

refurbished dead shoes on the secondhand store racks  
the purgatory for dead shoes.

no matter how someone tried to make them look attractive  
offering them another chance in works of penance  
or make them comfortable while they wait it out.

they still look like they came off dead feet.

some of the shoes died

in better places

and required less work

because of the suddenness of death

and italian leather.

others wound up on the unliving racks

from hard stumblers

from unsteady men with short futures

from men who could not remember where they had left them.

some people would

identify the secondhand shopper

as the needy down on their luck

out of any other options

identify the secondhand shopper

as the needy with no luck at all

who did not deserve luck anyway

identify the secondhand shopper

as a bargain hunter looking to be lucky

not afraid of nudging out the needy

identify the secondhand shopper

as a deadbeat

from an alley that did not smell better

than the way deadbeats live.

it was clear that dead shoes  
for the deadbeat  
was not a consideration  
of how many blisters  
would puff out and burst  
in raw flesh in a watery moment  
or how many diabetic toes  
trapped in street shoes would fall off releasing  
additional space  
for an unsteady gait  
or in the number of steps  
that were left for them  
before there were no more steps  
or they lost their shoes again  
in some place they could not remember  
except they would be returned to them  
on the secondhand dead shoe rack  
with street beggar coin money that takes  
forever to count.

dead shoes.  
wf.h.  
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