

We're Stuck Together  
--by Shauna L. Smith

*A few weeks ago, my granddaughter and I made up a "stuck together" song, which I realized on reflection served to help us deal with the disruptions in our attachment to each other, a connection which of necessity is intermittent since we live 3000 miles apart. It made me think more about the critical significance early attachments play in our adult relationships and how attachments and disconnections throughout our life affect our sense of self and our ability to bond and empathize with others. When I read an article about the Pentagon considering a plan to give a psychiatric drug to our soldiers in order to numb them to their feelings, I wrote the piece below, hoping we will not bring more detachment and denial into our already fragmented world.*

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Zoe, age three, begins: "Look Gramma—we're stuck together—we're attached." Zoe holds tighter to my arm and snuggles in. "How stuck are we?" I ask. "Like paper and glue," Zoe says. We sing it. "We're stuck together like paper to glue, like a me to a you. Like honey to pooh, like the sky is to blue." I screen out the rest of the world and pretend that in a parallel time zone someone else's grandchildren are not homeless, sick or starving. I never thought I would understand how so many German people could be caring at home while atrocities were committed in their name.

The Iraq Occupation is in its 5th year. The 660,000 death count must be a million by now, and the drumbeat goes on for more profit making wars. Thousands of our soldiers are returning home maimed, brain damaged, their minds blown out by multiple traumatic events. Increasing numbers are committing suicide and murder.

The latest news is that the Pentagon and the pharmaceutical companies have teamed up to consider giving the psychiatric drug propranolol to our soldiers before they go into battle -- to numb them to the effects of the brutality of war. Now a chemical method to help our soldiers bypass their normal feelings of empathy and guilt. Why don't they end the war and bring our soldiers home instead? My granddaughter and I sing about love and connection while the Pentagon and Pharma conjure up ways to cut the connection, to immunize our soldiers from empathy—the essence of connection.

We try to ignore the hard things that only distantly affect us, but we can't. For each of us, every day is a challenge in which we must navigate the delicate balance between living quietly and making our voices heard; ride the fine line between our need to protect ourselves and our integrity; and do our best to make sure both are remembered.

And we sing on: "We're stuck together like our lashes to our eye, like the stars to the sky, like water to the sea, like a you to a me." *Like all of us to all of us*, I think, we're stuck together in our human condition, morally bound to remember that connection and take action toward peace and justice, so that more families can sing caring, made-up songs together.

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