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COMMENTS TO EDITOR: Dear John, in light of comments at the last editorial board meeting about elevating standards for the narrative essay section, I am going to recommend rejection of this poem. It is unfortunate, as I really like the sentiment expressed. The idea that caring for self occurs through openness to and embracing patients rather than protectiveness and defensiveness is a wonderful one. But I just don't think this is a well-crafted poem. It lacks wordsmithing, and in my view it would be difficult to suggest sufficient corrections to change this.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Although we applaud the philosophy expressed in this poem, we cannot use it at this time. The repetition of the title phrase is not compelling, and the phrase itself is a bit awkward. The self-protective strategies mentioned seem at a very different level than the issues implicated in patient care. Also, it is not clear exactly how openness and vulnerability to patients is indeed self-care (although I agree that it is, this is not self-evident in the poem). These thoughts might work better as a reflective narrative.