"Barbie Doll" by Marge Piercy is a poem that not only shows you what effects barbie dolls actually have on people, but also shows how rude and judge mental society can be. It evokes the thought that barbies are perfect and ideal, and anyone that doesn't look similar to a barbie is nothing, even if they have alot of things going for them. It also tells a story about how much peoples harsh words get to the individual that they are talking about, you never know what extremes a person will go to until you push them to their limit.

The first stanza of "Barbie Doll" starts with "this girl was born as usual." (1) Stating that she was your ordinary girl, there was nothing wrong with her. "and presented dolls that did pee-pee, and miniature GE stoves and irons, and wee lipsticks the color of cherry candy." (2,3,4) These quotes explain that her barbie doll not only went "pee-pee" like your average person, but also had stoves and irons in her doll house and red lipsticks that you always see grown women wearing when trying to be cute. The barbie doll was perfect in every way. "Then in the magic of puberty, a classmate said:You have a great big nose and fat legs." (5,6) These lines take a turn from the perfect barbie, and go into the girl looking nothing like one. Assuming her classmate has seen nothing but barbie look alikes, he or she assumes that because the girl doesn't resemble one she is not pretty and has many faults.

Marge Piercy's "Barbie Doll" then goes into explaining that even though the girl had everything going for her "She was healthy, tested intelligent, possessed strong arms and back, abundant sexual drive and manual dexterity." (7,8,9) she still wasn't good enough because "everyone saw a fat nose on thick legs." (11) All the people around her couldn't get over the image of all women resembling a barbie. There for "she went to and fro apologizing." (10) Apologizing for the way she looked because people couldn't except her the way she was. Everyone noticed what they thought was bad on her and never realized how good of a person she really was.

The third stanza gets more in depth on how much peoples harsh words were taking a toll on this girl. "She was advised to play coy, exhorted to come on hearty," (12,13) These quotes simply tell you that she was suppose to be silent, and only come out if she had something good to say. "Exercise, diet, smile and wheedle." (14) She was doing everything in her power to try and be something shes not, just to please other people. Exercising all the time, going on a diet, and putting on a fake smile for people to except her and consider her a barbie doll. "Her good nature wore out, like a fan belt." (15,16) She got tired of trying to please everyone else just so she could fit in and not get called names. "So she cut off her nose and her legs, and offered them up." (17,18) Eventually her trying to be something shes not got too overwhelming and she committed suicide. She couldn't please everyone anymore, so she gave up and killed herself. "In the casket displayed on satin she lay, with the undertaker's cosmetics painted on." (19,20) In her death bed, laying upon satin, she looked like a barbie, with all that make-up painted all over her face. She finally looked like a barbie.. But it was to late.

"A turned-up putty nose, dressed in a pink and white nightie." (21,22) She had the perfect nose now and the clothes of a barbie. "Doesnt she look pretty? everyone said. Consummation at last." (23,24) The girl finally got the recognition she deserved, once she looked like a barbie in her casket. But it was a little to late, and what had been done was done, no turning back. "To every woman a happy ending." (25) The last quote of the poem is mostly sarcasm, explaining that this is going to happen to many women playing with barbies, they will eventually want to look like one and go to extremes to do so, hopefully they think wisely and don't let other peoples words get to them.

"Barbie Doll." By Marge Piercy was definetly a touching poem. It's reality and it shows how harsh people really can be. If everyone doesn't have an ideal look then they get looked down on and made fun of. You never know how much your words can hurt somebody and how far that person will go in order to fit in and please other people. Barbie dolls probably aren't the best thing to play with because they make everyone assume that all women should look like that, and anything else isn't beautiful, and thats wrong. This poem teaches a lesson about the way you treat other people, and the way people get offended by harsh words. Piercy is trying to explain the affects that barbie dolls have on people and the things people will do to be "perfect".
Barbie Doll Analysis (2011 Exemplars)

The poem, "Barbie Doll", by Marge Piercy depicts a very scary, but realistic view of an average women's life. Piercy paints the picture of a woman with low self-esteem that wants to become beautiful, no matter what the cost may be. This is a reality for many girls. Once the thought that your are "ugly" is planted into your head, it never seems to go away.

Marge Piercy's "Barbie Doll" begins by introducing the subject as a beautiful baby. "The girlchild was born as usual/ And presented dolls that did pee-pee." (1-2) Piercy's subject started out as a young, happy girl. When she began to change and go through puberty, she was shot down by a fellow classmate. "You have a great big nose and fat legs." (6) Criticism is always a low blow to girls. Us women automatically take the comment to heart and it eats away our confidence. But again, this is very much a reality, tormenting starts early and it damages the souls of anyone it is aimed towards.

The downward spiral of self hatred began for the main character after that first comment. "She went to and fro apologizing./ Everyone saw a fat nose and thick legs. (10-11) Piercy describes how when your self confidence is gone, you begin to "feel bad" for being "ugly". When you feel so down to the point of apologizing for the way you look, you are vulnerable to further torment and self destructiveness.

