

Winks

I love my old great-grandma
with that twinkle in her eyes.

It's rotten that she's weak
and awful thin.

Her face is deeply wrinkled now
in places where she smiles,
and silver whiskers
quiver on her chin.

My old great-gran and I
have many secrets that we share.
We whisper them
when no-one else is near.
But as Great-Gran is going deaf
I have to get up close,
then *SHOUT* my secret whispers
in her ear.

And sometimes,
when we're on our own,
she grins with both her teeth,
and gently presses money
in my hand.
She doesn't speak.
There is no need to tell me it's for sweets.
She simply winks,
and knows I'll understand.

Tomorrow is her birthday.
She'll be ninety-six, I think.
Her birthday cake is iced
in pink and white.
She'll get some woolly slippers
and a shawl from Mum and Dad,
and whiskey in her milky drink
at night.

I've bought her jelly babies
with the pound she gave me last.
She'll suck them,
watching telly with her drink.
I know she can't eat *all* of them;
I'll have to help her out.
I'll sit beside her, open-mouthed...
and wink.

Barry Buckingham