

## FSH COMMENTS 2018 7

**COMMENTS TO AUTHOR:** This is a well-written poem about a palliative medicine specialist who tries to explain her role and herself to a patient. I like the question-answer repartee between the patient and the doctor. I like the narrator's realization that she has no answers, only questions; and many of these questions relate as much to herself as to her patient. The poem is effective on an emotional level and also caused me to think about the costs of this specialty to the physician.

Although the poem overall is well-written, there are a few places in which it is apparent that English is not your first language. In particular, three of the lines that use the "with you" construction were confusing to me. One talks about "sound with you" which does not make any sense to me at all. The other two talk about "fight with you" and "get angry with you," which can be interpreted as being involved in an argument with the patient or expressing anger toward the patient. Clearly this is not your intent, but the poem would read better if this format could be changed. I do understand that these lines are emphasizing the "with you" aspect of the palliative specialist, in the sense of journeying "with" the patient, but unfortunately the elasticity of English does leave this open to less desirable interpretations.

One of the things I especially appreciated about the poem was the directness and simplicity of its language. The title, by contrast, seems somewhat pretentious. I'd recommend coming up with a new title that is more in line with the tone of the poem as a whole. Also, "mankind" represents sexist language which should be avoided.

Similarly, the use of the term "palliativist" in a poem is jarring, as it is a very clinical sounding word and a good example of classic "medicalese." Perhaps you can find a more conversational way of describing what you do that would be more in line with the language of the rest of the poem.

With some minor revisions, this can be an affecting and thought-provoking poem.

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR:** Overall, I like this poem about a palliative medicine specialist who tries to explain her role and herself to a patient. I like the question-answer repartee between the patient and the doctor. I like the narrator's realization that she has no answers, only questions; and many of these questions relate as much to herself as to her patient. The poem is effective on an emotional level and also caused me to think about the costs of this specialty to the physician.

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