

*I love your shoes*

After Leslie Scalapino

I love your shoes.

I have nothing to say yet I want to connect with you. I love your shoes.

I'm feeling vulnerable to bulldozing. No male bovine, nor its namesake construction vehicle, is in sight, however, I am susceptible to untruthful talk.

Despite my ludicrous bullishness, I suspect some women disguise hatred when saying to me, I love your shoes. Therefore the bull of theirs transforms me into a bad blunder.

These women believe they deserve my shoes more than I. This is no love affair with me or my shoes. These are not the people who would kill in exchange for the monetary value of Air Jordans. These women kill slowly.

As soon as my shoes and I pivot, turn, and transport, there are whispers. To my back, air carries pin pricks—the antithesis of cupid's arrows. I may, before departing say, I love your shoes too. I attempt to love thy neighbor as thyself but having felt the death arrows from their eyes, I am only able to feel affection for your footwear, entertain lufe, fondness and affinity for your cordwainer, that courteous cobbler, who affords me this saving laurel leaf of etiquette.

Unlike me with my desire to connect, and unlike still the female prickers, there are a third people of the phrase, I love your shoes. The parched people crave. And, in so craving, read all compliments as flimsy flattery. They cannot distinguish between genuine praise of their shoekin discretions or adulation. Believing no benevolent sunrays of praise, they crave compliments having prevented themselves from deserving such laudation.

Whether you intend compliments, flattery or self-degradation, I find your taste in footwear to be superb, your ability to match genuine leather with your outfit admirable. While I do not feel any romantic longing toward your shoes nor do I feel sexually aroused by you, I prefer, in this moment, your shoes, explicitly distinguished from boots, to all other shoes: I love your shoes.

---

[Jennifer Styperk](#) has poetry in *Denver Quarterly*, *The Texas Observer*, *There*, and forthcoming in *Open City*.