

Medicine

The Midwife's Day

A Poem of Purpose, Life, and Quiet Grace

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BEFORE THE SUN has touched the land,
 She rises with her practiced hand.
 A coffee sip, a tied-back braid,
 A call checked twice, no plans delayed.
 The pager buzzed at 3 A.M.—
 A mother cried: “The pains began.”
 She dressed not with alarm, but poise,
 For birth begins without a noise.
 In shoes that knew the ward's worn floor,
 She passed the threshold of the door.
 The halls still slept in silent hush—
 But life was stirring in a rush.

“Room four,” the nurse says with a nod.
 The midwife breathes, and offers God
 A whispered prayer, not always loud,
 But honest, in the sterile shroud.
 Inside, a woman clenched in pain,
 Sweat glinting like a soft champagne.
 Her partner held a trembling hand,
 Both staring toward the promised land.
 The midwife knelt with knowing eyes,
 With voice both firm and gentle-wise.
 She touched the belly, heard the beat,
 A symphony both fierce and sweet.
 “Let's breathe,” she said, “You're doing well,”
 While checking every rise and swell.
 Her fingers skilled, her instincts sharp,
 Like tuning tight a birthing harp.

The hours pass like ocean tide,
 As contractions swell and then subside.

A stool, a walk, a tub of warm—
The midwife shifts through every form.
She times the peaks, she marks the dips,
She soothes the moans and dried-up lips.
She rubs the back, adjusts the light,
And offers calm through fear and fight.
She checks the cervix, counts the turns,
Monitors how the baby yearns.
Is heart rate safe? Is labor slow?
She charts it all with steady flow.
And when the pain begins to roar,
She is the anchor at the shore.
She does not flinch, she does not flee,
She is the calm midwives must be.

The room begins to buzz and wake—
Push now, breathe deep, and then retake.
The midwife dons her sterile gloves,
And steadies hands that cradle love.
The head is near, the crowning clear,
The mother trembles, screams, then cheers.
The ring of fire burns but brief—
And then, at once, a deep relief.
Into the world, a child cries—
New breath beneath fluorescent skies.
The midwife lifts this soul unknown
And places him in arms alone.
The mother weeps. The father shakes.
The cord is clamped. The new world wakes.
A tear may grace the midwife's cheek—
But she does not let emotion speak.
Instead, she checks: Are lungs all clear?
Are fingers pink? Can baby hear?
And while the joy begins to bloom,
She's stitching gently in the room.

By noon she's rinsed her weary hands,
And jots down notes in colored bands.
Another check, another room—
A prenatal in quiet bloom.
"Your blood pressure is high today,"
She says with care, not harsh dismay.
She listens to the fetal beat,
She charts the swelling in the feet.
A mother cries in worry deep—
What if the baby's born too weak?
The midwife nods and softly leans,
"You're strong. Your baby knows what means
To grow beneath your loving womb.
We'll watch it close. There's always room."
She orders tests, adjusts the plan,
And squeezes tight a shaking hand.

She teaches class in Room 8B,
On labor signs and when to pee.
She shows the dads how swaddles wrap,
How milk may leak through every nap.
She phones a mother home from birth,

To ask if bleeding's light or worse.
She checks on stitches, breastmilk flow,
And if the blues begin to grow.
She meets the OBs in the hall,
Discusses charts, reviews a call.
She fights for rights that mothers need—
“For rest, for birth without the speed.”
The paperwork begins to climb,
She signs and stamps in borrowed time.
Yet every form is proof she's there—
A silent line of patient care.

Her back is sore, her shoulders tight,
She's missed two meals and slept one night.
Her bladder waits till births are done,
Her legs outpace the setting sun.
She's cried for babies lost too soon,
Held hands beneath a sterile moon.
She's watched the blood pool on the floor,
And never made it to the door.
She's had to call the medics in—
When plans went wrong beneath the skin.
She knows the sounds of joy and grief,
Of heartbreak and of true relief.

But sometimes on a Tuesday morn,
A mother brings the babe once born.
Now walking, talking, full of spark—
A light once formed within the dark.
They hug the midwife with a smile—
“Without you, we'd have feared each mile.”
She kneels and meets the baby's gaze,
Remembering those screaming days.
She gets a card with crooked hearts—
A thank-you note in colored parts.
And though her name may not be known
To those beyond the labor zone,
She's changed a life, a path, a tale—
A midwife strong, composed, and pale.

By evening's end, she takes her coat,
Still humming baby's birthnote note.
Her shoes are stained, her braid undone,
The day now lost, the deed now won.
A pager's buzz begins again,
Another mother in the den.
She sighs, but smiles, and turns around—
For life, once more, will soon be found.
And in her soul, a sacred beat—
That labor brings, both raw and sweet.
She walks the hall with steady grace—
A quiet power in her pace.
No medals hung, no honor claimed,
No titles loud, no global fame.
But every life that came to be,
Was midwived into history.

To be a midwife is to stand

Between the soul and surgeon's hand.
To read the body's cryptic tongue,
To sing its song before it's sung.
To listen, touch, to know and wait,
To walk with mothers through that gate.
To rise when most would run or rest,
To give your mind, your heart, your chest.
For every life that takes first breath,
Was held by hands that banished death.
And every cry that fills the air,
Was cradled in a midwife's care. ■

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