

FM REVIEW COMMENTS 2013 12

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: Interestingly, both reviewers agree that this is not very good poetry, but one recommends accept and one, reject. In fact, although I didn't realize it until X brought it to my attention, this was submitted as a 55 word piece, not a poem per se. In my view, the work describes a pivotal moment when a physician must claim his role as the adult child of a dying parent. This is such a poignant (and to many physicians, very familiar) topic that I suggest giving the author another opportunity to convey more successfully the emotions he is so obviously experiencing.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This 55 word piece describes a powerful and poignant moment in the life of a physician at the point when he must be primarily a son confronting his father's imminent passing. Although it is clear how much this moment affected you, these emotions do not come through as strongly as they might in the writing. I am not suggesting using more "emotional" words per se, but perhaps, as reviewer 1 recommends, offering the reader more vivid details and memorable images. The editorial staff made some slight revisions in the submission (see attached). While this is not meant as a model to be followed, it may give you some ideas. In particular, consider how rearranging the lines to start with "My father awaits last goodbyes" immediately draws the reader into the narrative. On another point, I found the bouncing between "my" father, and "his son" and back to "my" "I" somewhat disconcerting. You might get farther by claiming the first person voice unequivocally. Also, please consider a different way of phrasing the line "What's the end game?" This may indeed have been what was uttered, but in the context of the written piece, it strikes an unintentionally discordant note. Finally, however you choose to revise be sure to retain the musicality of assonance, alliteration, and rhyme that struck reviewer 2 so favorably; as well as the jerky rhythm that mirrors perhaps the last agonal breaths.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: This submission describes the last moments of the author's father's life, the turning off of the respirator, the final kiss farewell, and the brokenhearted gratefulness for a "good death." It is one of those submissions that split reviewers rather dramatically. The author has clearly wrestled with the various suggestions, feedback, and offered rewrite. The result is an improvement over the initial effort. I feel further attempts to revise will not be productive. Although it still seems somewhat wooden, it is a sincere and heartfelt rendition of the author's grief and gratitude as he lets go of his father. I recommend acceptance.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for engaging with the suggestions of reviewers. This version of your father's last moments and the mixed emotions of broken-heartedness and gratitude that you experienced at this final letting go is quite moving. Thank you for being willing to share this very personal transition with a wider audience.