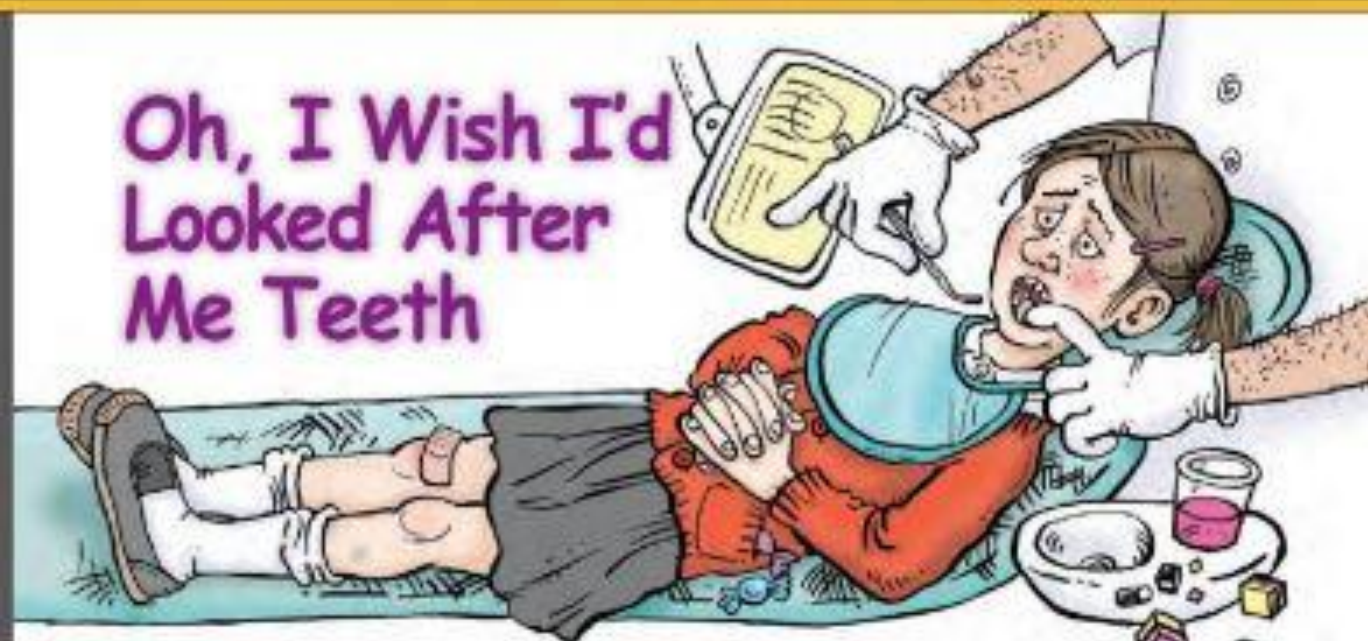


Oh, I Wish I'd Looked After Me Teeth



Oh, I wish I'd looked after me teeth,
And spotted the perils beneath,
All the toffees I chewed,
And the sticky food,
Oh, I wish I'd looked after me teeth.

I wish I'd been that much more willin'
When I had more tooth there than fillin'
To pass up gobstoppers,
From respect to me choppers
And to buy something else with me stailin'.

When I think of the lollies I licked,
And the liquorice allsorts I picked,
Sherbet dabs, big and little,
All that hard peanut brittle,
My conscience gets horribly pricked.

My Mother, she told me no end,
'If you got a tooth, you got a friend'
I was young then, and careless,
My toothbrush was hairless,
I never had much time to spend.

Oh I showed them the toothpaste all right,
I flashed it about late at night,
But up-and-down brushin'
And pokin' and fassin'
Didn't seem worth the time – I could bite!

If I'd known I was paving the way,
To cavities, caps and decay,
The murder of fillin's
Injections and drillin's
I'd have thrown all me sherbet away.

So I lay in the old dentist's chair,
And I gaze up his nose in despair,
And his drill it do whine,
In these molars of mine,
'Two amalgam,' he'll say, 'foe in there.'

How I laughed at my Mother's false teeth,
As they foamed in the waters beneath,
But now comes the reckonin'
It's me they are beckonin'
Oh, I wish I'd looked after me teeth.

By Pam Ayres

CHECK-UP

- 1 List some of the sweets that did the damage.
- 2 Give another word that the poet uses for teeth.
- 3 What letter at the end of a lot of words does the poet not pronounce?
- 4 What does she mean by the 'reckonin'?
- 5 In your opinion, should the poem be read silently or aloud? Why?