

FSH DECISION LETTER 2014 10

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to review the manuscript. It presents in an effective and moving way the tensions that can arise between healthcare providers and patients from different socioeconomic circumstances, especially in the context of the pressures and stressors of the hospital environment. I have now received the reviews of your manuscript and am able to make an editorial decision.

Based on my review and on reviewer comments I am not able to accept your submission. In line with reviewers' comments, I would like to recommend your making several minor revisions which should not alter the intention of the piece, but should instead strengthen and focus what you are trying to achieve.

Please pay attention to the three excellent reviews you received. Since they make sometimes contradictory suggestions, you will have to pick and choose which seem to best capture the spirit of your story. Below are some guidelines that might help.

- 1) If you wish this to be a 55 word story, please remember that it must adhere precisely to the 55 word limit. It was not clear that all reviewers understood you were working within this structure.
- 2) All reviewers had trouble with the line "No room in the inn." However, to me, because of its Biblical connotations, to me it is the perfect line. Although I believe the correct quote from Luke is "no room in the inn," it is often quoted as "no room at the inn," which would eliminate the rather annoying homonyms "in" and "inn." Also, as reviewer 3 suggests, by capitalizing Inn you might emphasize the religious reference, which in this case is desirable.
- 3) Reviewer 2 questions the phrase "mutual disrespect," wondering if in fact both health professionals and mom disrespected each other. If this is the case, your language is good.
- 4) The indentation structured confused reviewer 1; and she is right to emphasize consistency. It seemed to me that you were using indents to represent the perspective of health professionals. Please pay attention to this issue, especially in stanza 2.
- 5) In general, reviewer 1 makes some excellent suggestions for revision. These are not all compatible with the 55 word limit, but play with them. In particular, I liked bringing in the "resident" as a critical speaker, so it is not just the poor nurse on the line. However, you might also work with quotations, as she suggests, again to save words.
- 6) Like reviewer 1, I couldn't figure out exactly what the line "Making life work" meant.
- 7) Reviewer 3 also has strong specific suggestions, especially "demanding" for "irresponsible"; "child protective services" for "child protection".
- 8) Like reviewer 3, I also had trouble with the phrase "compassion fail." I understand that you are using it as a kind of shorthand for failure, but at first it seemed ungrammatical and then distracting. What about simply "compassion fails"?
- 9) Finally, in a story with such particularity and detail, the phrase "cold white power" seems somewhat abstract. Also, it doesn't really seem to follow clearly from the wonderful preceding question, "Where are the grown ups?" (which by the way you could hyphenate to

buy you another word 😊). Is there some way you can tie in the coldness and whiteness of the hospital with the immature behavior you observe all around.

This story describes a tragedy we see all too often, made especially honest and authentic by the simple concluding apology, which many of us have felt often. With a relatively minor reworking it can be a truly polished piece that will speak powerfully to our readers.

DECISION LETTER II: Based on my review and on reviewer comments I am not quite able to accept your submission. However, with the few very minor changes recommended by Reviewer 3, this will make a poignant and perceptive 55 word story.

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 the revisions that made a very appealing submission even better.

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