

CHATTY CATHY

When I was young, I never played with dolls.
Now in middle age, I've suddenly inherited one—
an old Chatty Cathy, though the pull string that
protruded out of her back to make her talk is missing.
Her once beautiful, voluminous skirt shows clear
signs of water damage.
Her long, gleaming hair is matted.
She's still got that painted on smile, though,
but it's only skin deep. I know that inside—
if she had a "real" inside—she'd be pretty messed up,
likely on a fast track to teenage delinquency.
I check her arms for needle marks or self-cutting.
Nothing, just a strange coloured mark on her upper
right thigh. Glad I never had a daughter to raise,
a son was bad enough, but a girl can get into
such trouble, so easily taken advantage of, then
bearing the price, bearing the unwanted child,
who would always only get a second-hand doll,
probably a lot like this one.
A child who would turn silent, with not even
anyone there to pull the string
to try to find out what she really had to say.