

# Ode to My Socks

Pablo Neruda, 1904 - 1973

Maru Mori brought me  
a pair  
of socks  
which she knitted herself  
with her sheepherder's hands,  
two socks as soft  
as rabbits.  
I slipped my feet  
into them  
as though into  
two  
cases  
knitted  
with threads of  
twilight  
and goatskin.  
Violent socks,  
my feet were  
two fish made  
of wool,  
two long sharks  
sea-blue, shot  
through  
by one golden thread,  
two immense blackbirds,  
two cannons:  
my feet  
were honored  
in this way  
by  
these  
heavenly  
socks.

They were  
so handsome  
for the first time  
my feet seemed to me  
unacceptable  
like two decrepit  
firemen, firemen  
unworthy  
of that woven  
fire,  
of those glowing  
socks.

Nevertheless  
I resisted  
the sharp temptation  
to save them somewhere  
as schoolboys  
keep  
fireflies,  
as learned men  
collect  
sacred texts,  
I resisted  
the mad impulse  
to put them  
into a golden  
cage  
and each day give them  
birdseed  
and pieces of pink melon.  
Like explorers  
in the jungle who hand  
over the very rare  
green deer  
to the spit  
and eat it  
with remorse,

I stretched out  
my feet  
and pulled on  
the magnificent  
socks  
and then my shoes.

The moral  
of my ode is this:  
beauty is twice  
beauty  
and what is good is doubly  
good  
when it is a matter of two socks  
made of wool  
in winter.