

Tim Gillespie

## At the Metro Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Station

I pull up, and the team surrounds  
my car in white hazmat suits,  
blue gloves, yellow booties.  
“Stay inside your car, sir,” says  
the space-invader man. “Please  
unlock the doors and pop the trunk.”

I watch them in the mirror take  
with brisk precision all the boxes  
packed with rusty cans of paint, past-  
use-date solvents, Grandma’s pesticides,  
dead batteries and burnt-out bulbs,  
chemicals, aerosol cans, bottles  
of outdated pills. “That’s all?”  
the spaceman asks. “Oh, there’s more  
where that came from,” I say.

Atop a small ledge on the driveway out,  
lined up along the shelf at eye level,  
some hazmat wit has saved platoons  
of cast-off toys, a troop of one-time  
treasures arrayed in ranks for their  
last action. Redeployed, the tossed-out  
action figures, some armless, legless,  
melted by past tours of duty, still serve—  
poised Ninja Turtles, GI Joes, Avengers,  
Justice Leaguers, two Chewbaccas,  
and one brave balding Barbie,

all with arms raised, muscles flexed,  
poised to rid the world of all  
the toxic trash—like me, arch-enemy  
of mighty, faltering, heroic Earthman.

