

# MIND TO MIND

Creative writing that explores the abstract side of our profession and our lives

Stephen T. Harvey, M.D., Editor

## Clerihews for Chloroform

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A Clerihew is a four-line comic poem with a rigid rhyming scheme, aabb, but no metric requirements. This poetic form was invented by E. C. (Edmund Clerihew) Bentley (1875–1956), British humorist and author. Bentley's Clerihews always began with the name of a famous person or character to create a rhyming challenge. The remaining three lines "roasted" the figure, sometimes in a historical context. If Bentley hoped he was inventing a poetic form to replace the limerick, he was unsuccessful, since most anesthesiologists have never heard of a Clerihew. I became aware of them when I was loaned a delightful book entitled *The Lost Clerihews of Paul Ingram*.<sup>1</sup> Below are six Clerihews that I composed about individuals who played a significant role in the early history of chloroform anesthesia. With each is a reference pertinent to the Clerihew so that this collection could serve as a basis for an anesthesia history journal club.

Robert Mortimer Glover

Could never get over  
Getting little praise  
For his dog days.<sup>2</sup>

James Young Simpson

Would have turned crimson  
If one were to suggest  
Ether was the best.<sup>3</sup>

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Francis Brodie Imlach  
 Was the first to extract  
 Without pain a dentist's tooth  
 After neighbor Simpson's proof.<sup>4</sup>

Jane Carstairs,  
 First of the OB dares,  
 Christened daughter Wilhelmina  
 Whom Simpson named Anesthesia.<sup>5</sup>

Hannah Greener,  
 A healthy fifteener,  
 Earned unwanted fame  
 When chloroform was the blame.<sup>6</sup>

John Snow  
 Was able to show  
 Precision is required  
 When chloroform is inspired.<sup>7</sup>

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