

Photocopy

1747 Princeton Ave.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84108
June 30, 1987

Joseph Parisi
Editor
POETRY
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610

Dear Mr. Parisi,

Thank you for your letter of June 10--with all those kind proposals and the critically meaningful comment on "Elegy for Jon."

"Elegy for Jon"

I think the poem very probably depends too much on the none-too-obvious implications of the refrain that you found disappointing: "Between a stair and a stair." Writing, I was wrung by the irony that a climber of wild heights should have died indoors on the way up or down mere stairs. The facts too no doubt make objective work on the poem nearly impossible: it was written soon after I had news of the death of my elder son, a biologist and woodsman, prevented from full activity by arthritis that came in late adulthood after childhood illness--rheumatic fever. Yet I infer that you found the poem sound enough, apart from the refrain. If the two lines of the refrain were stricken out, the poem would retain the full force of the characterization of exuberant courage for which I value it.

If you think you can use the poem without the refrain--the refrain merely stricken out--please do so: this, I hope, without any sense of concession on your part, for I should deplore that. So, with that understanding, I enclose the copy that you returned to me--leaving the matter for your action, and calling for no comment upon your final decision.

As for other short poems that I might submit for your consideration, I have one only, "Honor and Honors," that I enclose with the usual return envelope and postage.

Sincerely,

Brewster Ghiselin
Brewster Ghiselin

Enclosures