

Lady
The Lady of the Shoe

IF perchance the mind could speak,
 An explanation would be due
Of why it's strong and where it's weak –
 Its triumphs, and its failures, too.

Why should it sometimes just let go
 Of memories that it's interred?
Why does it fail on things we know,
 Like faces, names or just a word?

Why does it over-compensate
And cling, although release is due?
I wonder more and more of late
About my Lady of the Shoe. . .

She's with me still. Well, not right here:
Were we to meet, I would not know
The girl I saw in Worcestershire,
 Five seconds, sixty years ago.

But still, she flits into my mind
Unheralded: she's there instead
Of matters that I'd like to find.
It makes no sense: she may be dead!

And if she is, no doubt she smiles
Each time remembrance jolts anew,
And shows her how she yet beguiles
 Because of that abandoned shoe.

For me, she's still just twenty-two;
A lass who has but half-shod feet.
I saw my Lady of the Shoe
 In a quiet urban street.

Lady

But first I saw my lady's shoe –
Black, high-heeled, just standing there,
Abandoned, with no helpful clue
To modify my startled stare.

How could someone leave a shoe?
She must have noticed, with some grief,
That she was wearing one too few –
According to widespread belief.

But if not, she would surely see
Before long that she ought to stop.
She must have cried, "*This cannot be!*
I should not catch me on the hop!"

My musings had progressed thus far,
Proceeding as a one-man quiz,
When from a quickly-stopping car
A girl leapt, crying, "*Here it is!*"

Across the pavement then she flew,
One shoe off and one shoe on,
Gathered up the lonely shoe,
And then, next moment, she had gone.

That's all there was: amazed delight
Was all that she had left behind.
She'd gone for ever from my sight –
Yet still she isn't out of mind.

A nothing moment lives on yet.
Perhaps we all have one: do *you*?
Where is she now? I can't forget
My fleeting Lady of the Shoe.
