

My Soldier Dolls

Gerard Wozek

have dropped their bayonets.
They've shucked
their rubber grenades
and traded in their jeep
for Barbie's yellow
Summer of Love dune buggy.
The tough-looking Marine,
the one with the anchor
tattooed on his plastic bicep,
has taken up knitting scarves
for the army lieutenant,
who brings him canteens
of strawberry Kool-Aid
and Bazooka Joe comics.
At twilight, they drive out
past the willow trees
to watch lightning bugs
weave in and out of the dark.
Hey Joe, the lieutenant whispers,
how did you manage
to survive the war?
The cadet places his medals
on the dashboard,
pulls down his starched collar
and bares a plum-colored
neck wound the size of a fig.
It's all right, you can touch it.
They stare out at the flickers,
little firebombs going off,

and listen to the crickets pipe.
Then the two hard-lipped mouths
scrape across each other,
slowly at first, then faster,
trying to find something warm,
like a tongue or a heart.