

Name: _____
Date: _____ Block: _____

“Incident in a Rose Garden” by Donald Justice

Gardener: Sir, I encountered Death
Just now among our roses.
Thin as a scythe he stood there.

I knew him by his pictures.
He had his black coat on. 5
Black gloves, a broad black hat.

I think he would have spoken.
Seeing his mouth stood open.
Big it was, with white teeth.

As soon as he beckoned, I ran. 10
I ran until I found you.
Sir, I am quitting my job.

I want to see my sons
Once more before I die.
I want to see California. 15

Master: Sir, you must be that stranger
Who threatened my gardener.
This is my property, sir.

Death: I welcome only friends here.
Sir, I knew your father. 20
And we were friends at the end.

As for your gardener.
I did not threaten him.
Old men mistake my gestures.

I only meant to ask him 25
To show me to his master.
I take it you are he?



Answer the following questions using RES—RESTATE the question, give an EXAMPLE from the poem if possible, and write in complete SENTENCES.

1. What type of poem is this?
 - a. Narrative because it tells a story.
 - b. Dramatic because it tells a story but looks like a script with all dialogue.
 - c. Lyric because it shares the speaker's thoughts and feelings.
 - d. Limerick because it rhymes.

2. This poem does not seem to rhyme or have any rhythm. What do we call this in poetry?
3. This whole poem is about personification. What is being personified as a person in this poem?
4. What does Death look like in this poem?
5. There is a simile at the end of line three comparing two things. What two things are compared?
6. As used in the poem, what is a scythe?
 - a. a knife
 - b. a tool used to file nails
 - c. an implement used to mow (as grass) composed of a long handle with a curved blade.
 - d. a weapon used in modern day battles
7. The words at the end of the third stanza are written in a different order than we would usually say them. This is called inversion. What is the best way to invert the words in this line as people would most likely say them?
 - e. Big it was, with white teeth.
 - f. With white teeth it was big.
 - g. It was big with white teeth.
8. Why does the gardener run away from Death?
9. What do lines 20 and 21 mean?
10. Why is the end of this poem an example of situational irony?
11. What is the theme (life lesson) you learned in this poem?