

# A Kmart Sunday Melodrama

by John Cantey Knight

Miriam had a mother  
 but lost her one day  
 in the Kmart across  
 a cow field from  
 the interstate. Barbie  
 smiled. That's  
 what happened  
 to Miriam's daddy  
 last summer when  
 her mama had lost him  
 to a bleached blonde  
 Tammy Faye temptress  
 at the Quick Stop. Her  
 daddy wasn't no Ken,  
 but a double second  
 cousin once removed.  
 A one-eyed  
 Negro side-glanced  
 on her way to a sale  
 on support hose.  
 Barbie had a tattoo  
 like her daddy did,  
 but it was a butterfly,  
 not a naked lady.  
 She ran her hand down  
 the beautiful plastic.  
 A handsome man  
 with green teeth said,  
 "Y'ore sech a pretty  
 gal. Where's  
 yore mama." That stick  
 of candy sucked  
 good. Still holding  
 Barbie, she thought he  
 kind'a looked like  
 Ken. By the flashin'  
 light, mama was  
 examining a 'xtry large pair  
 of yeller panties  
 and a matching bra.  
 She tugged his jacket  
 and pointed. He grinned,  
 "Yore mama's a fine  
 lookin' woman. How's  
 about you an' me

playin' a trick on her?"  
She beamed without  
any front teeth and said,  
"Shore" as they walked  
hand-in-hand to the door.  
One of her three  
brothers waved "goodbye"  
as she clutched Barbie  
out of the box. A flat-faced  
man that looked dumb  
stopped 'em in the parking  
lot and declared himself  
Security. "May I  
see the sale receipt?"  
Slick as owl shit, he smiled,  
"You know how little  
kids are. Give the dolly  
back to the nice man."  
Miriam's face wrinkled.  
She clutched Barbie closer.  
"You ain't my goddamn  
daddy, you sumnabitch."