

# Heart of the Enemy

**Jenny Pacanowski**

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The day you waved at me  
For the first time  
The convoy was  
Transformed  
Into a parade  
I lowered my weapon  
Waved back like a beauty queen  
In desert camo...  
A parade of freedom  
Of winning hearts and minds  
Of this liberated country  
My mission was clear  
I was present  
We had arrived  
To help  
To save  
To heal  
To love

We convoyed into your village  
With our green ambulance  
The leaders  
Presented you and the other children  
For US  
To poke and prod with our instruments  
Of medicine

I taught you about cough drops  
How not to swallow it  
Whole  
To take in the medicine first  
You nodded  
And I smiled  
I listened to your hearts  
The bounding and the slushing  
As blood pulsed through your veins  
My heart burst with purpose  
We lived another day  
Together  
Immersed in war

I left  
You stayed  
I was assigned  
To the road  
To convoys  
You went to begging  
Then to rock throwing  
We laughed when we saw you  
Flicking US  
The bird

Until ...  
The explosion silenced us  
Your screams were deafening  
Or was it mine?

I scrambled around the crater  
The dust was blinding  
Until I saw the blood

Desert sucks up blood  
Quicker than water

I saw you!  
Running away  
With that cell phone  
That detonator  
In your little brown hand

Die You Little Motherfucker  
You were no longer a child  
With a beating heart  
Sucking on cough drops  
YOU ARE A THREAT  
Running across your desert  
Of Sand that rakes my skin  
Much like your existence  
Rapes my idealism

Die you Little Motherfucker  
You have come into a world  
That hates you  
Wants to kill you  
You little terrorist  
We can't tell the difference between insurgents and civilians  
You all look the same to us  
Different than US  
You are the enemy  
Die you little motherfucker

I see 2004 like a movie  
Reeling backward in my mind  
Drawing forth the  
Moving targets  
I mean....  
Civilians  
I mean....  
Children  
I mean...The Detonators

You are THE blurry in my pictures  
You are as indistinct as the shambles of concrete  
You call "home"  
How do I return home?

What if I said I didn't know?  
I didn't know how to stop the machine  
Not the convoy  
Not the war  
Not even myself

I reached out...  
But my weapon  
Separated us  
I wanted to pull you in  
Close  
But,  
All you could feel was  
Cold hard steel

What if I said  
I was sorry  
We ever occupied  
You  
I want to hold you  
Redefining  
Love unconditionally  
Giving you my blood  
After we had gutted  
You  
Your country  
Please help me  
Put away  
My gun  
My armor  
My hate  
And redefine my love  
For humanity  
Including you  
Please  
Let me come home  
Please  
Let us all come home  
From the war  
Inside  
US ALL

**Jenny Pacanowski** is a poet/combat veteran/facilitator/public speaker/actor. She collaborates with Impact Theater, Poetic Theater Productions, Bedlam Outreach, The Military Resilience Project along with many other organizations. Most recently, Jenny has performed at the Lincoln Center Atrium, The New York Cultural and Ethical Society, Poetic License: Kicking down Doors, LaGuardia Community College Veteran Week, Aquila Theater@ GK arts center and many more. Her goal is to help veterans and civilians by healing the wounds of war and military culture through the arts. Jenny hopes by creating smoother reintegration programs; it will facilitate lowering the suicide, homelessness and addiction epidemics that plague our veterans.