

FSH DECISION LETTER 2014 21

In my read, this poem shows hope, usually so glorified among physicians and patients alike, to be an untrustworthy trickster. “Don’t take away the patient’s hope,” is a common refrain in the medical community. But sometimes hope is the enemy of acceptance. It all depends on what one means by hope – and for what. Still, I like the subversive message of this poem.

Please consider the comments of reviewer #1. However, on the whole I do not agree with them. It might be possible to alter the title to “give less away.” I found the overall tone of the poem to be ruefully humorous, so I did not find this key word discordant. In contrast to this reviewer, I like the repetitive sound of furtive and (later on) fervently, although try to lose one of the latter: “that what I/so wished to be rid of/I now so fervently wish to keep” . In general, I am opposed to the use of bolding or italics in poetry – it seems gimmicky. Please consider whether you could work with space to create the kind of emphasis this reviewer is looking for.

For my critique, I’d say that the immediacy of the poem suffers from reliance on the past perfect tense. I’ve attached a revision that gets rid of some of these remote verb tenses. Also, the last lines of the next-to-last stanza do not make full sense to me. Please consider how the attached suggestions either improve or distort your meaning.

I am very enamored of the concluding couplet.

DECISION LETTER II: This poem reads very well now. It is “slyly” humorous, while making a serious point that hope is a two-edged sword: we long for it, yet can be devastated when it betrays us.