

RETIRING FROM NURSING

I've hung up my stethoscope, turned in my scrubs,
I'm anxious no more about protocol flubs.
I'm done with procedures and taking report,
No longer obsessed about lawsuits in court.
I've stopped dropping orders; I'm closing my chart—
No more bedside strain from suppressing a fart.
I've quit being tempted to come to work sick.
At last I am safe from a stray needle-stick.
No more changing gowns made organically wet
Or gathering stories I want to forget.
I've halted my search to find things out-of-stock.
I'm quitting my game of a race with the clock.
No more blowing veins with repetitive pokes
Or torturing patients with bad puns and jokes.

But I will miss working alongside a staff
Who humored my humor by feigning their laugh.
I never felt lonely surrounded by gals
Who called themselves “guys” and were always great pals.
These girls were alert! On the night shift, I've seen
Them wide-eyed with courage (or was it caffeine?).
I've watched them restrain their annoyance all night
When caring for patients who sit on the light.
They stand out as models of Nightingale's dream,
Accepting assignments while wanting to scream.
Of teamwork and trust, from this coworking crew,
How much I have learned! But alas, I am through.
The years have sped by, and I've relished each one,
But I must “Abandon shift!” now, . . . I am done!

— *David L. Hatton, 8/17/2015*