

What I Was Wearing by Mary Simmerling

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 you 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.