

FSH COMMENTS 2015 7

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This is a beautifully written piece that pulls the reader into a sad story of a life that ends all too soon. In its theme, it is a meditation on transience, mortality, loss, grief, and guilt. My one overarching critique is that you might consider distinguishing more carefully between the guilt the ex-wife feels and the guilt the narrator feels she should bear ("...her nights were comfortable, far from the agony of an ending life"; "she wasn't there when he suffered horribly, and when he needed her, and of that she was guilty"). This seems a harsh judgment on the part of the narrator toward the ex-wife. Who knows what had happened in their relationship, why they had divorced, why she did not go to him when he was dying? I think it would be less distracting and not detract from your main message about guilt to leave this emotion in the heart and soul of the ex-wife.

Minor corrections: 1) I'm old school, but I still think that from a strictly grammatical only a hen "laid" eggs yesterday. Change "laid pale" to "lay pale." 2) "The doctors and nurses laughed, and they complained - of..." I think the additional "ofs" although perhaps there for the cadence of the sentence, could go without irreparable loss.

Aside from these small concerns, I liked this essay a lot. It was moving, thought-provoking, and profound.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: I thought this was a very well-written and moving essay. As above, my main concern had to do with the blaming attitude of the narrator toward the ex-wife in the story. I felt this was excessively judgmental, with no foundation provided, and distracted from one of the main points, which was, I thought, that death often provokes guilt (whether warranted or not). I would like to see it published.