

FSH Comments 2014 25

Comments to Author: Thank you for this extremely well-crafted and moving piece. The bookends of the medical student's absence/presence show how easily illness brings us to our knees; how we try to maintain control only to have it evaporate. The story also reminds us how easily the ordinariness of life can come off the tracks and hurtle into strange and terrifying places. Finally, I think the tension intimated between the professional and the personal will be of particular interest to our readers. I really enjoyed this work, and find its images linger long after the initial reading.

Comments to Editor: This is an extremely well-conceived and structured 55 word story. The first and last lines both reference a medical student, but with completely different intent. In the first, the patient (also a medical educator) attempts to dominate, dismissing the student so she can focus on her "other" labor. By the end, struggling with a "souring" of events, it is the medical student who holds the basin into which the narrator vomits. I also like the tension intimated between the professional and the personal. The piece is told in a straightforward, factual tone whose matter-of-factness serves to underlie the restrained anguish of the narrator. The work is coherent, restrained, and powerful. I think it is one of the best 55 word stories we've received.