

FHS DECISION LETTER 2019 7

Based on my review and on reviewer comments I am not able to accept your submission in its present form. However, with a few minor revisions, the story should make a valuable contribution to the journal. It tells a tragic but not uncommon story of sexual abuse, consequent drug abuse, and family secrets concisely and powerfully, while also demonstrating the challenges, rewards, and weight of therapy. Please correct the typos noted on the attached ms. Also, please revisit the lines about the family "not knowing" about the abuse that was occurring. I understand that you want the impact of a "reveal" but these lines are confusing as they are directly followed by lines that contradict them. Perhaps you can rework so that it is clearer that this is what the patient has always believed, or always told the narrator. .

DECISION LETTER II: With every change, this revision improves on the original. The title is much better, thanks for working on this. The typos are corrected, and the possible confusion about the motivations of the family is clearer. However, I think a few more changes will strengthen the story even further. Specifically, taking out the word "didn't" might help convey the initial idea of the family's passivity, rather than what is eventually revealed (their collusion), thus making the "reveal" more powerful. Secondly, there is a grammatical incorrectness in that the phrase "n Sober, safe with her daughters and cat," now modifies the aunt, not the patient. Untangling this is an unnecessary distraction. Finally, the phrase "frozen betrayal" seems melodramatic. The story succeeds because it describes horrible acts in very matter-of-fact, understated terms. I suggest sticking with this approach - either eliminating the phrase entirely, or going with something more understated like "another betrayal."

This is a well-written piece and we are eager to see it in the journal. We appreciate going one more round to refine it even further.

DECISION LETTER III: I am pleased to inform you that your work has now been accepted for publication in *Families, Systems, and Health*. Thank you for making additional minor, but significant changes. The poem is taut and devastating, yet with a glimmer of hope in the persistence of both therapist and patient. I like that you kept "betrayal," but allowed the word to speak for itself. All in all, you've produced an excellent poem!