

FSH COMMENTS 2014

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: I really liked the bluntness of the first part of the poem because I also felt the hearbreak, anger, and love in the second part. The direct command "Don't..." is powerful, and similarly for the "Say rather." The images are perfect, the first set in their saccharine faux-consolation; the second in their immersion in the natural world. The poem struggles toward acceptance "Maybe..." and in my mind that's exactly how it should be. For me one of the best parts about this poem is that, while it is beautifully crafted and very artistic, it contains some very practical advice. I can easily see using this poem in a teaching context - or with my grandchildren!

The only line I stumbled over a bit was "He's not breathing or growing," especially the last word. It suggested to me that the poem is trying to explain the death of a child to a child. If this is not the case, perhaps there is some other way to say he's not alive, he's dead.

This poem will linger in my mind and heart because of its authenticity, grief, and strength.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR:

I really liked this poem. It is beautifully crafted, tough, and heartbreaking. Its use of the natural world to help reconcile a child to the reality of death is powerful. As I said in the author comment, the poem manages to be both an aesthetic achievement and contain some excellent advice about broaching the topic of death with children, and I could easily see using it in a classroom setting.

My only quibble is the line "He is not breathing or growing," which per above I found a bit jarring, especially the allusion to growing, although I suppose we are all growing until we're not. Anyway, revision of this line is not a deal-breaker for me. I like this poem and would strongly support its appearing in FSH.