

BARBIE DOLL BLUES: BURN BABY BURN

We were products of the plastic age
when even love was an elastic
that stretched and snapped back to smack
anyone who held it hyper-extended,
something certain to sting but still,
an artificial convenience we needed.

Polymers like jello pooled in jugs
arousing flesh undulations.
Lust for latex, like kissing:
a fetish no longer.

The new forbidden thing we needed to get off on
now was our greatest fear—
the heat that could consume us.

Lacking it, we fed cyberskin jelly cocks
to cul-de-sac gashes to quiet a hunger
that seared from celluloid lips lapped by no flames,
flames whose heat we could only imagine—
from Bakelite we built bodies as alters to that heat,
shrink-wrapped on our backs
bare-breasted in bed
molded mantels heaving to heaven
limbs laid out in a cross
ready to bear nailing of a savior.

But to what sort of savior would we offer
such sacrificial flesh if not men made of flames
who, at first, seemed slick, like petrol spilled on pavement
but when lit, burst in angry
arcs of rage sparked as gasoline rainbows,
rainbows that would kiss our skin
make our cheekbones shine painting in shades
from the palette of indelible pain?

Why was it we wanted only men of flames
who burned our nerves and made us melt?

Once, our vapid noses smelled vapor fumes
of a violence whose volatile ventilation
whetted our want for something more fragrant
than sulphur fists that left us sniffing
for the sweeter sense of love we'd never smell.

To stop breathing in that atmosphere
seemed the only way we would ever escape
those noxious odors that broke our noses
so we suffocated ourselves under
suits of soot we wore to soothe bruising
(out of sight yet, still, on our minds always)
a way to live not alive but surviving,
a survival senseless numbed by touches—
we forced ourselves to forget how it felt to feel.

We had to find ways to feel more alive:
we pulled on pins we jabbed through
our own areolae and believed that it felt good,
believed we'd found a way to ground our live-wire lives,
our mutilation, a mutation,
breasts turned to io moth wings,
needles through nipples,
saws through our eyes.
The blind bleeding lithic flesh! We worked miracles.

Remember what a riot that was, what kicks we got from pricks and nicks, and what about waiting for the sores to seal, the scabs to stitch in scars that would suture skinful sins?

We'd found a way to work around
our urge to discharge our electric surge,
to add another coating of creosote
to the chrysalis that cloistered us
further into the folds of ourselves.

What a way to rot that was, weathering waste and withering. What a route.
But what else was there, save for waiting
for a sadistic savior to serve
who'd smear us with the salve of sex—
a safer way to hurt...

Juicy