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DESI DI NARDO

My Little Brother

I never told you that I was afraid of the other
children
When they boxed you in and shouted *Four*
eyes
And sneered and scoffed until you cried
I saw you lick the blood off the side of your
mouth
Turning into the wall of the school yard
When desperation flooded your eyes
Picked on, taunted, and mocked for being
humble
You looked at me like I might have been your
mother
You prayed for me to be
But I was only two years older
And pretending to be something else
Shame on you for the expectation
I could have knocked you out for hoping
But when you followed me into my room
that night
I let you play with Ken
I played Barbie
And we went to the drive-in a plastic, red
convertible
You played with my hair while I drove
Nobody mentioned anything
Besides it was only schoolyard talk anyway

Desi Di Nardo is a novelist in Toronto. Her writing has appeared in numerous literary journals. Previously, she worked as an on-air television host and taught English in college.