

FM REVIEW 2015 23 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This is a superb essay, one of the best we've received. It recounts the story of the death of a patient almost 30 years ago while the author was doing a medical mission in Uganda; and how this death, as well as the entirety of the experience, informed the author's subsequent commitment to teaching future generations of family physicians and to the imperative of social justice in the healthcare domain. The essay is beautifully written; even better, it is beautifully reasoned so that it has a single clear and very moving message. I actually disagree with the two very minor suggestions of the reviewers, but feel the author should have a chance to consider them.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This is an eloquent, beautifully conceived essay that allows readers to feel the power of these experiences so many years ago and how they informed your 1) subsequent commitment to patients, teaching, and social justice. The essay provides a generous, authentic window into your life and motivation to practice medicine. I loved the reference to the Mary Oliver poem and feel the essay provides a moving answer to the question it raises.

Personally, I do not agree with either of the reviewer's minor concerns, but would like you to consider them:

1) Reviewer 1 suggests the reference to "piles of dead bodies" is distracting and does not have a clear referent. I disagree, and actually found this sentence quite powerful. Perhaps there is a way to clarify and provide just a little more context. Your choice.

2) Reviewer 2 wondered if, in the later part of the essay, when you are discussing your current career, you might refer to the issue of measles vaccination in this country. Obviously this is not where you were going with Penina's story; and frankly I would find this distracting. However, possibly you could consider making a reference to vaccination when you first make the diagnosis ("...measles pneumonia, a disease rarely seen in America at that time because of the widespread use of vaccines."). Again, your choice.

Thank you for this thoughtful, touching, and inspiring essay.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: The author is a true writer. In addition to addressing the very minor concerns of reviewers, she made further stylistic revisions to improve the artistry and clarity of the manuscript. It was a beautiful essay before, and remains so now. Please enthusiastically accept.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for the attention and care you've lavished on an already wonderful essay. It reads beautifully and provides much insight into both your experiences in Uganda and who you are as a physician. Through this story, you remind us why the micro life of the individual patient is inevitably linked to the macro social and cultural structures in which that patient is embedded.