives a job to a washed-out executive. What was I thinking? I spent all my money on cars and clothes. Yes, I had a wonderful life. But I was too stupid to realize it. I had a well-paid job, I was a C.E.O for a big company, a nice house, actually more than a house, a villa. I could afford it.



Or could I? I could never imagine myself living in the street, having nothing! I had a great many friends once. I remember the days of the parties. We had a great time, but where are my friends now? They pretend they don't know me. You see, I am a nobody now. I couldn't imagine that I would get fired. Yes, the company sacked me. I lost everything. I was in enormous debt. I couldn't tell my family; I was too ashamed. My only hope was my friends. When I turned to them for help they rejected and ignored me ... When I left home, I had the clothes I am wearing and my favorite Prada shoes on. Come to think of it, all of my shoes were Prada ones. The thousands I had spent, the thousands on shoes... I bought this particular pair of shoes two years ago in Paris, on a Christmas trip with my beloved Mary.

Paris, what a wonderful city! I spent a six-month salary in Paris.... I was so happy! Anyway, this pair of Prada shoes I am wearing now, I would wear it on every special occasion. Well, I liked life in my Prada shoes. It was exciting, challenging, fun! Ok, so I worked long hours, but I had everything I had ever dreamed of. Yes, I liked the glass castle I lived in. But money? The easier you earn it, the easier you spend it. Mary left me two months later because I could not offer her that dream trip to South Asia anymore. Now, I know. But it is too late. I'm 40 years old, and I feel like I am 80. Was I really happy? Did I have any real friends? No, I was never truly happy and I can't find the strength to pursue happiness now. It is Christmas; I am not at all hopeful for the future. I am starving, the last real meal I had was 10 days ago, and I am freezing. But I'm a lucky guy; these Prada shoes are really warm."

Police officer Papadopoulos could not find the real name of the unknown man who had died in the National Garden. The cause of his death had been hypothermia. No one declared him missing. Case closed.


Illustration by Helen Antonakopoulou

WHAT WERE THE SHOES MARY KILLED HER HUSBAND WITH CALLED?

By Jacob Tsalikoglou



Stiletto Heels



*They're shiny and blue,
There are only a few.
They are a great invention,
From the spring collection.
I heard from the salon
That they are Louis Vuitton.*

By Eliza Evans



The Pair of Shoes that Changed her Life

By Zoe Glinou

It was a small shop, with a large window in the front. Painted on it in perfect script were the words "Boutique of Chassures." Marie's eyes widened upon seeing it.

"Monsieur, you do not mean... You couldn't possibly mean-"

"Unless, of course, you would prefer to stay like... that!" He gestured to her.

Marie laughed, her eyes shining with delight, as he pulled her into the shop. Her joy faded slightly upon entering the boutique, replaced with unrest and a feeling that she did not belong. The store held only four or five people, all of which turned to stare at her when as she entered. The women here were all well-dressed, all wearing pretty shoes. She, on the other hand, was dressed in rags, barefoot, and in her opinion, she was terribly ugly.

Upon their arrival, a plump, pink woman stepped out from behind the counter, smiling warmly at her companion. "Monsieur Henry! How nice to see you again!" She greeted him with a shrill, kissing him on both cheeks. Monsieur Henry smiled, embracing the woman.

"Madame Lafayette you look lavishing as ever." He kissed her hand, only causing her to blush further. He then turned to Marie. "Madame Lafayette used to make shoes for my mother, and I used to accompany her as a child. If anyone can create a masterpiece when it comes to shoes, it is her."

Madame Lafayette turned to the other side. "I wouldn't say that, but I will certainly do my best," she said in fake modesty. She then turned to peer at Marie, looking the young girl up and down. "And who might you be?" She inquired.

The young girl felt her cheeks flush, as she returned her gaze to her bare and dirty feet. "Ma-

rie,” she mumbled shyly.

