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The Doll in the Sheepfield

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THE DOLL IN THE SHEEPFIELD

She sets me high on the fence post
so I can watch them move sheep.
The family can't afford a sheepdog
so by token of size the girl
runs them, staggering through
mud, a stick in her hands, tripping
herself up, yelping at the stray's heels.
And over and over they get
away from her, the man yelling
"Can't you do anything. Turn them.
Turn them all at once. Don't
scatter them." until at last
it's done. They go to walk

the fences and she grabs me
soaked with sweat in the cold
wind and flushed crawls in under
the fig leaves. Rolls me
contorted into a ball forced
up to her face to muffle sound.
Her hot breath pushes through me.
I can almost imagine breathing.
Until, calm, she smooths
my arms and legs out and rocks
me, sings me to sleep:
 "Ann's not alive.
 Neither am I.
 Ann's not alive.
 Neither am I."
Infinitely calm and rocking.
Rocking.