

Poet looks forward to purple

Dear Jo:
Have you ever seen or heard the poem, "When I Am An Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple"? I heard it on the radio a few weeks ago and found it amusing — I'm sure your readers would, too. If you can find it, could you print it? It's an interesting look at aging by a middle-aged woman.

Mrs. K.S.,
Another middle-aged woman
Dear Mrs. S.:
I guess middle-aged women are in the "category" too. Right now, it's rather a nice place to be!
I had some difficulty finding it. I had read it a few years ago in a newspaper and neglected to clip it for my files. Nevertheless, I found it



gerontology
A. Jolayne Farrell

In a book (named after the poem), "When I Am An Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple: An Anthology of Short Stories and Poetry." It's edited by Sandra Maria and published by Papler-Mache Press, Manhattan Beach, Calif. (1988).

So here's the poem entitled "Wearing Purple" written by Jenny Joseph:

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say I have 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 public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick flowers from 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 beermats 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 must 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.
Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at 11 Cynthia Crescent, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4E 1J3.

Teachers like strike law; parents ask for change

(AP) — A state Senate committee held a hearing on bills regulating teacher strikes, such as the nine still under way this week, and got conflicting views from parents and the state's largest teachers union.
The Legislature remains deeply divided on the issue, on which former Gov. William Milliken in 1975 and 1980 vetoed bills. Since then, lawmakers generally have kept their hands off the topic.
"I'm trying to come up with remedies to a difficult situation we face every fall," said Sen. Fred Dillingham, R-Fowlerville and chairman of the Senate Human Resources and Senior Citizens Committee, which held a hearing Thursday.
AL SHORT, director of government affairs for the Michigan Education Association, said the big teachers' union is satisfied with the

present situation.
"I think the system is working — I think it's working very well," he said. "We think what's going on right now works."
But the committee room was full of parents who apparently didn't think the system was working so well.
"Our teachers are on strike," said Gerald Salow, a parent in the Stockbridge School District. "There are going to be feelings that will be hard to heal. There's going to be resentment, I think."
"I'm convinced this is not the message to send to our children . . . A walkout of the teachers just isn't good for the children," he said. "Public employees know they are in public service when they accept this job."

"Something should be done to make them understand we can't disrupt the school year," Salow said.
TEACHER STRIKES generally are considered illegal.
But Short noted that they're illegal only after a contract is agreed to and a calendar established for the school year. He also pointed out that contracts cover other school district employees, not just teachers.
Still, he said, "Public employees should have the right to strike."
The main bill before the committee, sponsored by Sen. Nick Smith, R-Addison, would require that teachers and school boards comply with a bargaining schedule in teacher negotiations. The measure would set penalties for teachers and school districts if school was delayed by a strike.

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