

The following poem is offered in celebration of the holidays, with respect to Jenny Joseph, the original author of "Warning!" and with huge thanks to Pamela Hunt, a dear friend and Farm Midwife who kindly donned a purple top and red hat for the photo below, despite the fact that she is not in the least bit old!

When I am an old midwife, I shall wear purple scrubs
with red gloves that don't go, and that make women smile.
And I shall spend the budget on birth balls and essential oils
and nice smelling candles, and say we've no money for oxytocics
except in real emergencies.

I shall sit down on the labour ward floor when I am tired
and hide all the monitors and draw flowers on women's notes
and stick my tongue out at anyone who wants to meddle
and make up for the meddling of my youth.

I will take crowds of slipper-clad women into the corridors
and help them to ambulate, invite them to dance,
and encourage them to yell.

I will wear my hair down and relish being fat
and sew my own purple scrubs
so I never have to scabble to find big ones
in the theatre changing room.

When I am an old midwife, I shall knit all day long
creating hats for babies, and socks for women's feet.
And everyone will see me
and know that all is well.

I shall discuss the purple line - loudly - in audit meetings
and put diagrams up on powerpoint.
I'll suggest the need for an RCT
to evaluate the different kinds of juice
we might offer to labouring women.

I will greet the visitors at the security point
and say, all of you are welcome, birth is a celebration
and *do* bring the children,
it's a family occasion.

I will learn to play piano
and lead choirs of women,
chanting and singing whatever their hearts desire.

I shall stick out my tongue at authority
and question any policy
that leaves no room for uniqueness.

But now we must have uniforms that keep us standardized
and do admission CTGs and not be too radical
We must do VEs, keep lots of notes,
and set a good example for the students.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
when suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple scrubs.



