

**Walk a Mile (or Two) in My Genderqueer Shoes**  
by Aron Ryan

For my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, mother refused to buy  
the sneakers in my size. In her words,  
*those are men's shoes!* Still, I refused to try  
heels, sandals, or women's Sketchers

for I wanted only those black D.C. sneakers  
with the slick grey laces. Heaven forbid  
the harsh click of heels against high school  
halls (tick tock tick, tock) like a broken

watch. I wanted the squeak that solely sneakers  
could speak when I'd slide down the halls  
in rain-soaked soles. I wanted to run in the rain,  
letting my sneakers pound against puddles,

running from what I didn't know. I didn't know  
how badly I wanted to escape my own body,  
how desperately I'd trade perfume for cologne,  
my dresses for suits, my so-called *phase* for

the truth. Truth is, I threw such a tantrum that mom  
bought those black D.C. sneakers with the slick  
grey laces. Truth is, I wanna walk in men's shoes  
and I don't give a damn about mother's taboos.