

Jane C. Miller

Self Portrait as Shoe Last

I am the before and after on the shelf
untouched unless your rough hands cobble me

for someone else. Sweat-darkened, I am
the ghost shape hide-draped and bound

far from the scuffed grovel and tears
of seasons. Never will I feel

the slither of hose falling
in a warm heap. Never be

one you cup under the arch and ease
in, pulling my tongue snug to skin.

Never be the one you free—
what stays me, loosening.

Speechless, I want to be speechless
as a shadow to its moving self,

holding and held the way a lover is—
worn in, worn out.