

Thank You President George W. Bush And The Pro-War Demonstrators  
--By Ray Bacigalupi

Up until now I've been able to pretend  
That the world is different than it is.

I was solidly entrenched in the American Dream  
Land of the free, a place where anyone could make it.

I was able to invest in oil companies,  
Manufacturing, or defense corporations

I was able to use up natural resources  
As though they were endless, and freely given.

I was able to live with a standard of living  
That ranks in the top ten percent of the world.

I was able to change channels when humanitarian programs  
Aired documentaries of children, women and men  
Dying of starvation and past military interventions.

I was able to turn away from the homeless on our streets,  
Ignore the lack of health care, the undereducated and underfed  
Within our own borders

I was able to sit by while much of our GNP went to  
Prior military conflicts and appropriations for future wars.

I was able to ignore our destruction of ecosystems world-wide,  
Corporate abuse and inhumanity; and religions being used to justify murder.

NOT ANYMORE.

George Bush has effectively, through his arrogance, short sightedness, and greed  
Poured ice water on me  
Slapped me in the face  
Shaken me...

Not long ago, I stood at a corner in Sacramento with others for peace  
Holding signs that said, "Honk for Peace"

People honked, gave us the peace sign or thumbs up, thanking us.  
We did the same; thanking them.

But dispersed among the supporters was the opposition.

In just one hour nine individuals put up their middle fingers in obscene gestures  
Others put thumbs down, yelled "get a job", "get a life" and made other disparaging  
remarks.

And what they taught me is how difficult it is to be nonviolent.

I grew up little and afraid, hating bullies.  
As I got older and bigger, I spent a good deal of my life trying to be tough.  
I learned to box, became a cop, fought in Vietnam.

And here I was at a peace rally waiting,  
Actually wanting an antagonist to stop and face me...  
So I could beat them senseless.

I learned again how easy it is to be violent against others  
And how hard it is to use compassion,  
understanding and respectful dialogue.

For years I have been unable to cry when I needed to.  
Now I can't stop.

So I don't know where all this is going,  
Or who I'll be tomorrow,

But again I want to thank George Bush  
And those who side with his ideology

FOR WAKING ME UP.