

these boots i wear were owned by a smoker.
i know because the burning taste follows them-
everywhere i go, it lingers within reach.

worn scuffed shoes, passed down
from only a simple contact, an identity with no face to me,
then to my grandmother, and then into my hands.

someday, will my actions and mistakes
be preserved in the belongings of a stranger,
who takes my biased shortcomings only as neutral facts?

the woman who owned these boots smoked.
she might have contracted cancer, or died from her habit,
and yet it is only a taste and a lingering smell to me.

it is acrid and yet comforting,
stained into the leather, woven in with the thread.
there is secondhand smoke everywhere.

elle