

FSH Comments 2014 22

Making decisions about inherently subjective writing is never easy. Because of the decidedly mixed reviews, I would like you to have the opportunity to revise this 55 word story. I agree with reviewer 3 that the topic, while touching, is not entirely original; and the writing, while possessed of a certain power, is not inspiring. The best part of this piece is the theme of contrast. Consider bringing this out in a more particularistic way. The lines about "gift" and "trial" are somewhat clichéd. Similarly, the images of the children and adults responding to the snow are prosaic and very general. The image that is most moving is leaving the kids home on a snow-day to help your patient. That is authentic. Possibly you can work the story around this image, or by developing similar images. Also, a couple of small points – be sure that the piece is only 55 words (this submission is 56). Also, please avoid repeating the word "shoveling."

DECISION LETTER II: I appreciate the work and thought you are putting into this 55 word story. I agree that the repetition of snow as the first and last word is poetic and a lovely "coming full circle." I also liked the phrase "grey dim day" - interesting and unusual. "Traversing the tundra" was another evocative phrase.

Unfortunately, in my view the piece has not yet achieved its potential. There are too many gerunds in the last sentence. Also, the sentence fragment "white, fluffy..." is at odds with the complete sentences used in the rest of the story. Finally, although I appreciate your imaginative word choice noted above, "white, fluffy," "building forts," still do not fully come alive as intriguing images.

I have offered some specific language options in the attachment. You do not have to accept these exactly, but perhaps they will give you additional ideas about how to approach the story. One point is that I changed the word from "office" to "clinic" because the latter is more evocative of a medical setting. However, obviously if you do not work in a clinic, then you should preserve the original word.

I hope you find these suggestions helpful.

DECISION LETTER III: I am pleased to inform you that your work has now been accepted for publication in *Families, Systems, and Health*. The revisions you made have significantly strengthened the piece, which now captures with clarity the contrasting disappointments and pleasures, losses and rewards that a "snow day" brings. Thank you for your patience with this process and for your fine work on this 55 word story.