In the next stanza, Marge Piercy's character begins to play "Barbie". "She was advised to play coy/ Exhorted to come on hearty/ Exercise, diet, smile and wheedle." (12-14) The subject of Piercy's poem tries to become a "Barbie". She acts just how a proper, and quiet as a beautiful girl "should". "Her good nature wore out/ Like a fan belt./ So she cut off her nose and her legs/ And offered them up." (15-18) The girl tried her hardest to be "beautiful" but her good intent changed quickly. She had enough of herself and wanted to do whatever she could to take away her ugliness.

Piercy's last stanza sums up how "wonderful" it is to be beautiful:

In the casket displayed on satin she lay
with the undertaker’s cosmetics painted on,
a turned-up putty nose,
dressed in a pink and white nightie.
Doesn't she look pretty? everyone said.
Consummation at last.
To every women a happy ending. (19-25)

The beauty killed her. At some point, becoming beautiful turns into a deadly obsession. The need to be loved for your looks and turn heads controls the mind and takes over the heart.

Marge Piercy does an absolutely perfect job at telling the sad story of what the need to be beautiful does to women. But really, what is beauty? I think that is one thing that cannot be defined with words, but Barbie definitely should not be the poster child for it. Yes, Barbies are pretty. But they are not the definition of beauty. Piercy also paints the picture of the young girl growing up with criticism and that need to be beautiful, while using a Barbie as her goal of what to become. This is a real, everyday thing that all girls go through to some degree. Marge is trying to get it out there that that's not what us girls should be focused on. But you know, beauty is pain.
Barbie Doll Analysis (2011 Exemplars)

Goals are much higher than they used to be. The poem "Barbie Doll" expresses many of the expectations and pressures put upon young women today; especially standards of beauty. "Barbie Doll" also shows human desire to be perfect and the criticisms many women must endure if they are not what some people call perfect. Obviously the pressure can be enough to even make some women go over the edge as shown in the poem. This poem is a fictional story that could have been a reality for many people including the author. From childhood until death the woman in this poem must endure her cruel life.

Stanza one sets off the general plot and mood of the poem well. It is a common beginning for many girls today. Lines one through four of the poem explain the beginning of the main character's life, but they do more than that. The lines seem to be a paradox to the rest of the poem because they seem to say that at the beginning of life all people are equal. The line, "The girlchild was born as usual," (1 Piercy) seems to point out that nobody cares about qualities like appearances at birth. The words almost seem to foreshadow that eventually the girl's life takes a turn. The lines two through three make it seem like before teenage years it is everyone’s job to pamper and flatter children. People, "Presented [her] dolls that did pee-pee/ and miniature GE stoves and irons," (2-3). Lines five through six explain that for this girl things do take a turn for the worse. The criticisms start at the words, "You have a great big nose and fat legs," (5). This marks the beginning of the downspiral the girl's life takes.

Stanza two illustrates the ignorance of people. It shows how people can not seem to get past negatives and find positives in people. Lines seven through ten elaborate on the main character's better qualities. "She was healthy, tested intelligent,/ possessed strong arms and back," (7-8). These traits do not seem to matter to most people though. In the last line of the stanza the author states, "Everyone saw a fat nose on thick legs." People are too focused on appearances and negative qualities to see the good inside people. However, the girl tries to fit in and be normal anyway. Her attempt to fit in is what the third stanza summarizes.

"She was advised to play coy,/ exhorted to come on hearty," (12-13). In the third stanza the main character gave in. Plenty people tried to help the girl though not realizing her suffering. Her friends and family it appears tried to help. The advice they gave was not the right kind of help for her. She obviously tried to follow this advice because eventually, "Her good nature wore out," (15) and she gave up. The pressure became impossible to bare. She committed suicide and literally "cut off her nose and legs." (17). The term may sound like a metaphor or hyperbole, but the figure of speech becomes all to real in the finale of the poem.

The woman's funeral is the final stanza of the poem. "In the casket displayed on satin she lay,/ with an undertaker's cosmetics painted on,/ a turned up putty nose." (19-21). It is at this point that our main character is finally satisfied. "Doesn't she look pretty?.../ Consummation at last," (23-24). The lines 23-24 explain that the main character finally got what she wanted. She also became what others expected; perfect. She became beautiful and all her flaws were fixed, which is impossible in life, but apparently only possible in death. As the author explains that every woman gets a, "Happy ending," (25).

The poem "Barbie Doll" is a gruesome story with its own truths. Every girl is expected to be perfect, which is impossible. The definition of perfect is impossible to achieve for anyone. There are some who give up their lives because they can not be perfect. Others must simply brave through the hardships and criticisms. The poem is not just a story, but also a warning. The poem is a reminder that expectations can't always be achieved, and the bar should noy always be put so high.