At this point, Henry declared, “Marie is a dear friend of mine. I have come here in hopes of buying her a proper pair of shoes.” She lifted her head up at the sound of his voice, forcing holding tears back, and giving him a thankful nod, which he returned.

Madame Lafayette apologized quickly, before disappearing into the back room, promising only to be gone a moment. Marie sighed when the middle-aged woman left, allowing her shoulders to drop slightly from their defensive position. She moved to lean up against a wall of the small shop. Henry joined her side, resting a hand gently on hers.

“I apologize for the way she treated you.” He said softly, “You may not see it, but she is nice.”

Marie nodded, silently, just as Madame Lafayette returned from the back room, holding a small box of shoes gingerly in both hands. A spark of something flashed through Marie’s eyes, but it was gone as soon as it came, and Henry could not identify it.

“Here we are, dearie.” She said, placing the box gently on a wooden bench.

Marie stared at the box for a long time. Then, she decided to finally open it and try the shoes on, but upon doing so, she felt herself chest tighten. She did not know the first thing about shoes, main-

ly because she had not worn proper ones since she was very young. She exhaled a deep breath, trying to calm down, as she took the shoes in her hands, holding them with the same – if not more – care as Madame Lafayette had. It was a petite white pair of shoes, looking exactly like Cinderella’s. Marie could not believe her eyes, for it was, by far, the finest thing she had ever seen. She tried them on with ease, much to her surprise, twisting around in front of the mirror, and smiling at her appearance.

“Let us see!” Madame Lafayette’s excited voice came from outside.

Henry felt his breath fastening in his throat at the sight of her. She was beautiful and Henry couldn’t help but smile at her.

“We’ll take them.” He breathed, keeping his eyes locked on hers.

“No charge necessary.” Madame Lafayette smiled, patting the young man on the back, before leaving the two.

As Marie and Henry exited that boutique, something inside the girl seemed to soar. She held herself higher, and her pace seemed to quicken out of sheer delight.

For the first time ever, she felt as if something has changed in her life. Wearing this very pair of shoes made Marie feel truly beautiful and finally good about herself.



The Shoemaker

By Alexia Pachou

Once upon a time, there was a shoemaker, who lived in a small village called Keleman. He was very kind, and if anyone wanted help, Keleman was the first to come. People passed by his store to say hello or give him gifts as he treated the villagers with kindness. They were the only family he had since he had tragically lost his own when he was very young. Keleman was very good at his job, too. Everyone loved his shoes.

One rainy evening, while he was working at his store, he heard a strange sound. It was coming from outside, but he couldn't identify it. Keleman walked to the window to see what it was, but he only saw leaves flying about in the fierce, gusty wind. He went back and continued with his work. Then, someone knocked at the door. Keleman opened it slowly, and

a strange man entered. For a fleeting moment, Keleman thought he knew this stranger although he had never seen him before. He had an oval face with prominent cheekbones. His icy blue eyes below his thin angular eyebrows were so clear and bright that you were afraid to look at them directly for too long. An aquiline nose hooked over his small, narrow mouth. He was young and tall. His clothes were wet since he didn't have an umbrella to protect him from the lashing rain.

"Good evening, stranger. How may I help you?" asked Keleman.

"I have come to town to visit my brother, but I got lost. Then, it started raining, and I didn't know where to go. I saw the light..."

"You are welcomed here," Keleman interrupted him. "Stay as long as you want. I'll make you some hot tea. You can sit by the fire.

What's your name?" he said.

"Thank you very much! I am Briand," said the stranger, but he didn't go to the blazing fire. He sat in a chair near the window. Keleman came back with a cup of tea, steam rising in beautiful, curved lines.

"Your clothes won't dry if you sit so far from the hearth."

"I am fine here, thank you," replied the stranger.

Keleman handed the stranger the tea. He hesitated, "Do you want

to tell me your brother's name? This is a small village, and we all know each other. I can help you find his house."

"I really appreciate your offer, but I promised him that I would find it him myself."

"I see... well, I wish you good luck then!"

The stranger smiled; he looked so charming that Keleman was sure that every girl would fall in love with him.



