

DECISION LETTER 2015 3

Based on my review and on reviewer comments I would like suggest a small change for your consideration. This is a beautiful poem, both in terms of its content and its craft. The theme of life ending with a soul-destroying whimper, rather than a bang of demolition is compelling. Your imagery and metaphors are superb. It is really a pleasure to read such evocative and powerful wordsmithing.

Within that context, having now read the poem three times, I have to say that each time I found the shift in format jarring (and not in a helpful way). Given your writerly skill, I appreciate that the shift is intentional, and likely intended to underline the distinction between the observations in the nursing home and the subsequent dialogue between narrator and spouse. Nevertheless, in my read it was distracting to no especially beneficial end. Could you revisit the last two "stanzas" ("I said," "she said") and experiment with reconfiguring them in a less "prose-y" style?

Otherwise, this is an exceptional poem, which will certainly cause readers to both think and feel deeply about end of life issues.

DECISION LETTER II: I am pleased to inform you that your work has now been accepted for publication in *Families, Systems, and Health*. It is both beautifully crafted and fully realized. The insights it portrays regarding end of life are moving and powerful. It is an honor to have such work represented in our journal.