



Savior

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Received: 31 July 2022 / Accepted: 18 October 2022 / Published online: 26 October 2022

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When you asked to be saved
I never hesitated even if I was
the youngest of us. Remember
that time I drove five hours
to find you at a gas station with
fluorescent lights, a halo around you.

These days, I no longer ask
questions. Consider the times at the
motel, supermarket, and even in
Denver on the first snowfall of the year.
I didn't tell you that
my boss nearly fired me for
leaving my shift without notice
when you were in Vermont
with one shoe lost, but it was

worth it to find you before
dusk settled. These days,
dust coagulates in my
throat. My dreams glitch
with finding and missing
you. Tell me why you didn't
call me that December.

I would have been there for you.
I could have saved you.

Poet's Statement

This poem is inspired from an encounter with a patient who suffered from substance use disorder. In the clinic, they told me that they had a support system that was lost when they gave in to the usage of drugs. They said that the best thing their family did for them was to stop supporting them. Even though they felt angry and betrayed in those moments, they said that upon reflection, they were glad that their family did not further enable them to continue their substance use. Confidently, they told me that hitting rock bottom was truly the best thing that happened to them. From other family members of those suffering from substance use disorder, I hear a narrative where it is often hard to draw a clear line between caring for someone undergoing a disease and enabling them to continue harmful behaviors. Thus, they feel that being present and potentially enabling is better than abandonment. The point of view from which this poem stems from is as follows: an individual who helps their family member who is suffering from substance use disorder. In this poem, there are nuances of grief, guilt, and love. Through this poem, I aspire for readers to consider how they care for patients undergoing substance use disorder and the impacted loved ones.

Declarations

Ethics approval and informed consent was not required for this article. This work does not infringe upon the rights of any person, nor does it violate anyone's privacy. Patient identities have been de-identified in terms of details of events occurring and conversations taking place.

Disclosures The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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