American Life in Poetry
American Life in Poetry: Column 914
By Kwame Dawes

There is, of course, no hidden chapter in the “Good Book” that explores sandaled Jesus’ fashion rules, but Cornelius Eady in “Easter Shoes” is being funny and deadly serious. The poem takes him back to childhood, to the pains of conformity and the forced obedience of being “dressed”, “encased” and “pinched” into decency. “Easter Shoes” celebrates the petulant act of creative rebellion that he achieves by scuffing the impractical shoes while maintaining the “mirage” of obedience.

Easter Shoes
By Cornelius Eady

In a hidden chapter of the Good Book,
Is there a verse that explains
Why Jesus cares for fashion,
Why my feet must be encased
And pinched? When you’re a kid,
It’s how someone else dresses you;
You won’t grow into these black, shiny
patents, as much as your mother
Wants it. On the way to Sunday School,
You are a mirage, like the new store shine
You scuff, as you obey.