

Heeling

by [Sarah Rossiter](#) in the [November 2, 2004](#) issue

It's the coat I notice first, several sizes too big, and blue as the sea, an ocean to drown in, and clearly not hers. It was, I guessed, his, just two months dead, and she, his wife for scarcely a year, stays afloat, barely, marooned in his clothes, in anything that keeps him close, the scent and touch of cloth to skin. But it's the shoes that pierce my heart—gunboats, we called them when I was a child—and they do look like boats, his New Balance sneakers that carry her, heeling, over sharp breaking waves.