

Six

Tiptoeing down the stairs on
Christmas Eve, *needing*
a glass of water
and maybe. . .
Out of the corner of my eye,
a shimmer coming from the hall closet,
the ajar door invites me:
all my presents!
I was six.

Checking the tags twice, signed by
Santa Claus himself,
carefully picking a rectangular box
holding it to my ear, I
shook it.
Guessing—
Could it be?
Cinderella Barbie?
I was six.

Cinderella Barbie with long, golden locks
tied neatly up in a bun,
The most elegant jewelry—
coated with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires—
and a beautiful, light blue gown
she could wear at the Prince's ball?!
Drooling, I tear a little at the paper.
I was six.

Hearing a creak inside the kitchen and faint moan,
I sprint up to my bed
holding tightly onto Teddy.
I pray that I will fall fast asleep,
and *Cinderella* will be waiting for me in
the morning, not replaced
by coal. . .
I hide under the covers,
six.