Junior doctor's poems a "battle cry" against Jeremy Hunt's contract imposition.

Friday 1 April, 2016

A UK junior doctor has written a collection of poems inspired by the junior doctors' contract dispute. The collection "What Rhymes With Hunt?" is being sold to raise money for the BMA Charities Trust Fund, which offers grants to doctors and medical students who are in financial difficulty.

The poems, with titles like "Stethoscopes", "The Paediatrician's Children", "Hickory Dickory Doc" and "Jeremy Hunt" range from the silly and lyrical to the dark and political. The aim is to celebrate all doctors as well as anyone who has served on the front line of the NHS.

Dr Jepson describes the collection on the website, whatrhymeswithhunt.com, a "battle cry against the destruction of the profession" and it is expected that junior doctors will rally around the poems during the emergency care only strike between 6 - 8th April 2016 in anticipation of a full walkout on 26th and 27th April 2016.

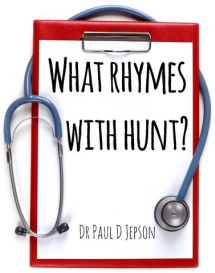
The collection was written and produced by Dr Paul D Jepson, a general practice registrar based in Manchester. He said "I have had a passion for poetry since school but after starting my medical degree in 2005 it has taken a back seat. Then the issue of the junior doctors' contract came up and all of my doctor friends were asking "what rhymes with Hunt?" on social media. I thought there might be more material there than just the obvious expletive and I've been working on the poems in my spare time ever since. I hope that they can be a morale booster for everyone working in the NHS because right now the general feeling is pretty low.

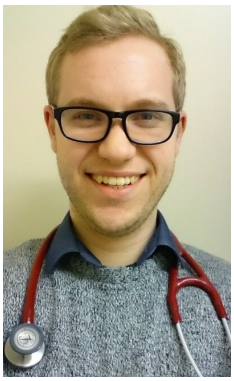
My personal favourite poem is "Backwards World" which is based on my experiences of treating people with Alzheimer's disease. The title is a reference to the mini-mental state examination (MMSE) which is the standard tool we use to assess dementia. There's one test where you ask the patient to spell 'WORLD' backwards and it can be heart-breaking watching people struggle with it, knowing what that means for them and their families".

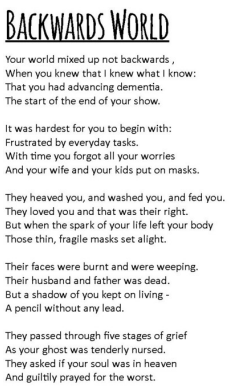
The collection contains some scathing attacks on the government and Jeremy Hunt, in particular, is given harsh treatment. Dr Jepson in no stranger to controversy: in 2011 he wrote a letter to the BMJ about the relative risks of smoking which lead to headlines such as "Doctor suggests tabloids publish daily smoking death toll".

"What Rhymes With Hunt?" is available in Kindle Edition for £2.99 from Amazon and there are plans to publish a print edition in time for the full strikes at the end of April 2016.

Media:







BACKWARDS WORLD

Your world mixed up not backwards ,
When you knew that I knew what I know:
That you had advancing dementia.
The start of the end of your show.

It was hardest for you to begin with:
Frustrated by everyday tasks.
With time you forgot all your worries
And your wife and your kids put on masks.

They heaved you, and washed you, and fed you.
They loved you and that was their right.
But when the spark of your life left your body
Those thin, fragile masks set alight.

Their faces were burnt and were weeping.
Their husband and father was dead.
But a shadow of you kept on living -
A pencil without any lead.

They passed through five stages of grief
As your ghost was tenderly nursed.
They asked if your soul was in heaven
And guiltily prayed for the worst.

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