"Please, carry on with your work. I didn't mean to interrupt you. I will sit silently here, drink my tea, and leave as soon as it stops raining," he promised.

Keleman reluctantly returned to work, making a new pair of shoes. For half an hour, the only sounds you could hear were those Keleman made with his tools and the tapping of the raindrops on the windows. The young man sat still, watching the drops roll off the clear pane and studying Keleman, who seemed absorbed in his work. Keleman wondered to himself what the young stranger was actually there for. The rain stopped, and without warning, the stranger stood and moved towards the door. Keleman was startled.

"I shall leave now. Thank you for your hospitality!" And he vanished into the wind-swept night.

"Very mysterious..." Keleman muttered to himself.

The shoemaker worked until he was tired, but he couldn't stop thinking about the stranger; somehow the shoemaker felt a connection to this unusual man who had appeared on his doorstep.

The next day was warm. The sun had recovered its power and was now shining bright above the houses. Keleman's store was full of people, but the shoemaker felt distracted. He kept glancing to the direction of the chair the stranger had sat in, wondering if the odd man had found his brother the previous night. Keleman was working as fast as he could, trying to serve everyone, but there were too many customers. Some were trying on new shoes; others had brought their damaged ones to be repaired. Keleman was always optimistic; however, sometimes there was nothing he could do, so he gave them a new pair at half price, and he would keep soles and laces from the old shoes to use to mend others.

Just as Keleman was feeling overwhelmed, the door opened and a man strode into the store, causing everyone to stop and stare. It was no other than the stranger who had come the previous night. He approached the shoemaker, his eyes glistening.

"You gave me a warm place to stay when it was cold. Now, I will work for you for free in return," he said smiling.



"I can't accept that," replied Keleman. "I helped you because I wanted to. You don't have to do anything for me."

The villagers were muttering and looking at each other puzzled.

"That is why I think you deserve my help. Let's work!" Briand shouted. He started serving the customers, and he did it very well. Keleman didn't know what to do, so he accepted the help of the strange young man, and they worked together.

"You should leave now," said Keleman when the store closed.

"I can't. We have more shoes to repair! I'm staying with you," he asserted.

The young man took a pair of shoes and pointed at them. Then, he made a gesture, and... the shoes magically repaired themselves! Keleman couldn't believe in his eyes!

"Don't say anything. This will be our secret. Your kindness is being rewarded," said Briand.

"Who are you?" wondered the shoemaker aloud.

"The help you need and deserve. That is all you need to know," replied the strange young man as he magically repaired another shoe.

Keleman could not shake the feeling that he knew this wonderful man; he stood still like a statue for a couple of minutes. Magic? That was too much for him. "It's just a dream," he whispered, but he was wrong. Everything was real. Briand quickly repaired shoe after shoe, and all the work was done so fast that they even had time to talk.

Briand got Keleman to tell stories about

his friends, job, and interests. But when the stranger asked about the shoemaker's family, Keleman changed the subject. Even though he felt a connection to Briand he had never felt before, the loss of all those he loved when he was so young was too tragic and painful to discuss. Despite the fact that his store was always full, Keleman didn't really talk to anybody. His thoughts had been locked in his head like a treasure in a chest, waiting for someone with the key to open it. Now, he had the chance to express himself. Briand, however, revealed very little about himself. He started talking about how much he had missed his brother when the clock struck eleven at night. Briand had to go. He stood up hurriedly, told Keleman that he would come early the next day, and bade him goodnight.

The following days passed quickly with the young man helping Keleman. The shoemaker had someone to share his good and bad moments with. He had a fellow worker. He finally had a real friend.

One day, a couple of months later, though, Briand did not appear. In fact, many days passed, but the strange man didn't turn up. Keleman was worried.

