

FM REVIEW 2014 33 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This essay started out as a eulogy to Dr.. It was rejected with extensive suggestions for rewriting and resubmitting. The version sent out for review focused less on praising Dr.X and more on what it is like to lose a mentor and to then be asked to fill his shoes. Reviewers both liked it and recommended respectively minor revision and acceptance. I believe it could be improved still further by a revision that addresses the main point made by reviewer 1, which notes that the author praises the mentor to such an extent that she herself is not sufficiently visible. By correcting this imbalance, the author might also be able to address the concern of the 2nd reviewer regarding the "fawning" tone of the piece.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for this resubmission of your original essay. You have obviously put a lot of thought and care into the reworking. The issues you raise are important ones - how to deal with the loss of a beloved mentor; and how to step into his shoes. We rarely have an opportunity to share thoughts on these topics, so your essay is very valuable from that perspective.

We would like you to consider another revision in which you allow yourself to be a bit more visible. As Reviewer 1 writes, "you make such a genuflex to your mentor that you are left out a bit." The narrative essay is not a eulogy, it is about how you, in conjunction with your mentor's patients, had to come to terms with his loss. Try to include your own sense of grief a little more clearly. How did his unexpected death affect you, and how did you try to cope? As Reviewer 1 requests, let us see how the wonderful qualities of your mentor were filtered through your own personality and sensibilities. I suspect that you do yourself a disservice by describing yourself only as an emulator and imitator. There is likely more of a developmental arc here which you can help us see. Perhaps you started out just trying to repeat Dr. X's jokes and share his mannerisms, but as you cared for these patients you undoubtedly introduced your own humor and your own little quirks. I think if you write a more of yourself and the patients you saw that day, there will be less of a sense of "genuflection," and more a sense of genuine wrestling – and healing – from your mentor's death.

At the top of pg.2, para 1 you say "I explained to the patient..." I don't know if this actually happened, but it is hard to believe that you shared the entirety of what follows with this patient. It sounds like a literary device. It would be more natural to simply write about how Dr. H affected you, not only as a physician, but as a person. The best tribute to Dr. H. will be conveyed to readers by your genuine sense of loss and your commitment to continue his work.

A small point, but I think on pg 3 you mean to say, "Each visit that day progressed as the first." (I'd also take out "fateful," it is unnecessarily melodramatic). Please also pay careful attention to the excellent recommendations for revisions from the two reviewers.