

SHOES

by Richard Hoffman

My mother cut holes in her shoes
so her corns would stick out, not
torment her, standing all day
in a mill folding woolen sweaters.

Her shoes stank. They were ugly.
Twin lobsters in a tank at the market,
laces defeated antennae, children
tapping at the glass, saying “Eww.”

And she cut linoleum to cover,
from inside, the holes in the soles
because those were the only shoes
she could bear to wear to work

and because she needed to work.
And she soaked her feet in the evening
and smoked and listened to the radio
and dreamed of walking — where?