

Heel should not be an insult

**The true humility of heels:
pale, battered, wrinkled, swollen.
We may paint our toes, but naked
heels are dumb as cows' behinds.**

**Patient, stubborn, vulnerable
they follow us looking back
like children in cars making faces
through the rear view window.**

**In undressing a lover, even
foot fetishists must blink:
the sock, the stocking peeled,
the unappetizing bony fruit.**

**We are always landing on them
slamming them into pavement,
jumping out of trucks, forcing
them into stirrups and pedals.**

**Cats walk on their toes like ballerinas
but we, ape cousins, go shuffling
and what we leave in the sand
is the imprint of our heels coming home.**

**They are the periods under the leaping
exclamation point, gravity's mooring,
our anchor to earth, the callused
blind familiar of soil, rock, root,**

**Let me rub your angular barnacled
hull with unguents and massage you
tenderly, my little flatiron shaped
heroes, my hard laboring heels.**

Marge Piercy

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