

## What I was wearing

was this:  
from the top  
a white t-shirt  
cotton  
short-sleeved  
and round at the neck

this was tucked into  
a jean skirt  
(also cotton)  
ending just above the knees  
and belted at the top

underneath all this  
was a white cotton bra  
and white underpants  
(though probably not a set)

on my feet  
white tennis shoes  
the kind one plays tennis in  
and then finally  
silver earrings, and lip gloss.

this is what i was wearing  
that day  
that night  
that fourth of july  
in 1987.

you may be wondering  
why this matters  
or even how i remember  
every item  
in such detail

you see  
i have been asked this question  
many times  
it has been called to my mind  
many times

this question  
this answer  
these details.

but my answer  
much awaited  
much anticipated  
seems flat somehow  
given the rest of the details  
of that night  
during which  
at some point  
i was raped.

and i wonder  
what answer  
what details  
would give comfort  
could give comfort  
to you  
my questioners

seeking comfort where  
there is  
alas  
no comfort  
to be found.

if only it were so simple  
if only we could  
end rape  
by simply changing clothes

i remember also  
what he was wearing  
that night  
even though  
it's true  
that no one  
has ever asked.

by Mary Simmerling