

FM REVIEW COMMENTS 2013 13

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This is a wonderful piece of family medicine history. However, the shift in tone from the moving personal account of the author's origins to a disquisition on health disparities (however admirable) in my view is not in line with the purposes of the narrative essay section. I suggest we encourage the author to continue in the anecdotal way with which she commences the essay, and remove some of the material about health disparities.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This writing has the makings of a wonderful essay. The anecdotes about your parents and your subsequent tracking down of the physician who delivered you are moving and sobering, and remind us all of a national history that is not as far away as we sometimes would like to think.

Around pg. 4, line 40, the essay takes a shift in tone and focus, which I'm sure was completely compatible with the invited presentation you gave, but is not consistent with the purpose and scope of the narrative essay section of this journal. The narrative essays should tell personal stories about the authors and their patients, students, or colleagues, albeit ones that illustrate larger points that will be of significance to our readers. The policy of the journal is not to publish opinion pieces, however laudable the topic (in this case advocating for continued attention to health disparities).

We hope you would be willing to rewrite the last portion of this essay by continuing in the same vein as you started. Rather than talking about the importance of addressing health disparities, perhaps you can reflect on your experiences as an African-American family physician, the discrimination you encountered, the helping hands extended, the ways in which you were able to care for underserved patients, and the ways in which systemic injustices may have impeded such care. We realize this is a lot to ask in a 1000 word essay, but even a few anecdotes to give our readers a small window into what your personal journey was like (as implied by the title) and what you learned from it would make an invaluable contribution to the journal.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: Both reviewers liked this essay. Reviewer 1 makes an impassioned plea for more of these stories documenting the varied historical threads of Family Medicine (as he did in his first review), and I think we should take this suggestion seriously. Reviewer 2 has some concerns about the "balance" of the essay - i.e., Dr. South-Paul really only describes one anecdote, whereas Dr. Streiffer provides more narratives. I understand this concern; but I feel Dr. South-Paul has shared the story she wants to tell; while Dr. Streiffer's stories are linked thematically to family practice in the South. I believe we've got what we can from these authors and it is very good. The essay raises important questions about the intersection of racism and medicine from the personal perspective of two experienced academic family physicians, and as such is very deserving of publication.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for this expanded essay, which now reflects on the intersection of racism and medical practice from two different viewpoints. We

appreciate the historical perspective as well as the implications for addressing ongoing disparities and discrimination in healthcare access and delivery. Thank you for telling these stories.