"He won't come," he feared. The villagers could see that the shoemaker had not been the same since the stranger had come; he was happier. Now that his partner wasn't there, Keleman seemed upset and hopeless. Even though the people around him had always supported and cared about him, Keleman had never felt close to anyone until Briand came. Now, loneliness conquered him again. There were times he worked all night, thinking of Briand and worrying. He had lost his one and only friend. Some of the villagers tried to keep him company, but nobody could fill the void left by the disappearance of the stranger.

Keleman was depressed until, one day, a

little girl approached him and whispered in his ear, "Why don't you find his brother? Maybe he can tell you what became of Briand?"

What a great idea, Keleman thought, his face lighting up like the sun. His heart was beating so fast that he thought it would burst. He kissed her, and then he asked everyone in the store if they knew who Briand's brother was. Unfortunately, his happiness didn't last long. No one had seen Briand out of the store before his disappearance, nor did they know anything about him. Despite this, Keleman didn't lose hope. He quickly donned his coat and announced that he was taking a day off to look for Briand's brother. The villagers felt pity for him. They did not believe that Keleman would be successful in his quest.



Keleman walked resolutely through town, asking every person he met about the brother. No one could help. As the sky darkened, so did his mood. The wind became stronger and rustled the leaves. Keleman slowed

his pace. He was tired and beaten; it started raining. There were only a few people outside, running home to escape the coming storm. Soon, the roads were empty, and Keleman stood alone. He didn't know where to go; thunder boomed, and lightning struck nearby trees.

"This is a waste of time. I will never find him," he hissed. To make matters worse, he was far from his store. The rain began to fall in sheets, drenching him.

He stood there, stuck in indecision when he heard a woman's voice, "Hey you!!! Over there! What are you doing? You will get soaked! Come here!" Keleman entered the house reluctantly as he didn't want to ruin the floor. He recognized the woman before him although she rarely visited his store, and he had never really spoken to her.

"Good afternoon, Miss Windsor. Thank you

for letting me in.”

“You’re welcome. What were you doing there in that storm?” she asked in surprise, taking Keleman’s dripping coat.

“I am looking for someone. He was working with me, but now he has left. He didn’t even say goodbye. I’m not sure if you know him. You haven’t come to my store for a very long time,” he said, taking a seat near the fire.

“Wrap yourself warm in this blanket. Then you can tell me more.”

They chatted and laughed for many hours in the quaint, warm house. Even after the rain had stopped, Keleman could not leave. Something was keeping him there in the company of the kind-hearted woman. He realized that feelings were starting to grow in him for Miss Windsor. For the first time, he noticed her bright, hazel eyes above her small and elegant nose. He loved how her vivid, red lips contrasted beautifully with her pale skin. Maybe seeing that she was such a good person made him even more attracted to her. However, he remembered that the store was waiting for him, and shoes couldn’t repair themselves anymore.

The next day, he was in a jovial mood. It was obvious that Keleman was a victim of true love. He was looking forward to seeing Miss Windsor again. Fortunately, he didn’t have to wait that long. She appeared in his store at closing, and they went for a long stroll through town together. The next day, she came again, and he invited her to stay for dinner. A few months later, Keleman proposed. Everyone in the village was happy for them. Keleman felt complete. It has been a miracle, as he had always been alone before Briand, and since his friend disappeared, the shoemaker had despaired. However, love heals all wounds. That didn’t mean he had forgotten Briand. More than anything, he wanted his friend to be present at the wedding.

The day before the big day, as Keleman was closing, he found a letter on the counter:

“Dear Keleman,

The time I spent with you was irreplaceable. I saw an honest and generous person, who cared more about others than he did about himself. You should know, though, that sometimes you have to pursue YOUR dreams and goals. Trying to find me led you to meet the wonderful woman you

have by your side. Even though you encountered many obstacles, you didn’t give up. I shall tell you that I do have a brother, but you have already found him. I told you I was searching for him, which was true; it is the reason that I appeared in your shop that rainy night. I’m sure that you have many questions, all of which I will answer now. Firstly, I want to tell you that I know why you never spoke about your family. I know about the tragic car accident that your parents and younger brother had been in as they were coming home from the maternity hospital. I know because I am your brother.”

