Dangerous Shoes  
*�for Niki*

Look at those spidery spike heels�black suede,

lots of straps�whatever possessed you?

And where is the dress you could wear

with such shoes?

Never mind now. It�s time

to do your chores. Put on your rubber boots.

Go weed the garden, muck out the stable,

divide the rooty clump of lilies, chase billy goat

back home, start thinking

about dinner.

But who is that woman standing

at your kitchen sink? She�s wearing nothing

but your new shoes and her own version

of your skin. See that mole

on her left hip�

like a spider bite: the dark

desire to slip on a gilded string bikini

beneath the flannel nightie. Don�t

just stand there staring. Notice

how she wears her hair. Isn�t that the way

you�ve thought of fixing yours?

Now watch

how evening�s glamour

casts its blush around her

pale reflection in the window

as she fades: a sprinkling of freckles

into the darkening shoulders

of a day left out in the sun

too long. Now she�s gone,

and one stiletto sandal

stands upright in the middle of the floor.

The other lies on its side as if begging

to be finished off.

Better snatch them up now

while you can, before night

comes twirling down the mountain

in her own smoky dress. She could be looking

for just such a pair of dangerous shoes.

*--Katherine Solomon*