

Claire Burnett
From A Psalm to the Scaffolders

Love to the Carers

Love to the carers, those who really do care.

Love to the ones who give a shit as they clean it up.

Love to the carers who make time when their co-workers rush -
washing bodies of humans like mopping a floor
to get quicker to their next ciggie break -
remembering Joan prefers coffee and Iris
drinks tea from the bone china cup.

Love to the carers who, hard pushed for time,
find hearing aids in the laundry before it gets washed.

Love to the carers who bathe the feet of the bed-bound and confidently
yet carefully put razor to tissue thin faces.

Love to the carers who care for people not room numbers.

Love to the carers who sing songs to people who no longer speak,
bringing lullabies to Jean and Joan's unuttering lips.

Love to the carers who remember to leave Stan's radio on at night,
not to close Humphrey's curtains and leave a window open
in respect of that farmer's life.

Love to those carers who give unpaid extra half hours,
to tuck in at night,
place a kiss on the brow and
godbless Faye a good sleep.

Love to the carers who go home exhausted
and roll out of bed for the early shift;
beginning their day with wet bedding and soiled pads.
Time pushed
they;
wash faces and bodies once more,
coaxing toothbrushes into clenched mouths
and brush hair,
and apply make-up to Violet,
and a squirt of perfume for Iris
and
make space
to take Betty outside for her smoke.

Love to the carers who give love for the minimum wage,
who clean excrement from their own skin without flinching.

Love to the cares who patiently coax
anxious residents
downstairs;
getting sworn at and swung at,
slapped, bitten and scratched by the fearful.
And find capacity to comfort the tearful.

Love to the carers who find Charles' phlegm on their arm.

Love to the carers who remain calm,
putting first the person they are with,
no matter how unpredictable
and frightening their fearful rage.

Love to the carers who love their vocation,
we can trust their care of the bodies and souls
of the people we love.