

FSH DECISION LETTER 2014 12

This poem expresses well the helplessness we feel – as well as the excuses we make – in the face of terminal illness. It is simply yet affectingly written.

With some minor revisions, we think the poem could be significantly improved. Please follow Reviewer 1's suggestions about switching "'cause" (which I agree sounds juvenile) to "because." If you feel this makes the line too long, you can substitute "I'd" for "I had..." Also I agree about keeping the poem punctuation-free. You might also consider not capitalizing every line (a rather old poetic convention), but instead capitalize only words that begin a new sentence. Please also pay attention to reviewer 2's concern about the ellipses. I understand that you are trying to suggest something for which there are no words, but since you are using the medium of language I think words might be more effective. Since this is a poem, and you are not restricted to a word limit, consider finding language to express what the ellipses represent. For example, in the first stanza, you might say, "I was waiting for... certainty," or "I was waiting for... I don't know what." In the final stanza, you might try, "Because if I'd known, I'd have done... something" or "Because if I'd known, I... don't know what I would have done." Look for ways of formulating the narrator's uncertainty without making the reader fill in all the blanks.