

FM REVIEW 2019 6 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This poem tackles the difficult subject of the opioid crisis. Its strength lies in the multiplicity of voices it attempts to capture. The writing is rather prosaic and inconsistent in its use of rhyme scheme. Reviewer 1 found the work confusing. The last stanza, as reviewer 2 observes, offers a very simplistic solution and needs to be rewritten. I recommend that we give the author the opportunity to rework and revise.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for this poem about the opioid crisis. Reviewers and editor admired your willingness to tackle such a difficult subject in verse! We also appreciated your acknowledgment of the social determinants of disease that factor in so heavily in addiction.

However, there were also several problems to be addressed:

1) Reviewer 1 found the various patients represented to be confusing. I do not agree, and found it easy to understand that different individuals were speaking in each stanza. Nevertheless, the poem could benefit from an introductory stanza that talks about the multiplicity of voices affected by addiction, and asks us (readers) to listen to some of them.

2) The craft of the poem is quite inconsistent. The rhyme scheme, for example, varies from stanza to stanza. Without imposing a rigid format, please consider whether it is possible to systematize the format. Also, the poem is somewhat deficient in terms of imagery and metaphor that can bring stanzas to life. Please think about ways to make the writing more vivid and striking.

3) Although the patients' narratives clearly implicate social determinants of disease, the last stanza implies that buprenorphine magically "fixes" addiction. This is an overly optimistic and simplistic conclusion. Also, this last stanza should somehow incorporate all previous voices, so the reference to "my kids" seems too specific (perhaps not all the patients speaking have kids). Please re-vision this final stanza. It should be powerful and hopeful in terms of the doctor-patient relationship but also realistic about the difficulties of overcoming addiction.

4) I did not understand your reference to "black" in stanza 3. If it refers to the race of the speaker, why is this relevant? If it refers to "black and blue," it is probably best to avoid associations with the color "black" and negative connotations (black cloud, black hole etc.) which some may find offensive.

Your poem reminds us of the human struggles behind the numbers, and suggests the importance of a trusted physician in the recovery process. Keep working at it, and its heart and empathy will emerge more strongly.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II; The author has worked hard to revise this poem along the lines suggested by reviewers and assistant editor. This version is much improved. She's added a good introductory stanza that sets the stage for what is to follow. The rhyme scheme at first seems somewhat incongruous with the seriousness of the material, but I've come to the conclusion that its lightheartedness reflects the hopeful ending. My only remaining concern is that the final stanza

seems weak and poorly crafted. I've suggested an alternative, and perhaps this will stimulate the author to rewrite this conclusion with better wordsmithing.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for your conscientious revision of this poem. The craft is much more evident in meter and rhyme scheme, and I appreciate the effort you've invested. I thought you did an excellent job with the introductory stanza (and the title). Both invite the reader in, in an effective "storytelling" way.

My only concern is the final stanza, which moves in the right direction but to me is weaker than the rest of the poem. I think it needs more careful wordsmithing. Just as a lark, I tried reworking, conforming to your rhyme scheme (more or less) and acknowledging the ambiguity of "fixed." I don't know if this "fix" improves the stanza, but perhaps it will stimulate your thinking about how to further revise your conclusion.

Thank you for the time and effort you are putting into this piece. I know we share a common goal of polishing it to perfection :-)

COMMENTS TO EDITOR III: The author has accepted all recommended changes. This is an honest yet hopeful poem about OUD that I believe will make a useful contribution to the journal. I recommend we publish as is.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR III: I'm glad you agreed with the revision of the final stanza. The poem as it stands is an honest yet hopeful piece that will make a valuable contribution to the journal. Thank you for considering Family Medicine as an outlet for your writing.