AIMS For a better birth...

This is his head, says the midwife

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By Lizzy Lister

This is his head, says the midwife
placing an orange upon her ample bosom
and she seems like she could have fed
twelve children all until they were at least five
not like this baby with his me-me mouth
and arms like frantic wings, and every time I
try to feed him I think of oranges and the midwife
earlier, and earlier still, saying *can you feel the baby moving down?*
before he was born. Louis Armstrong playing. My mother
who had just called in to say hello chiming on each contraction
Would you like some tea? Would you like some honey?
Would you like your hair brushed, your back rubbed,
some nuts? And then there's Pulp on the record player
and gas and air and I'm at the cinema and it's intermission time
now's the time for ice cream, for orange juice, and the baby's
been born and I missed it, but not really for I'm still here
screaming while outside the twelve o'clock train hums

on the platform. And then there's the doctor, and then the
second midwife all asking *can you feel it moving*
and Mum's on the phone *yes do pop in for a cup of tea*
Elizabeth won't mind and I'm screaming *No, No,*
And here's the two o'clock train, and the four-fifteen
and *do you want tea, honey, nuts?* The midwives
are talking about baby's names. *Can we break your waters?*
Can you feel it moving down? Imagine a lotus flower,
Imagine a mountain peak, imagine the sea…
I'm jumping up and down *no don't make me lie down*
I can't lie down, I can't lie down, and then it winds me -
a sledge hammer just below my ribs and they're shouting
push push it'll soon be here. Can't you push any harder?
All of them *one two three push* and *I can see it I can see it*
you can do it, one two three push it's nearly here
it's nearly here and I can feel it burning, burning,
with a halo of fire around its enormous head. *Hold it*
hold it gently gently gently and it's slithering out
like a gigantic purple fish and it's so big and *stop pulling*
stop pulling the cord's too short, and then there's the midwives
with a torch staring between my legs like they're looking
for rabbits.

Louis Armstrong on the record player.
The eight o'clock train gently hums outside.

Author Bio: Lizzy Lister is a poet, musician, artist, gardener, mother, eco-warrior, cyclist and sea swimmer who lives with her family in a railway station beside the Cornish mainline and for a hobby adds live soundtracks to silent films with the band Wurlitza.