

FHS COMMENTS 2014 28

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: In a few brief lines, this poem offers a perspective on the limited opportunities often inherent in the immigrant experience as well as a devastating indictment of the gaps in our healthcare system. The image of this former oral surgeon, now a manicurist, contemplating extracting her own teeth is at once horrible and powerful. The narrator's fluttering hands perfectly capture her helplessness and ineffectuality. I really like this author's writing. It is spare, lean, yet lyrical, and very clear-sighted. I strongly favor accepting this submission.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This is a strong piece, a quietly devastating indictment of the gaping holes in our healthcare system. The writing is spare, lean, yet lyrical, and supremely clear-sighted. The short lines add to the overall sense of despair. The image of this former oral surgeon, now a manicurist, contemplating extracting her own teeth is at once horrible and powerful. As well, her "spitting" her disgust ties in well with the oral-related imagery. I especially love the narrator's fluttering hands, such an evocative symbol of her helplessness. Please consider revising the first two lines to eliminate the "but" which to me detracts from the bare awareness of the patient's situation: "She was an oral surgeon once, in China/Now she polishes nails, just scraping by." Other than this very minor suggestion, all I can do is relish the poem, even as I am angered by the situation that has created it.