

FM REVIEW 2017 9 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This submission is a moving poem that pays tribute to a fallen soldier and family physician. Both reviewers recommend acceptance with very minor revisions. The old-fashioned style at first was a bit off-putting to me; but when I considered the historical context of the caisson, it seemed appropriate. In its solemn acknowledgment of all who have given their lives for this country, the poem transcends politics and offers a humble eulogy. I recommend publication with minor changes.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for this moving poem that pays tribute to a well-loved colleague, a fallen soldier and family physician. In its solemn acknowledgment of all who have given their lives for this country, it transcends politics and offer a simply, humble eulogy. The rather old-fashioned style is actually well-suited to the topic, given the historical context of a caisson funeral. We recommend two small revisions to improve the impact of the poem:

1) Not everyone may know what a caisson is. Reviewer 2 recommends a title change (although the practice of using the first line as a title is consonant with the style of writing you've adopted). By changing the title, you would have an opportunity to hint at what you are about to describe - so maybe something that suggests a fallen soldier, a military funeral etc. I would leave the first line as is - and anyone who needs to, can google caisson.

2) Although as noted the writing style does convey the history of caisson funerals extending far back into the country's past, the use of capitalizations throughout the poem (again, while consistent with poems of this ilk) seems a bit distracting and perhaps unintentionally pretentious. I recommend eliminating these throughout.

This poem is a powerful reminder of the few who sacrifice much, sometimes all, for the many. We appreciate your sharing it to our journal.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: This poem about the military death of a colleague moved both reviewers and editor. I have never been concerned with the sentiment it expresses, but rather with its style, which struck me as archaic and possibly a bit pretentious. I am a big fan of modern usage in poetry (which emphasizes capitalization based only on the first word of a "sentence;" and only capitalizing proper nouns). However, after doing some research, I feel that the poem harks back to more formal traditions of poetry (17th-18th c.) that employ capitalization at the start of every line (regardless of whether or not the phrase represents a new sentence) as well as capitalizing nouns for emphasis only (not because they are proper nouns). This latter practice extends back to a time in which poetry was an oral form, and capitalization was used to "translate" emphasis.

Although the author attempted some changes regarding capitalization in this revision, the result is inconsistent and somewhat confusing. In a personal note from the author, he felt that these changes infringed on his artistic autonomy.

In revisiting the poem, I've concluded that it succeeds in terms of the emotion it evokes in readers and the reminder it provides of the multiple foreign military actions in which we are engaged that few people outside the military community think about. The cadence, the meter, the "old-fashioned" use of capitalization all serve to build a somber, respectful atmosphere as if the readers, too, were mourners at this funeral.

I think consistency dictates that, as the author originally wrote the piece, each line should be capitalized, and that the poem should also retain the additional noun capitalizations. This "old-fashioned" approach connects this death with a long line extending back in history, and I think actually adds gravitas to the melancholy scene.

Therefore, I recommend that we accept this poem in its ORIGINAL version NOT THE REVISED VERSION.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: We are very pleased to accept this poem in its ORIGINAL form.