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## Cocktail Hour in East Berlin

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# COCKTAIL HOUR IN EAST BERLIN

Mary Maroste

She had the biggest bedroom with a Dream Cast, Nintendo and PlayStation, but made me wash her clothes for Monopoly money. *She is my sister*, is all I could say.

It started with a zigzag braid pattern straight back. my mother yelled "you look like a boy" and forced her fingers into her greased scalp until the zig zags were gone.

Her preference to boxers over thongs flung my mother into a panic. her fists and barrels and keys and mugs violently kissed my sister, left her cafe cheeks a black Tahj Mahal. I offered her my last

Lemonhead when it was over, but she refused and snuck out the back door. My mother saw her and locked it. It was seven Christmases before I saw my sister again and when I did, she was he.

# WHEN MY SISTER WAS A GIRL

Heaven Barlow

Somewhere it is midnight & I am dragging my wooden dog  
across the kitchen table, leaving me breathless & gagging.  
The window opens & a tailored suit of an army man pins  
fireflies over my nipples, tells me to calm down,  
zips my knees together.  
On the corner of the counter a basket filled with sliced apples  
& war paint, reminds me of my mother.  
A bat wrapped in a blue blanket sucks blood out of oranges,  
my brain beats heavy & wet against the oak floors;  
*I wore the wrong perfume, my black bra broke.*  
Iron in my blood sinks, math problems etched into the table  
hold water, weather, remind me of my father.  
I put a Band-Aid on a scar that healed three years ago,  
the window cracks & the egg in my stomach sours.  
A tailored green suit of an army man throws  
margarita glasses at the wall, tells me to tie my hair back,  
buttons my bones back in place.  
On the counter, blue flowers in a silver mug grow bigger  
I mouth Plato into my cereal, my eyes glaze over;  
*In another life I was Athena, I never had a headache.*  
Somewhere, a raccoon swallows a nail in a junkyard,  
I collect splinters from the table, my toes uncurl.