

FM REVIEW 2018 43 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This is a poem with some potential about a patient whose life has been constrained by her social circumstances and who becomes "liberated" upon her husband's death. Her doctor is variously angry, sad, and eventually joyful as the patient becomes "her own hero." The major problem is that the poem makes reference to manga and Jpop as metaphors for the narrator's understanding of the patient, but it is unclear to both the reviewers and me what these allusions are meant to convey. I'd like to see her work within these metaphors, or abandon them. This submission needs a major rewrite, but I think it could be worth the effort.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This is a touching poem about a patient whose life has been constrained and stifled by her social circumstances and who becomes "liberated" upon her husband's (?) death. The narrator-physician is variously angry, sad, and eventually joyful as the patient becomes "her own hero." The image of an empowered woman, especially an older one, is very appealing, and I agree with Reviewer 1 that seeing this come to fruition in the final stanza is very moving.

The major problem is that the poem makes reference to manga and Jpop as metaphors for the narrator's understanding of the patient, but it is very unclear what these allusions are meant to convey. I'd like to either see you work more within these metaphors, or abandon them entirely. Somehow in the mind of the narrator, this elderly (Japanese/Japanese-American?) patient is connected with manga, with Yuki, with purple, with Jpop, and with classical music, but what these connections are, and how they deepen and nuance either the narrator's or the reader's perception of the patient is very hard to determine. Please try to figure out a way to connect the dots, otherwise the poem does not really work. How might you revise the poem to clarify why manga, Jpop etc. are central to appreciating this patient's struggle and eventual triumph? If you can solve this conundrum, you'll have a really strong piece.

Please look at the attached comments and suggestions for edits. In particular, please consider using the more contemporary formatting of poetry that eschews periods at the end of each line and capitals at the beginning of each line, unless these represent the start of a new sentence. Please also pay attention to the reviewers' comments; however, you do not need to follow the recommendations of reviewer 2 unless you think that in some way they improve the piece.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: This poem has undergone a major rewrite. The author is a talented writer and knows how to use language effectively. The main problem with the original submission was references to Yuki/manga, and J-pop, which apparently are well-known cultural anchors in Hawaii, but would like have required a lot of googling to make sense for most of our readers. The author has removed all these references, and has reworked the poem to tie together what remained in a new and more direct way. It is now a strong poem about the small victories of an older woman who finds herself liberated by the death of her abusive, controlling husband; and the joy her physician takes in witnessing her empowerment.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for the major rewrite on this poem, which has resulted in a simpler and more accessible piece. I confess I was sorry to see the references to Yuki/manga

disappear, as they were an intriguing and creative aspect of the poem, but most readers of the journal would have had to do a lot of googling to make them meaningful or even comprehensible. Your writing now has a straightforward through-line and tells a story of female empowerment that remains quite moving in its small, unassuming way.

As I commented initially, it was especially joyous to see an older woman become her own hero, even if her freedom was achieved only through the death of her husband. I also was touched by the physician-narrator's evident concern for and investment in this patient. Celebrating her small victories showed a beautiful dimension of this doctor-patient relationship.

You are a strong and elegant writer. You've demonstrated your versatility with language in an impressive way. I hope that you will continue to explore ways of incorporating culturally specific imagery in your future writing, while still preserving its universality.