My Favorite Old-time Poem

WHEN I WAS in third grade, in 1934, at Inman (South Carolina) Grammar School, I had to learn this poem," writes Nellie Owens of Ellenboro, North Carolina.

"I've always remembered the first two lines and wished I could find a copy of it. Recently, I found it in our old trunk of memories."'

Jimmie and Me

We laid in a cell, Mr. Judge, all night long
Waiting and wishing for the morning to dawn.
'Cause we couldn't sleep, Mr. Judge, in that cold damp place
And Jimmie was most scared to death at the wild, mad race
That the rats kept runnin' all through the dark night.
That's why we're glad, Mr. Judge, to see the daylight.

Please, Mr. Judge, we are not very bad boys,
And the policeman who took us said we're some
mother's joys.
He's wrong, Mr. Judge, and should only have said
That we're two little outcasts and our mother is dead.
And there's no one to care for us, at least here below,
And no roof that shelters us from the rain and the snow.

A preacher once told us that way up in the blue
There was a God watching all that little boys do.
And He loved little children, and His love, it was free,
But I guess, Mr. Judge, He don't love Jimmie and me.
For I prayed and I prayed, 'til I was most out of breath
For something to eat and to keep Jimmie from death.

So I went to a house that was not very far
And saw, Mr. Judge, that the back door was ajar.
And a table was settin' right close by the door,

Just loaded with pies, about twenty or more,
So I quickly slipped in and grabbed one to my breast.
The policeman then caught us, and you know the rest.

Discharged, did you say, Mr. Judge! Both Jimmie and I?
And we ain't got to be jailed 'cause I took a pie?
And we can eat all we want? How funny 'twill seem.
Say, Jimmie, pinch me, for I think it's a dream.
And you'll give us work, summer, winter and fall?
Say, Jimmie, I think there's a God after all.