

## **FSH DECISION LETTER 2014 8**

Based on my review and on reviewer comments I am not able to accept your submission. However, with minor revisions, this can be a poignant testament to the power of witnessing a passing life. Please pay particular attention to Reviewer 1's suggestions for revision, as well as the edited text attached, which indicates both possible word cuts as well as capitalization/punctuation options. Also please address the following:

1) Settle on the title you want.

2) With the edits suggested, you gain a few more words. Please consider using these to express something about how this experience affected you. Since the title suggests this was the first death you experienced, or at least the first death you experienced in this manner, it's important to help the reader to glimpse the interior of the narrator. You don't necessarily have to use language of emotion ("I felt sad," "I was relieved") but show yourself a bit more. Also, your story, while touching, does not provide much new insight into witnessing the dying experience. You have an opportunity in a new last line to surprise us, or make us think. Use it!

3) Despite all these suggestions, please make sure your word count remains exactly 55.

**DECISION LETTER II:** I have now had the opportunity to review your revised manuscript. Based on this review, while the submission is much improved, I would like to suggest further minor alterations.

1) The current punctuation sometimes seems distracting. It can break the flow of the sentence in ways that seem unnecessarily jerky and detract from the sense of the piece. I've suggested following more conventional uses of capitalization and periods, as you would find them in prose writing, while retaining your original line breaks.

2) The last sentence is very long compared to the rest of the story, and to me reads rather awkwardly. I am especially not fond of the "there is" construction. As I read this line, it seems to me what you are highlighting is the contrast between "the light" that was present at the death contrasted with the overcast skies outside. Working within the constraints of 55 words, I have proposed an alternative that tries to capture this moving contradiction. Please feel to improve on my suggestion!

**DECISION LETTER III:** I am pleased to inform you that your work has now been accepted for publication in *Families, Systems, and Health*. Thank you for your patience with the revision process. The final result is a beautiful 55 word story, poignant in its simplicity.