

### **FM REVIEW 2011 3**

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR:** As per reviewer 2, I'd like the author to work a bit harder on this heartfelt but as it stands rather trite poem; however, not for most of the reasons the reviewer offers. In my view, the reviewer mistakes the poem for an essay. A lot of the questions she raises (great questions, by the way) cannot be answered definitively in a poem, the nature of which is intentionally ambiguous. Whose trust? Patient, doctor, both? That's for the reader to reflect on. The nature of the relationship between doctor and patient?, and how that might affect their interaction. Again, unknowable, but a wonderful question for discussion that the poem could stimulate. Further, the reviewer makes some excellent points about limitations of L&D care in this country, but in my read that is not the point of the article, and cannot possibly be raised in this poem.

Unlike both reviewers, I don't even have a problem with the title, which I think describes what happens perfectly: doctor and patient go on a journey together that is predicated on mutual trust. However, since both reviewers disliked the title, I would bring this to the author's attention as per below.

For me, the main problem is that the writing isn't strong, so that the genuine emotion of the piece is unintentionally attenuated. I don't know if the author has the skills to correct this, but that's where I'd like to see more effort.

### **COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Dear**

Thank you for this heartfelt poem describing the not uncommon journey physician and patient embark on together during the L&D experience. Please note that both reviewers disliked the title of the poem (I on the other hand found it a fitting description); and consider whether there is another title that you might craft.

The writing could benefit from more wordsmithing. Some lines are quite effective (specifically all that follows after "surgery time.."), but the dialogue lines in particular are inelegant and do not adequately convey the emotion of the moment. I'm sure they accurately reflect the exchange, but think about how you could bring this dialogue to life a bit more. For example, "she replies" is rather prosaic. Maybe something like "Her voice quavers," which by the way I don't think is quite right either, but try to "show" somehow the seriousness of what's transpiring). Similarly, the doctor's reply seems clunky. Look for a shorter line and more powerful way to communicate both the urgency and the felt compassion