

FSH COMMENTS 2016 14

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: I found much to like in this poem. It is full of ambiguities, as a good poem should be, but its central theme of loss and loneliness as the result of illness comes through with heartbreaking clarity. In comparing the original and the revised version, I found strengths and shortcomings in both. In particular, I had trouble with the use of the word "wait" instead of waiting - it seemed affected. Also, the revisions of the last two stanzas seemed to make the new poem more optimistic than the original, while adding language that I thought at times detracted from the purity and simplicity of the poem up to that point. Some metaphors, like honey "standing," just didn't work for me. Also, in the absence of other "fruity" allusions, the idea of the "nameless ripened within us" seemed at once abstract and affected. I've offered some edits which might capture the best of both versions. I think it important to keep in mind that the readers of this journal are primarily medical educators, physicians and PhD social scientists, who are accustomed to clarity. Poetry in this context should walk that fine line between intriguing nuance and multiple meanings and mere confusion.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: I really had to work with this poem, reading it probably 5 or 6 times. The good news is, the more I read it, the more I liked it. I actually began to feel that, with patience, it was less confusing than my initial impression, and that its ambiguities were on the whole rewarding. As I mentioned in my email, I did not particularly like the revisions. I felt they changed the meaning in a way that I wasn't completely comfortable with, while at the same time adding yet GREATER ambiguity. Still, overall, I think this is a poem worth publishing. I've edited the revision in ways that try to make it a little clearer (we want to avoid ambiguity for ambiguity's sake), a little simpler, a little bit more straightforward, while at the same time not diluting its tone or message.