



## **WARNING**

JENNY JOSEPH

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple  
with a red hat that doesn't go, and doesn't suit me,  
and I shall spend my pension on brandy  
and summer gloves and satin sandals,  
and say we've no money for butter.

I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired  
and gobble up samples in shops  
and press alarm bells  
and run my stick along the public railings  
and make up for the sobriety of my youth.

I shall go out in my slippers in the rain  
and pick the flowers in other people's gardens  
and learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts  
and grow more fat  
and eat three pounds of sausages at a go  
or only bread and pickle for a week  
and hoard pens and pencils  
and beer mats and things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry  
and pay our rent and not swear in the street  
and set a good example for the children.  
We will have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?  
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised,  
when suddenly I am old and start to wear purple!