

Treacle

There are three regular carers who come in,
and all of them live up to the designation –
they care, professionally,
and, to various extents, personally.

One calls me by my first name, which I don't mind.
I like my name, and not many people use it, these days.
But I don't feel close to that one.
It's a professional relationship.

Carer Two is very kind and attentive.
She treats me with such respect –
so much respect that she can't bring herself
to call me by my first name.

Instead, she calls me "Mrs Czaplewski".
Bit formal. Perhaps that's from her training.
It does erect a certain professional barrier
that prevents fondness growing.

The third and last of my carers,
who generally fixes my lunch and tea,
is, by his own admission, dreadful at names.
Yes, he knows all the names,

but not with total confidence,
and he wouldn't want to get them wrong.
So, he tells me – and this is strictly against policy –
he employs a workaround, epithets of affection:

darling, lovey, princess; major, mucker, my chickadee,
carefully chosen to fit the recipient's personality.
The thing is, I really don't mind
if he can't remember my name.

See, although he's no more and no less
professional than the others,
you can tell the affection is meant.
When he calls me *treacle*,

short for "treacle tart",
rhyming slang, you know, for "sweetheart",
I know it's from his heart.
It's the most loved I feel, these days.