

FSH COMMENTS 2013 2

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This is one of those events that lingers in a physician's mind long after it has passed. A baby is born dead. What can be done? In this case, no futile instrumentality occurs. Instead, a nurse combs the infant's hair and the intern gives the baby to mom. Someone (it is not completely clear whether intern, nurse, or mom) comments on the (perhaps only) beautiful feature of the baby - her long lashes. In a moment of great tragedy, there is perhaps a glimmer of healing.

I think within the constraints of the 55 word format, this is a well-crafted, poignant piece. One of the most powerful images is that of "intestines spilling everywhere." Like the rest of the piece, the language is simple and spare, notable as much for what is not said and done as for what is. This economy pervades the entire work, and is the basis for its power. My only suggestions for revision are minor ones - 1) I would recommend not capitalizing baby, it is distracting; and 2) The word "exhausted" seems inadequate to hint at what must be going on for this mother. Perhaps "distraught" or "traumatized"? Perhaps the author can find a better word.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: A poignant, powerful piece, very well-crafted. I suspect many physicians will resonate with this scenario; and more will ponder what the health care team can do so that, in the midst of tragedy, a mother can begin healing. I have only a couple of minor suggestions: 1) I would recommend not capitalizing baby, it is distracting; and 2) The word "exhausted" seems inadequate to hint at what must be going on for this mother. Perhaps "distraught" or "traumatized"? Maybe you can find the right word. Thank you for memorializing this touching moment.