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Not Sinning as Much as People Needed Me to

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Not Sinning as Much as People Needed Me to

Eric Freeze

I've been in a lot of hospitals
envying the patient on oiled
rollers, drugged,
and filling the hall.
Like on the veranda with
my sister, when I watched her twist off
the head of a shapeless doll,
and make it dance
like a cossack until I implored
her to put it back.
I told her
"I would rather be dead,"
rather be the doll.
She looked at me
like an expression I once saw
on my mother's face
grabbing the cracked pulpit
in a Mormon testimony meeting,
saying how I was always
a serious child—
didn't play,
never broke the rules.
And me feeling I would
rather be dead, and her
looking
like she would have
needed me more if I had
done it all wrong.