

Dear Larry.

I had actually finished the play last week and thought we could chat about it in person over morning coffee. The one on one opportunity never occurred.

Even though I've never met Ben I almost feel as if I know him. Under the guise of fiction he bares his soul to the reader. He is almost like a diarist, the likes of Joyce Carol Oates, Sylvia Plath , Anne Frank and Anne Morrow Lindbergh. I wonder if he has kept a log or notes through the years of the steps and stages of his personal life.

His recall, if indeed correct, is really prodigious. The portraits drawn, in brief description, are vivid and compelling. One comes away from the reading feeling a personal acquaintance with the characters that inhabit the play. Needless to say, I was very moved by the descriptions of the father in the throes of Alzheimers in the different stages. Since you know Larry that my closest friend is in the grips of the second stage right now, I was able to understand the anguished state of the mother and the guilt put upon the son whose absence I can only presume was unintentional. Two years in the Peace Corps and a year in Paris sounds perfectly normal to me.

For the son it came at a propitious time, innocent of the family's predicament, so it seemed.

There was tremendous reality in the situation with Jane Weiss and Ben. It was quite metaphysical the way Ben, the playwright, wove life and death choices into the story. I think that cast a very poetic dreamlike ending to the brief play.

I wonder if there was a sense of catharsis for the real Ben when he wrote and completed this small vignette

Pablo Neruda whose poetry inspired Ben had written "Crepusculario" in English, "Book of Twilights". Neruda, a Chilean writer and freedom fighter is reported to have said on his death bed, when surrounded by Chilean armed forces: "Look around---there's only one thing of danger for you here --- Poetry".

When Ben referred to "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prueck" it reminded me of a line in it that reads: " I have measured out my life with coffee spoons." Larry, we just have stirrers in styrofoam cups to measure ours!!!!

Thanks for sharing your friends with me.
Elaine