

FM REVIEW COMMENTS 2009-2012 27

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: I recommend acceptance, but with attention to XX outstanding review. In particular, the portrayal of the nurse is overly harsh and could be softened a bit. The other concern this reviewer raises is a crucial one, and I'd appreciate your thinking on this John - i.e., patient - and nurse - confidentiality. Like the reviewer, I'm not sure that enough details have been changed to avoid identification of these individuals.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: I recommend acceptance. The author has modified the excessively harsh tone regarding the characters of nurse and interns. He has adequately addressed more minor reviewer issues. Most importantly, he has provided detailed reassurance that the identities of the individuals described in the essay are not identifiable.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR:, this is a very well-written submission that tells a powerful story. The imagery at points is dismaying and uplifting. The voice is authentic. There are two issues we'd like you to address, however. The first is the portrayal of the nurse, which is quite harsh. Was she really as indifferent and incompetent as you portray her to be? Was there a reason you mistrusted her judgment? Could there have been a more reasonable explanation of how the patient went into labor without the nurse's awareness (or seeming caring?). Similarly, on a smaller scale, when you write that "the interns arrived on just another case," this seems like attributing the worst possible motives to them in uncertain circumstances.

A second concern is of an ethical nature, specifically that patient, child, and nurse might be identifiable based on the details you've provided. You know, as we do not, the extent to which you have changed identifying information. Nevertheless, you need to ask yourself, would these individuals (or individuals who know them) be able to recognize themselves from reading the essay as written? This is relevant because, as a psychiatric patient, the mother is a member of a "vulnerable" population (as is the infant by dint of being a minor); and the nurse might fear repercussions if in fact her behavior was as negligent as you portray (repercussions might be appropriate, but should come from within the hospital reporting system, not through a published article). Perhaps there is a way that you can change particulars so that you can fairly claim in a footnote that these are "composite characters." You are in a better position than we are to make the determination how best to handle this particular issue, but we ask that you take it seriously.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for the reassurance regarding the potential identifiability of the persons described in your essay. Thank you also for softening the judgments of nurse and interns. It is a moving, disturbing, and memorable piece of writing.