

# Poem and commentary: “fused at the wound”

by Rick Belden

The poem below is from part three ([“dance of the unloved child”](#)) of my book [Iron Man Family Outing](#). This is a poem that seems to resonate very strongly with a lot of people, men and women alike, perhaps more than anything else I’ve written so far.

## ***fused at the wound***

*is it love or is it addiction  
why not both  
she knows tears + I know anger  
together we almost made a whole person for a while  
fused at the wound.*

*but our little house of lies isn't big enough to hold us now  
she won't stand up for herself + I can't stand up  
for both of us at the same time anymore  
so we ride the broken lover's seesaw of staying + leaving  
one foot in + one foot out  
we dance in the kitchen like unloved children + wait  
for fulfillment of old pain's expectations.*

*so anxious to leave                      so anxious to be left  
so anxious to be right                  so anxious to be hurt  
so anxious to be disappointed  
so anxious to be alone again.*

*when this whole thing started  
I wanted us to be immersed in each other  
I wanted us to fix each other  
I thought that was what people were supposed to do  
I don't want that anymore  
I don't need that anymore  
but I still don't know  
how to love someone I don't want to fix.*

While preparing this post, I stumbled across a transcript of a video I made a couple of years ago in which I discussed this poem. Here’s what I had to say:

*The stuff that was going on in my home as a child, the dynamic between my parents, between myself and each of my parents, was not good training, not a very good education for me as I went into adulthood and attempted to form my*

*own intimate relationships, my own partnerships with women. Things really didn't go well, and they went spectacularly unwell a lot of the time.*

*And so this is one of the poems that I've written about a situation where I was living with a woman. I really loved her; we loved each other. It started out great, but it was going south and both of us knew it and neither one of us wanted to admit it. And neither one of us knew what to do about it either. Sooner or later somebody was gonna have to go. But at the time I wrote this, we were still in that state where the decision about who was gonna go first was undecided.*

*And typically for me, I'd rather let the other person go first 'cause I wanted to be the good guy. I didn't want to be the one that walked out, the one that gave up, although I certainly acted as if I didn't want to be there a lot of the time, which is a good enough reason for somebody else to leave. But I just didn't want to be the bad guy. I'd grown up with a man who was, that I perceived as, a bad guy. My mom basically did everything she could to reinforce the belief that he was the bad guy, and I didn't want to be that guy. I didn't want to be the one that ruined everything.*

*So anyway, this poem is about that uneasy state when both people have realized that this isn't gonna work out but nobody's ready to go yet.*

*I guess the additional aspect of what was going on here was that I had started my healing process, I had started to recover, but it was still very early in the process and the relationship was not moving in the same direction that I was moving in personally, and I didn't know what to do about it.*

*As I said, I had strong feelings for this woman, but the whole premise of the relationship, the way that I entered it and what I thought it was all about and what I thought I was supposed to do, I had realized that was false and that it wasn't going to work. But I still wasn't at a point where I knew what to do instead.*

*So that's basically where things ended, unfortunately. I guess fortunately for her, and I guess for both of us. I mean, she moved on and she went to somebody else and has a very nice family now and that's what she wanted. And I went ... I went somewhere else. I went somewhere where she didn't want to go and didn't need to go. So it worked out the way that it should have.*

To watch my video readings of "fused at the wound" and other poems, visit my YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/rickbeldenpoet>.

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Rick Belden is a respected explorer and chronicler of the psychology and inner lives of men. His book, [\*Iron Man Family Outing: Poems about Transition into a More Conscious Manhood\*](#), is widely used in the United States and internationally by therapists, counselors, and men's groups as an aid in the exploration of masculine psychology and men's issues, and as a resource for men who grew up in dysfunctional, abusive, or neglectful family systems. His second book, [\*Scapegoat's Cross: Poems about Finding and Reclaiming the Lost Man Within\*](#), is currently awaiting publication. He lives in Austin, Texas.

More information, including excerpts from Rick's books, is available on his [website](#) and [blog](#). You can also find him on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).