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## About the Bed We Share

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ABOUT THE BED WE SHARE

It's not my feet,  
to be fettered, but  
my six-year old sister's. My junior  
by three years. Corrective shoes. Her choices:

black and tan oxfords  
or navy Mary Janes, stitched  
in red thread. My toes wiggle  
in Buster Brown sandals.

The foot doctor, young  
and shaggy-haired  
like Keith Partridge, whispers  
to my mother. He woos her, reassures her.

She jiggles her charm  
bracelet, her four-leaf clover.  
Our birthstones—garnet and emerald—  
jingle. Disjointed.

He stresses discipline—  
meticulous use of the metal brace. Mary Janes snapped  
in place. Trapped in its jaw, its teeth.  
Tight. Every night. The red stitching

itches, welts my calves, my ankles. My sister thrashes, flops  
her tethered feet from side to side, our bed  
sheets drenched in sweat, salty-sweet.  
I don't dream. I don't sleep.

I don't dare complain  
about the bed we share,  
the bruising, my pain. As my parents often  
remind me, my sister's is

much greater. The cool summer breeze  
lifts the curtains, our thin cotton  
sheets. My toes wiggle  
freely, breathe.