“Barbie's Little Sister”

How terrible it would be to be Barbie's little sister, suspended in perpetual pre-adolescence while Barbie, hair flying behind her in a tousled blonde mane, dashed from adventure to adventure, ready for space travel or calf roping or roller disco in campy, flashy clothes that defied good taste and reason. Stuck with the awful nickname Skipper, Barbie's little sis never got out much, a mere boarder in Barbie's three-story hot-pink Dream House, too young to wear the thousands of outfits stashed in the bedroom closets: purple beaded Armani evening gowns, knit sweater dresses by Donna Karan, specially commissioned tennis togs sewn personally by Oleg Cassini. Skipper had to buy stuff off the rack at K-Mart, condemned to wear floral sunsuits with Peter Pan collars. Unlike her bosomy sister, Skipper had no chest for the boys to ogle, until some bright toy maker gave us Growing Up Skipper: with a twist of her right arm, she grew taller, breasts sprouting where there once were none, a thick rubber band inside her.
pushing her chest up and out
until the band snapped
and Skipper was stuck at age fifteen,
never the same again.
For consolation, she turned to
Barbie's black friend Christie-
who was just figuring out
all the fuss about equal rights-
and Barbie's best pal Midge,
who was tired of hearing
about spats with Ken, knowing
he was cheating on America's sweetheart
with every new celebrity doll on the market-
Brooke Shields, Cher, Dorothy Hamill.
Together, those three decided
they'd had enough of Toyland-
so they pooled their cash,
swiped Barbie's camper,
and tore out of California
for Las Vegas, where they bought
a little establishment not too far
from the gaming houses,
a restaurant for all of us
without thick manes of hair
or upturned noses, without
impossibly slender ankles
and tiny feet, without
perfectly molded breasts.