

Boston University College of Arts & Sciences
Department of English

236 Bay State Road
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
T 617-353-2507 F 617-353-3653



March 23, 2010

The Massachusetts Parole Board
Mark A. Conrad, Chairman
12 Mercer Rd
Natick, MA 01760

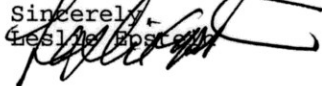
Dear Mr. Conrad,

In June of 2003 I sent the parole board a letter on behalf of Benjamin LaGuer, who was due to appear before it a few days afterward. In that letter I argued for Ben's growth and marveled at the way he had remained uncorrupted in spite of his many difficult years in the penal system. Seven more years have gone by. Those are my impressions still. I am in fairly regular contact with Ben: Never in all these years have I heard a bitter word from his mouth. If you think it would be helpful, I would be happy to send you a copy of that earlier letter, should it no longer be in your files.

I am writing today to say something a little different. As you know, my colleagues Robert Pinsky (the former poet laureate) and Rosanna Warren, a celebrated poet in her own right (and the daughter of Robert Penn Warren) have together written to the parole board not only about Ben's character but about his talent as a writer. They believe that he has so grown as an observer of life and of his own inner experience, and has developed so many skills as a poet and prose writer, that they believe that, should he win his release and should he apply to our Graduate Creative Writing Program at Boston University, they would hold every expectation that he would be admitted. I am writing to endorse that letter and to say, as director of the program for more than thirty years, that that is my opinion too. I not only think that Ben would flourish as a writer, he would offer an enormous amount to his peers in the program--an insight into life and a way of expressing oneself and dealing with experience in words that none of the other students could come close to matching, and from which they would benefit enormously

If you have any questions for me, either personally or as director of the program. please do not hesitate to contact me. My home phone number is _____ and my email is _____

Thank you for your courtesy in weighing this letter as you come once again to evaluate Ben and his request after so many years for freedom.

Sincerely,


LESLIE EPSTEIN, DIRECTOR
CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM
Boston University
236 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215