

## ON BEHALF OF PLASTIC SWORDS

By Megan Kudla

If I was a child,  
I would stick my pink tongue out to Ms. Rona  
in a single act of confident defiance.  
My imaginary friends would lead me to her hiding place where I'd pull out my plastic sword  
and swear  
on behalf of empty playgrounds  
from the schoolyard  
to the art studio  
to the laboratory  
to the conference room  
that I would Snap, Crackle, Pop her to oblivion.

Or if I could just call on Lily  
to board the Magic School Bus once again.  
I would slide inside Ms. Rona's nostrils  
and journey to her lungs  
where I'd find her source of breath—do the alchemy necessary to pinpoint  
it's attraction to oxygen.

But my taste buds have become bitter,  
and I can no longer fight fire with Aang's wistful spirit,  
Even if I could bend the sick air towards  
a burning sun.  
I can drive my own car past State Borders  
and feel the fist open and close around my throat according to  
the rules and regulations to which I was completely  
unaware  
when I was a child.