

FM REVIEW 2016 24 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This is a really excellent essay about discovering the value of healthcare that is often quotidian and routine, yet forges powerful bonds between patient and provider. That the author is a dentist only adds value in my view, underlining the common relational ground that family physicians share with other health professionals. The essay is very well-written (one of the better ones we've received) and seamlessly weaves together patient's and narrator's stories. Both reviewers liked it quite a bit. They both mentioned a rather "choppy" writing style, as well occasional awkward word choice. On the whole, I enjoyed the author's approach, and would describe her word choices as interesting and literary, rather than awkward. I've noted on the attached a couple of places where she could assist the reader with a smoother transition.

My only other concern is that author should consider closing the loop on her origin story, i.e., the event that impelled her into dentistry. I think her point is that this initially compelling story at a certain point ceased to inspire her; but as a result of her encounter with Mr. Thomas, she recognized its power anew. I think it would help the reader if she stated this more directly.

One other point is that the author is a second year medical student, which perhaps speaks to the identity crisis she experienced in dental residency. However, I suspect this is another story; and as it is not mentioned in the essay, my view is that we should just leave it alone.

I recommend minor revisions, and am grateful for such a lovely piece of writing.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for such a beautifully written essay. We really enjoyed the confident narrative structure, which enabled its insightful message to stand forth clearly and movingly. Reviewers also appreciated it. We have only a few minor recommendations for your consideration:

- 1) Reviewers found the writing style a bit choppy. On the whole I do not agree; nevertheless, there are a couple of transition points noted on the attached where you could help out the reader with improved flow.
- 2) A couple of paragraphs seemed to wander a bit from your main focus. Specifically, a) I felt the discussion of your disillusionment with your work as a dentist could be shortened and made clearer. b) The next to last paragraph about thanking Mr. T becomes a distraction - why are you refusing the gift? This is not something the reader wants to be thinking about at this point, as you bring your essay to a satisfying and insightful conclusion. Again, keep your focus.
- 3) Your writing is a pleasure. Please note punctuation for direct dialogue. Also note I've removed certain past perfect tenses. You are grammatically correct, but they impede the informal tone of the essay and distance the reader from the narrative.

Overall, thank you for this lovely piece of writing.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: This is one of the better-written submissions we've received. It was really a pleasure to edit. The author has made many minor revisions as requested. In particular, she has improved the flow of the essay by inserting transitional language at critical junctures. She has focused the essay on its essential message, and removed extraneous information. She has added an excellent paragraph clarifying how she came to realize that everyone's contributions matter in health care. I am delighted to recommend acceptance of this lovely essay.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for these well-crafted revisions. You've significantly improved the flow of the essay by inserting transitional language at critical junctures. You've focused the essay on its essential message, and removed extraneous information such as some of your early experiences in dental training and your refusing the patient's gift at the end. The reference to the origin story I like quite a bit, especially your use of the word "spectral"; and the paragraph about the "great chain of being" that enabled you to realize that everyone's contributions matter in health care was very moving.

Thank you for considering Family Medicine as an outlet for your work. This piece tells a touching and insightful story that will resonate with our readers.