Keleman was astonished. He read that sentence again and again trying to fully comprehend what was written in it. Big tears streamed down his cheeks. He continued reading:

“Mum, dad, and I are very sorry for leaving you alone. You should know that we have been and always are watching over you. We are always by your side.”

Keleman now could not stop sobbing.

“I felt that you were lonely, and I wanted to get to know my brother, but first I wanted to see what kind of man you are. So that night, I entered your shop to see how you would react to a stranger in need. You welcomed me as family without knowing who I was. I saw how lonely you were, but I couldn’t stay longer. I knew that you would search for me and that in searching, you would meet others who are like you. And you did; you met Miss Windsor. Keleman, we love you and are proud of the man you are. Try to achieve new goals that will make you happy. Life awaits you.

*Love,
Briand”*

Keleman folded the note and placed it in his pocket, where he kept it forever. His parents and brother had always been with him; he now knew. With this warm thought, Keleman followed his brother’s advice: he sought happiness and lived happily ever after with his wife and his three lovely children.

IN THE SHOES OF A DREAMER

By Antigoni Aleiferi



When the alarm went off this morning, I thought it was the worst sound I had ever heard in my life. My life planning was interrupted; I was dreaming of my life in the future, where I saw myself in 10 years from now... And I have to admit, it was amazing. Why did I have to wake up at that moment? Why couldn't reality wait a little longer so that I could finish my "planning?" At that moment, I knew. I knew exactly what I wanted to be and what I was; I was a dreamer!

I am presenting myself as a full-time dreamer! It's the only identity that suits me perfectly, and the only one that defines me truly. And it is indeed so hard to be a dreamer in a modern society in which bureaucrats, teachers, and reality order you to snap out of your dreams and imagination because it is just a waste of time. Gazing out of the window and daydreaming are considered not only a waste of time but a sign of laziness as well. Though if that's the case, would you rather be a dreamer or someone trapped in his daily routine?

To answer that we need to ask ourselves what is reality? Is it our daily efforts to produce goods and make more money? Is it the pile of bills we have to pay, the homework and duties we have to do? Should reality be sad and ordinary? Who can assure us that everything around us is real and not a bogus world that humans created in order to avoid the one inside us? Both these worlds are a result of our imagination and language, so why value one

more than the other?

The duty and the life goal of a true dreamer is to find the equilibrium between these two worlds and to bring reality and imagination together. It would be ridiculous to pretend that homework, taxes, and exams do not exist. Because they do. Often



people try to avoid their obligations only to find out that obligations don't take care of themselves!

On the other hand, it would be catastrophic to avoid or ignore the world of dreams. The world of dreams is cyberspace, the personal imagination a virtual reality. Through dreams, we travel to other places, parallel universes that help us better comprehend our world and reality. Isn't it surprising that an action that constitutes such a great part of a man's life is considered so meaningless?

Dreams make the world go round. In dreams, our spirit travels freely and we can achieve the impossible. Reality, logic, and reasoning are lost and replaced by inspiration, creativity, and imagination. Finding the balance

between dreams and reality is the art of living. Communication and harmony between the two worlds is necessary. Separating them is usually what causes problems in our daily routine.

Real dreams have nothing to do with having a good job and earning a lot of money. They are directly linked with what you see in yourself that others cannot. When gazing out of the window you can see the world more clearly.

I dream of a neighborhood, a street with happy people. Smiles and sorrows; hugs that make smiles stronger and sorrows weaker. I dream of being educated, so that I can broaden my horizons,

open the eyes of my soul and clearly see the world. I dream of having people around me that love me and that do not approach me because they want something from me. I dream of having people around me that I can love freely. I dream of being able to speak

*"Through dreams we travel to other places,
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comprehend our world and reality."*

the truth without being afraid of being judged.

I dream. I dream of love, happiness, freedom. I dream of development, cooperation, change. I dream of seeing my dream come true. I am a full time dreamer.

