

The Disarming

Man:

My president says your president is a military dictator and therefore must be stopped
before he unleashes his weapons of mass destruction upon us
my president says your president must be disarmed
one way or another you *will be disarmed*
it's up to your president
we don't need to wait for the deadline
it's too far away
my president says your president should've destroyed his weapons of mass destruction by now
so my president drops weapons of accurately targeted destruction
on your country's weapons of mass destruction facilities
to protect you and me from your president's weapons of mass destruction
yes I know some smart bombs missed their targets and caused some collateral damage
as is to be expected in any war for peace
just 'cause they're smart doesn't mean they're perfect
I mean who *is*?
I'm so so sorry that your house was destroyed
but now that democracy's coming
you're free to earn as much money as you can
and one day buy a house
that will make the one that was destroyed seem like nothing but a dusty old dollhouse
your military dictator will burn in hell for causing you such losses with his lack of cooperation
thanks to my president your military dictator can never harm you again
so what if my president wasn't legally elected it wasn't *his* fault
and now he's proven himself to be a great leader
sometimes for the good of the world the loser's gotta be the winner
you'll see
he'll win hands down the *second* time around
he doesn't care how many millions of people are out in the streets demonstrating against the war
(when they should be at work I might add)
he does what he thinks is right
he will not make sensitive military decisions based on mob mentality like some military dictator
yes I know a long time ago my government was behind your military dictator's rise to power
but that was to keep the *communists* from seizing the hour
so *what* if my president can't find any of the weapons of mass destruction
he said your military dictator had and must be disarmed of
just because he can't find them doesn't mean they're not there
I can't even find my car-keys in my own home
but I know they're here *somewhere*
I'm so so very truly sorry my president's weapons of accurately targeted destruction
accidentally landed on your house
but your military dictator is gone now and can never hurt you again
and my TV news shows shows all your friends laughing and singing and dancing in the streets
of your city in celebration of the occupation that set you free
DEMOCRACY!
Yes I know you don't have any electricity or clean drinking water anymore

that's to be expected in a war
 but you will soon
 and a lot more
 because your oil fields are safe now
 and in the protective hands of my energy conscious corporations
 and my conservationist compassionate conservative president
 who kneels down and prays to God
 every night before he goes to bed
 and sleeps like a baby
 knowing there's one less military dictator in the world
 one less madman who harbors terrorists
 who attack us on our own soil
 and slaughters our
 innocent people.

Boy:

Congratulations on your victory.
 You have disarmed me.
 When I first woke up I kept asking
 "Can you help get my arms back?"
 Do you think the doctors can get me another pair of hands?"
 Before the war I wanted to be a soldier.
 Now I want to be a doctor.

Man:

That's *beautiful*.
 One less enemy soldier in the world to worry about.
 One more future doctor driven by democracy and new freedom
 to cure his people
 and drive the kind of classy car a doctor deserves to drive.
 Tonight I'll get down on my knees at the side of my bed and say a prayer to God
 and then I'll sleep like a baby knowing there's one less terrorist to torment my dreams.

Boy:

But while you sleep,
 it's daytime where I am,
 and the desert sun shines hot and bright on what was here before the fight:
 home
 mother
 father
 brother
 skin
 hands
 arms.

Soon it will be my birthday.

I will be thirteen.

As a gift I will receive a fresh new layer of birthday bandages where my birthday suit used to be.

As a birthday party I will have another skin graft surgery
 and the celebrations will continue when they file down my still growing bones
 which will pierce the skin

of the stumps
where my arms used to be.

Where are my arms?
I can still feel them attached to me,
but there's nothing there.

Wait.
What's that?
There.
Under your bed.
In the dark.
What's that under your bed?
After you said your prayer,
did you check under there,
before you turned out the light?

Change

Dear Mr President,

I'm only four years younger than you.
You're the first president from my own generation.
Does that mean I'm approaching middle age?
At the end of your first term I'll be the age you are now.
Wait a minute...
That means that if you serve two terms,
at the end of your second term,
I'll be more than...
No, that can't be.
Fifty?
How can that be?
And then the president after you could be younger than *I'll* be.
How did this *happen?*
I'm not even making a living yet at the work I went into debt learning how to do.
Should I put on a tie and flag pin and try to be more like you?
But fifty's the new thirty, right? *Right?*
Come on, you went to Harvard. Tell me, is it true?
Or am I running out of time?

Change has come.

But wait a second...

You're one of the young ones.
 I think you're the fourth youngest president in the history of the country, right?
 So doesn't that mean that although I've seen all that I've seen and done all that I've done
 I'm still young?
 There's still hope?
 Soon I'll have health coverage and a good job?

Change is coming.

Well then, speaking as one of today's youth,
 the ones who put you in power,
 because what we care about is the content of your character,
 I say congratulations Mr president.
 We the children of the world chant
 "yes we can"
 with tears pouring down our cheeks
 in celebration of your glorious victory over racism.

An eight year old civilian girl
 in a poppy growing mountain village of northern Kabul
 and an eighteen year old soldier boy
 from a heroin flowing housing project in the South Bronx
 whose hearts pound as one
 at opposite ends of his shivering machine gun
 don't care about the color of your skin,
 or the name of the political party you're in,
 or your early opposition to your predecessor's preemptive obsession.

A high school sophomore
 hanging by his neck from his belt in his closet in the back of the Bible Belt
 doesn't care about your wonderful way with words
 when he hears you say
 a person who is gay
 deserves full civil rights
 but not quite the right
 to be as free and human as you and your wife.
 Children chasing their shadows
 in the rubble on a reservation out west
 don't care about your call for energy alternatives
 when they see you appoint Secretary of the Interior
 a man who greased the machines that crack open the earth
 swallowing up the disappearing sacred species
 who dilute the impending poisons of yet another person's birth.
 A premature baby born into a Washington, DC war zone
 doesn't care about the country preacher inflected uplifting lilt in your voice
 as you sermonize on the inspirational middle class
 but won't say the word
 "poor"
 in the entire two year presidential campaign
 she never heard
 you say the word.

An eighty year old born into the Great Depression
who survived five wars
who worked five decades
is grateful for the slow Stimulus drip coursing through his veins to mitigate the pain
but wonders why you put into the position
of regulating the dirty money men
the very men who deregulated them
and put us in this dependent position we're in.
A nameless faceless Pakistani family
is sitting down to dinner
in the room next door to a terrorist leader
unaware that in the air one of your nameless faceless budget draining drones
is about to drop a bomb on the dinner table
as they watch you play with your daughters and your dog
on the tiny screen of their brand new used TV.

In closing, Mr President,
from one forty-something person of youth and experience to another,
again I say congratulations on your historic victory,
and, um,
about that change...

Can you spare some?