

## **FM REVIEW 2009-2012 6**

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR:** I was moved by this poem about the limits of doctoring in an abuse situation. The reviews were also positive. I recommend a few minor changes below. I also have an ethical concern which I raise with the author.

**COMMENTS TO AUTHOR:** Dear, this is a moving poem which speaks eloquently to the limits of medicine when confronted with a situation of abuse. Reviewers make minor recommendations, which you might consider.

- 1) I agree with reviewer 2 that "less is more" so that perhaps you can pare down the adjectives and adverb in line 1
- 2) I'd suggest not capitalizing "boyfriend"
- 3) Personally, I liked the ambiguity of the "we" in the third line from the bottom, and don't think it needs to be clarified. It is more powerful for potentially including resident, attending, and patient
- 4) I like the suggested rewrite of the last stanza by reviewer 1. As the original reads, it is a little dry and clinical. The insertion of the resident's hope for improvement helps us understand her emotional connection to the patient. Please think about reworking.

Finally, I have a question that is more ethical than aesthetic. From the very brief description the poem provides, in my state this situation might very well be a mandatory reporting one. I don't know whether this teen is under 18, or whether there was evidence of choking, but I wonder whether counseling about safety and community resources is a sufficient response from a professional/legal/ethical perspective. Of course, you are offering art, not a case report, but still we hope you can consider this issue.

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR II:** I am recommending one further minor revision because, based on her cover letter, I believe the author did not see the pdf from reviewer 1 which I am attaching again. The reviewer makes a very specific recommendation regarding the submission which I would like the author to at least consider.

Regarding the ethical concerns about reporting possible domestic abuse of a minor, the author's cover letter addresses all relevant issues in detail. In my view, it might be a good idea to have an asterisk explaining a) NY is a non-mandatory reporting state b) the "teenager" was 19 and c) the IPV seemed to have started later.

**COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II:** Dear Dr. Fogarty, our apologies for an apparent miscommunication in our last correspondence. In addition to the editorial decision letter, there was a pdf attachment from reviewer 1 which offered a few specific ideas for revision of the last stanza that we really wanted you to at least consider. (This is what I referred to when I wrote in my original comments: ("I like the suggested rewrite of the last stanza by reviewer 1. As the original reads, it is a little dry and clinical. The insertion of the resident's hope for improvement helps us understand her emotional connection to the patient. Please think about reworking.")). Just to make sure there is no confusion, here is the reviewer's suggestion:

**"They talk about safety and resources,  
hoping things might get better  
She closes the visit until next time"**

**On another note, thank you so much for your thoughtful and detailed response regarding our ethical concerns. Thank you for your willingness to add an author statement briefly stating that appropriate response to possible IPV should always be uppermost in a physician's mind, but in this case a) NY is a non-mandatory reporting state b) the "teenager" was 19 and c) the IPV seemed to have started later.**

**I was moved both by the patient's plight and by the sensitivity and care of her physicians. This poem for me exemplifies the art of medicine in both senses of the word.**

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR III: I recommend acceptance of this poem in its current version. Also, I recommend that the author include the statement that I suggested in the last set of comments.**

**COMMENTS TO AUTHOR III: Reactions to poetry are so subjective. I like this final version a lot, and I like the addition of the "tearless" line. I think both serve to humanize the resident, and offer a window into her interior struggles. Thank you for your flexibility in the rewrite. While a poem should stand on its own (and yours does), we think it might benefit our readers to provide a brief clarifying statement about IPV issues raised in this poem.**