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## Shoes

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## Shoes

They often fell asleep,  
both of them,  
while watching TV  
-Chuck Norris or an old Bonanza-  
stretched back in opposite chairs,  
recliners that matched only in age,  
his glasses half hanging  
to one side of his face,  
her bare feet raised  
with white shoes laid beneath.

The week my grandfather died  
I called my grandmother  
to hear what I could not see  
from 600 miles  
a church, a coffin  
and then a grave  
the feel of an empty house  
in January  
but as I waited she began, instead  
to ask me  
about Ohio  
about the north  
if there was much snow here  
if there was much cold  
and if I had good winter shoes  
for walking.  
She said that as a girl once  
not knowing any better  
she was lost in a strange city  
and walked blocks  
until her feet froze and bled  
that at the boarding house  
she cried  
as the girls who knew what to do  
sank them slowly  
into white basins  
of lukewarm water.

—Jessica Kramer '03