

## Somewhere Children Do Not Play at War

You can't blame me for flinching  
back against the wall  
when a small boy points his  
pistol at me and yells "Pow! Pow! Pow!"

I am lying back there somewhere  
feeling the sidewalk as if I'd never touched  
sunshine, pumping out my urgent  
puddle

And when three kids dash by, invisible  
in their camouflage sneakers,  
chattering on their walkie talkies,  
pay no attention if I button my opinion  
and pocket my fingerprints

I crouch somewhere in a black, sweaty  
silence too small for me,  
listening to voices muffled by cinderblocks  
or years

And when I wake this morning  
to jubilant cries, and look out to see twins  
in miniature green berets waiting  
while a man in uniform  
unlocks the station wagon,  
forgive me if I drop the curtain and start  
smuggling my unborn children across the border

Somewhere I am waiting for my daughter  
to come home, holding grief in  
like one who holds a breath too long  
under water

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Free Ralph! Illustration by Steven Spazuk

