A Poem for My Children

on the Subject of Obedience

There was a boy whose name was Jim

And although life was good to him

And gave him food and home and love

He thought that it was not enough

That it was time for him to do

Those things that he'd been told not to

"I am half-grown and must be free

To do those things denied to me

And I shall do them all", he said.

"I'll spread some black dirt on my bread

And drop large objects on my toes

And I shall put beans up my nose."

And everything that as a kid

His mum said "Don't!", he went and did

He crossed his eyes and dragged his feet

Threw bags of garbage in the street

Leaned out windows, ran down halls

Spilled on floors and wrote on walls.

Until at last, at half past two

He could not think of more to do

All things forbidden he had done

And nothing had been so much fun

As he'd imagined when he started

He sat there weary and down-hearted

"How dull", he said, "I must admit it

I feel my sins are all committed

My wild oats have all been rolled

I've saved up none for when I'm old

If in the future I should fall

There'll be no thrill in that at all

I've committed anger, pride and lust

I've drunk and smoked and lied and cussed

The things my mum and dad condemn

I've finished up by 2 p.m.

Everything that was not right,

Now what is left to do tonight?"

From this, dear children, you should sense

The value of obedience

I tell you "Don't!", I mean "Postpone

Some naughtiness for when you're grown"

Save up some mischief and rampages

You'll enjoy them more at later ages.

And so, dear children, please, less noise

It's eight o'clock, pick up your toys

Brush your teeth and off to bed

But after all your prayers are said,

The lights are out, you're quiet as mice,

Whisper one word that isn't nice.

Don't say ten, don't say a group

Just say one like: p..

Oh, what a pleasure from one bad word

Say it a second time and third

A terrible word, profane and vicious

How bad of you and how delicious!

One is enough, the rest will keep

Now close your eyes and go to sleep!