

FM REVIEW 2018 28 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This poem describes the dilemma of a physician-son struggling with how to advise his elderly mother in her medical decision-making. In the end, the mother makes a "non-decision" decision to accept surgery for potential cancer, while never following through. It is a situation many physician will identify with, and appreciate that there is no easy resolution. The poem itself is well-written and expresses very well the helplessness that unites both mother and son. Reviewers liked the submission, and with a few minor revisions it should make a good contribution to the journal.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This moving poem describes the dilemma of a physician-son struggling with how to advise his elderly mother in her medical decision-making. In the end, the mother makes a "non-decision" decision to accept surgery for potential cancer, while being careful never to follow through. It is a situation many physician will identify with, and appreciate that there is no easy resolution. The poem itself is very well-written and expresses in simple, yet powerful phrases the helplessness that unites both mother and son.

I agree with Reviewer 2 that it might be possible to tighten some of the lines just a bit, making the poem even more spare, with no place to "hide" from the uncertainty and confusion both son and mother feel. Please see the attached, as well as Reviewer 2's suggestions, for possible ideas of where such tightening might occur. You may have your own and better thoughts on how to achieve this end. Very minor tweaking is all that is needed.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: This is a spare, effective poem about the narrator, a physician, and the uncertainties that arise in dealing with the health concerns of his elderly mother. It captures very well the dynamic of deciding not to decide. Reviewers and asst editor recommended minor revisions in language and overall tightening of the piece. The author accepted many of these changes and rejected a few with reasonable arguments in these cases for retaining his original version. I think the poem works well and recommend acceptance for publication.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Your minor tinkering with language makes an already affecting poem even tighter and more compelling. I appreciate your careful consideration of the recommended changes and your arguments in instances where you chose to retain the original version. In particular, the point about "echoing" is very well taken and persuasive. Thank you for this moving reminder of the uncertainties in medicine and in relationships.