

elephant dream

I have in my care three elephants
two males one female
they are very sick
from too much time in the heat of the sun
they've come to a place of shade and safety now
but they're dying
the female is the sickest.

they have large ragged holes in their skins
burned into them by an unforgiving sun
weak and withered
dried and dying
drained of power
they wait and they suffer.

I've noticed them only recently
I know that without my help
their time is short.

I haven't been trained to care for these holy creatures
so I ask others for help
one well-intentioned man
young bureaucrat in uniform
suggests a cage for shade and safety
they're dying!
I remind him
but they'll be very safe
he says.

others are not interested at all
some make jokes
this is urgent! who will help me?

these animals need water
lots of it
more than I can ever provide
with the old buckets once used by
my father my uncles my grandfathers
elephants have other needs too
but water is basic and must come first.

I'm desperate time is short
I walk up a slow hill on a back country road
(*I've walked this road in younger days*)
looking for someone to help me save these sacred beasts.

Excerpted from *Iron Man Family Outing: Poems about Transition into a More Conscious Manhood* by Rick Belden. Copyright © 1990, 2008 by Rick Belden. This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License](#).

www.rickbelden.com