

Living Dolls

ANDRENA ZAWINSKI

A living doll, everywhere you look.

It can sew, it can cook,

It can talk, talk, talk. Sylvia Plath

As a little girl, I never wanted any creepy
doll. No haunted puppet or voodoo doll.
Not Twilight Zone's sinister Talking Tina.
No Chucky of horror fame. Not even
a sideways glancing Kewpie doll waif
won tossing balls in a carny booth.

Yet they continued to arrive
on holidays and on birthdays.
Betsy Wetsy drink-and-pee in diaper.
Walking Baby in gingham and Mary Janes.
Stiff dollies with oddly cheery countenances.
I wanted none of them—

Not the rosy-cheeked Southern belle
with golden ringlets and starched ruffles.
Not the newest bride doll propped up
on the bed, collections of them crammed
on a bookshelf or hung high on the wall
in out of hand displays of crinoline and satin.

I favored the soft comfort of a monkey sock doll
 my mother clipped, stitched, and stuffed
 from Rockford Reds. As a little girl I wanted
 my brother's Lionel train remote
 to make the trail of cars speed, smoke, and toot
 along figure eight tracks through a tiny toy town.

As a little girl what I wanted
 was an Erector Set to assemble bridges,
 Lego bricks and beams for cityscapes,
 Lincoln Logs for cabins and barns,
 appliance box toss away turned clubhouse
 with Crayolas, scissors, and tape.

I chose, over dressy dolls, to strap on
 a cowgirl holster and gun with chaps and hat
 to cruise the block on a cherry Schwinn
 or to whiz around on slick metal skates,
 key dangling like a fancy locket
 from a string at my neck. I really loved

smacking the Wiffle Ball with a bat,
 firing glass cat eyes against a wall,
 crawling around on monkey bars,
 pumping the air on a wooden swing,
 its rattle of chains in my hands. As a little girl,
 what I really wanted was to fly—
 wind in my hair, imagination rocketing.