

“Grandmother”

by Sameeneh Shirazie



Part II: Reading**Grandmother / Sameeneh Shirazie**

I hadn't asked her much,
just how she felt,
and she told me all about her day,
and how she'd washed the sheets,
and how she could not understand
why the towel got so heavy
when it was wet.

She'd also sunned the mattresses,
such tired bones and so much to do,
and my eyes filled with tears
when I thought of how I was simply
going to say "Salaam" and walk away
and so many words would have been
trapped inside her.

I would have passed by as if
what lay between those bedclothes
was just old life
and not really my grandmother.

*Page 16***Part III: Basic Understanding****Vocabulary Practice****Exercise A**

Fill in the missing translation according to the poem.

English	Hebrew
washed the sheets	כיבסה את הסדינים
towel	מגבת
sunned the mattresses	שמה את המזרונים בשמש
tired bones	עצמות עייפות
filled with tears	(עיניה) התמלאו בדמעות
trapped	לכודה
pass by	לחלוף ליד (בלי) להעניק תשומת לב

Exercise B

Fill in the sentences with the words above:

1. After cleaning the bedroom, my mother *sunned the mattresses* and *washed the sheets*.
2. I came out wet from the pool, and I looked for my *towel*.
3. The movie was so sad, so my eyes *filled with tears*.
4. He felt *trapped* in prison.
5. After the school trip, I felt I had *tired bones*.
6. Every time I *pass by* my friend's house, I smile to myself.

*Page 17***Exercise C**

Which of the following words and phrases relate to the grandmother? Which relate to the granddaughter? Copy and complete the chart.

*Filled with tears • pass by • sunned the mattresses • tired bones
towel • trapped • walk away • washed the sheets*

Grandmother	Granddaughter
<i>sunned the mattresses</i>	<i>Filled with tears</i>
<i>tired bones</i>	<i>pass by</i>
<i>towel</i>	<i>walk away</i>
<i>trapped</i>	
<i>washed the sheets</i>	

Exercise D

Write five sentences about the poem. Use at least one word or expression from exercise C in each sentence. You may change the form of the words.

- 1. Her eyes **filled with tears** when she thought of her grandmother.*
- 2. One of the grandmother's chores is to **sun the mattresses**.*
- 3. Her **tired bones** needed a rest.*
- 4. She hung the **towels** out to dry.*
- 5. She has words **trapped** inside her.*



*Page 18***Basic Understanding****Answer the questions:**

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?

The granddaughter

2. Who is the speaker talking about?

Her grandmother

3. What does the old woman do during the day? Name two things.

a) *She washes the sheets.*

b) *She suns the mattresses.*

4. What do we learn about the old woman's life?

We learn that she spends her day doing housework, which is very tiring. She is lonely and she wants to share her thoughts and feelings with someone (and was perhaps waiting for the opportunity to do so when the speaker / her granddaughter passed by).



*Page 19***Part IV: Analysis and Interpretation****A. Literary Terms: Setting / Theme / Tone**

The *setting* is the time and place in which the events of a story or a poem occur.

1. What is the setting of the poem?

The poem takes place in the grandmother's room, possibly later in the day when she has finished her chores.

2. Did the speaker intend to stop and talk with her grandmother? Why or why not?

Which words in the poem helped you decide?

No, she was just passing by and asked her grandmother how she felt. The words that helped are: "I was simply / going to say 'Salaam' and walk away."

3. Why do the speaker's eyes fill with tears?

Her eyes fill with tears because she feels guilty that she did not have time to talk to her grandmother.

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The **Theme** of a poem/story is its central idea or message. We can usually find the theme by asking: "What is the poem/story about?"

4. What do you think the message of the poem is?

We should not take our family members, especially grandparents, for granted, and we should take the time to listen to them and spend time with them.

5. What is the role of women in the society described in the poem?

The women have to do the housework.

6. Do you think the grandmother's life reflects the life of most grandmothers today? Explain.

Yes, the grandmother's life probably reflects the life of grandmothers in many areas of the world.

The **Tone** of a poem is created by the speaker's attitude and emotions. The tone can be playful, serious, angry, nostalgic etc.

7. Which of the following emotions are expressed in the poem? Which words express these emotions?

- Caring
- Sorrow
- Love
- Regret
- Relief

*Page 21***B. HOTS: Distinguishing Different Perspectives**

Two shoe salespeople were sent to Africa to open up new markets. After the first one arrived, he sent an email to his company saying:

"I'm returning on the next flight. Can't sell shoes here. Everyone goes barefoot."

The second salesperson arrived and also sent an email to the office. What do you think he wrote?





"The sales are unlimited. Nobody wears shoes here!"

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How are mother and grandmother looking at the baby?

How do their perspectives differ?



1. *Mother loves the baby.*
2. *Mother thinks about the baby's future.*
3. *Grandmother wants the baby to be happy.*
4. *Grandmother wants the baby to be creative.*
5. *Mother wants the baby to be rich.*

Distinguishing different perspectives means identifying different points of view within a text.

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1. What is the speaker's attitude towards her grandmother?

Her attitude is indifferent / loving / sorrowful / caring.

2. How does the speaker's perspective change at the end of the poem? Which words helped you decide?

The speaker looks at her grandmother from a different perspective. She understands that she has related to her as just another old person and not with the love she should show to her grandmother.

3. What is the perspective of the grandmother in the poem?

The grandmother wants company / someone to talk to.

