

FSH REVIEW 2018 2

Comments to Editor:

This is a 55 word poem about an intern's first death pronouncement. There are several powerful images - the narrator sitting in the stairwell, the family weeping, the pager yelling. The spare two words at the end sum up the emotionally and technically overwhelming nature of internship. There are also examples of trite "telling not showing" writing - reliance on emotion words to convey emotion (sad, contemplative, reconciled, grateful) rather than creating a vivid picture. Admittedly, this is hard to do under the constraint of the 55 word essay, but the author has shown he has the capability of crafting some powerful lines. I recommend giving him a chance to do some additional wordsmithing.

Comments to Author:

This 55 word poem has much potential. I found some of the images quite moving - the narrator sitting in the stairwell, the family weeping, the pager yelling. I also liked the irony of the patient becoming sober, but too late to make any difference. The spare two words at the end are also effective, summing up the emotionally and technically overwhelming nature of internship. Not all of the writing rises to the level of this emotionally evocative imagery. There are also examples of "telling not showing" writing - reliance on emotion words to convey emotion (sad, contemplative, reconciled, grateful) rather than creating a vivid picture. This language is rather abstract and does not encourage the reader to feel anything, despite the objectively tragic nature of the situation described. I recommend that you revisit these sections of the piece, and find a metaphor or descriptive language that is concrete, particular to the scene you are describing, and brings the family and the intern to life as much as the "yelling" pager jumps off the page. Admittedly, this is hard to achieve under the constraint of the 55 word essay, but you've shown you have the capability of crafting powerful lines. I also think you can do something with the title that underlines a significant moment in the poem. Maybe "Pronouncement" or "Sitting in the Stairwell"? You have up to 5 words to use in the title of a 55 word story, so please consider taking advantage of them :-)