

FSH DECISION LETTER 2019 3

Based on my review and on reviewer comments I am not able to accept your submission. However, both reviewers and editor found both artistry and merit in your submission and encourage you to revise. For 55 words, you've received lots of different recommendations, and you will need to sort out which to follow. Here are some guidelines:

- 1) Although the title is strong and poetic (reminiscent of George Orwell), it doesn't illuminate the theme you are trying to get out, as reviewer 1 points out. Think about a title that introduces the reader to the idea of individual/societal indifference to persons who are homeless.
- 2) Watch language that is a little pretentious, which reviewers and editor all comment on. Again, it is up to you: Personally, I didn't like "recede" but I did like "sanitized." Maybe read your work out loud and see whether shorter, pithier words might be more effective.
- 3) You've chosen to work in a demanding form, the 55 word story. Reviewer 1 suggests you enlarge the piece to a full-fledged poem. I feel you can do more within the form, and have suggested words that could be cut to give you opportunity to develop your thinking more fully.
- 4) So what can you do with these extra words? Reviewer 1 notes that you don't really address the point raised in your Abstract about institutional/societal neglect of persons who are homeless. Without getting didactic or preachy, maybe you can indicate that all of us, as well as the societal structures we've created, have failed this population.
- 5) Finally, I think the work reads better as a 55 word poem, rather than story. To this end, consider eliminating the punctuation, and different line breaks.

I loved the line about feeling sanitized, lighter. If only it were that simple!

We think you have an important contribution here, and look forward to your revision.

DECISION LETTER II

Thank you for these thoughtful and well-reasoned revisions of your 55 word submissions. All of your edits significantly improve the piece, which in its body is perfect.

However, I am not satisfied with the title change. I understand that you are trying to comply with our concerns that you did not adequately address the larger societal issue of injustice implicated in homelessness. Unfortunately, the new title is very abstract and emotionally uninvolving.

I would like to ask you to make one further effort to come up with a title that draws the reader in. Maybe go back to "Down and Out." Maybe you can imagine something that suggests common humanity forgotten. In my view, 55 word stories (and poetry) encapsulate the universal in the particular; i.e., they are most effective when they express big themes through concrete imagery. Please see if you can contrive a title that is more grounded. At the risk of contradicting our earlier recommendations, don't worry so much about referring to the broader social theme; just find a title that grabs the heart.

Comments to author: "I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to review the revisions you have made. They are excellent and show careful attention to reviewer and editor concerns."

However, I am not yet able to accept your submission. The body of the 55 word story is strong and requires no further changes. I respect your desire to retain its prose format and am very comfortable with

this. The title, on the other hand, I don't feel works. It is too theoretical and emotionally disconnected - it makes homelessness into a puzzle to be solved or reconsidered. I take responsibility for guiding you in an unproductive direction, and I apologize. I'd like to see you make one further effort to craft a title that is more concrete, grounded in the reality of your experience with this homeless person, and thus emotionally compelling.

Comments to Editor III: The author was asked to come up with a more concrete, evocative title for the 55 word piece and she has done so. This piece is ready to go!

Comments to Author III: Perfect title, just perfect. It does exactly what I hoped it could do - reflect our universal responsibility in the particular of the narrator's action. On a literal level, it represents the content of the piece, while causing the reader to ask in what sense we too are passersby. I think the title works better in the singular - the reader can make the leap. Thank you for your patience with this process – a 55 word story can be a little gem, polished till it shines, and yours is truly shining.

Decision Letter III: I am pleased to inform you that your work has now been accepted for publication in *Families, Systems, and Health*. The new title is excellent, thank you. We applaud your focus on the difficult topic of homelessness and how it intersects with healthcare professionals. This 55 word story depicts a simple encounter, very familiar to all of us, and the moral quandary of the narrator. It will remind our readers to be aware and conscious of choices they make on a daily basis.