

FHS comments 2014 26

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This is a touching, emotionally evocative 55 word story. In a few words, it made me feel the husband's devotion to his wife; and the physician's commitment to this family. I especially liked the title, with its suggestion that it is both a cold night regarding temperature; and a cold night because of the severity of the wife's condition. The tie-in to the conversation in the car (about "family and snow) is also lovely and well-crafted.

I know how hard it is to make any changes in a constrained form, but Israel's situation at the hospital is not clear to me. Is he stranded? Did he not have a car? Did he come by ambulance with his wife, or was he dropped off by friends? Lacking this information, the narrator's decision becomes murky. Does she want to talk with him? Is it merely an act of kindness? Is it in response to his being stuck in the hospital on "the coldest night"?

A couple of minor points. 1) I don't see the value of gendering winter. You could equally well use "its". 2) I'm not sure that knowing the wife is much older adds a great deal to the story. Here are four words that might be used to explain the transportation dilemma.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: I liked this 55 word story. The double meaning of "cold" and the way this is referenced in the final line is very well done. As you can see, I got a little lost in the central action – exactly why the doctor gives the patient's husband a lift on "the coldest night." But overall the piece is well-written, and presents a touching image of a physician's devotion to this family.