

Comprehension Check

- He has seen pictures of him.
- Death beckoned to him, but he doesn't want to die before seeing his sons again.
- the master

1. What Do You Think?

Some will probably say that the ending is a surprise. Your discussion of the effect the poem had on you will probably include something about how it seems more likely that the old man would die, or that the master seemed unaware of the likelihood of his own death, so he was probably as surprised as the reader.

2. Possible Responses: the younger man dies before the older; the setting of a garden, suggesting beauty and life, stands in contrast to death and darkness.

3. Possible Responses: The gardener is afraid but realistic and respectful, while the master is calm and shows little respect for Death. Evidence could include: The gardener is afraid because he is old or because he is far from his family. He is more respectful of Death. The master is unafraid because he is younger and thinks that it is the older man whom Death seeks. His lack of respect shows in his description of Death (like a waiter putting on airs).

4. Students may mention details such as the scythe, the black clothing, the wide-open mouth and white teeth, the patient demeanor, the grin with glowing eyes.

5. Comparing Texts Each poem tells of the approach of something ominous; both narratives have one character who fears the approach of death and flees and a second who does not flee. Both have settings that would normally be nonthreatening (a home and a garden). Accept other reasonable comparisons.

6. Connect to Life Students' sketches should show enough detail to indicate that they understand the figurative language of the poem. Responses to the question will vary considerably, depending on the image of death each student creates for the Connect activity. Ask for details regarding similarities as well as differences. Accept all reasonable responses