

POETRY

Problems: Adam had 'em

To my dearest sir or madam:
Today, here with his mom,
I saw your patient Adam,
Thought I'd send this note along

Adam's now a full-grown boy,
Fifteen to be precise
I'd say his visit brought me joy,
But Adam ... isn't nice

We follow him for teenage angst —
In short, you may recall,
He's taken now to robbing banks
Since sometime late last fall

He's on no medications now
(Unless you count his pot)
Eats his veggies by the pound,
Has allergies to naught

I asked about his big concerns,
His mood, and his desires
He said he likes to watch things burn
And longs to set more fires

At this point, smoke began to creep
Beneath the clinic door
Adam only laughed and leaped
For joy and called for more

Our nurse rushed in all panick'd,
And, with Adam's mom and John,
We abandoned that Titanic
And collapsed upon the lawn

Sadly, Adam lingered there
Amid the flames and smoke
Even as I write this, dare
I say, my voice does choke

On examination, then,
His ashes in a tin,
Vital signs were absent and,
Respecting Adam's kin —



I refrained from auscultation
And deferred palpation too
We did, however, weigh him:
In kilos, one point two

That puts him at the first centile
For others of his age
Though, to be fair, it's not my style
To plot him at this stage

In summary, in short my dear,
Your patient, as you've said,
Had conduct much amiss I fear,
And now he's very dead

We'll follow in the afterlife,
Upstairs or query hell,
At least he didn't have a wife
Regards, I wish you well

Andrew Helmers MDCM
PGY2, Pediatrics
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ont.

CMAJ 2013. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.131475