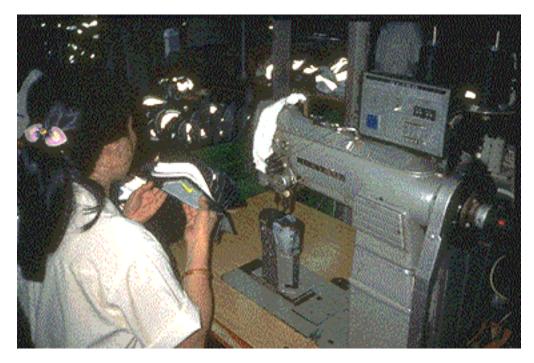
Two Poems

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Modern-day Shoe Factory Workers Sewing Nike Uppers (photo by Dara O'Rourke)

SHOE FACTORY WORKER

Lynn, Massachusetts, 1895

Alone at your stations, you keep sewing in tongues, another girl's job--hand-stitch the eyelets. How many pairs did it take to unlock the door, step into a dreamless twilight--

At a boarding house in candle dim, a bit of time to wash away grit, and worry: *The foreman hired by owners on the hill, what will he take*? How many stillbirths did you bury?

Peaked, your own shoes worn through and not a dime to save, Taylor's wayall this kindled whispers and when hell could not be traded,

your brave walked out into daylight.

Men hired to knock billyclubs against auburn tresses said you spread backtalk against the boss, riled a strike. Who knew during taper hours you read *Adam Bede* and *The Copperhead*.

The photo hides maimed fingers, bones bowed by rickets. After influenza, orphan-daughters owned no Sunday-best. They fashioned ladies' hightops and paid their mothers' debts.

RENASCENCE

Every dawn, people rise up one by one and to see them from the earth above through clouds and crowns of trees

the standing is a surging wave. Hurled out of darkness riding earth's carrousel, with slant grasses, marigold instinct enamors sunward.

Before a day's finale, in unison, peoplereturn from work and after untold pressure, recoup one by one, recline, rest a while, lay with.

Prodigious thinkers dormant in midnight's velvet, surrender to a pillow's mercy. Sleepers hope their muscles unknot limber as taffy.

Scaling defeats, the prostrate rise erect, exalt the lift and fall of hands to harvest what a mind seeskindling for the flames.