

## Unit 1 Review: Voice Multiple Choice Practice

### Behind Grandma's House



- At ten I wanted fame. I had a comb  
And two Coke bottles, a tube of Bryl-creem<sup>1</sup>.  
I borrowed a dog, one with  
Mismatched eyes and a happy tongue  
(5) And wanted to prove I was tough  
In the alley, kicking over trash cans,  
A dull chime of tuna cans falling.  
I hurled light bulbs like grenades<sup>2</sup>  
And mean teachers held their heads,  
(10) Fingers of blood lengthening  
On the ground. I flicked rocks at cats,  
Their goofy faces spurred with foxtails.  
I kicked fences. I shooed pigeons.  
(15) I broke a branch from a flowering peach  
And frightened ants with a stream of spit.  
I said “*Chale*,<sup>3</sup>” “In your face,” and “No way  
Daddy-O” to an imaginary priest  
Until grandma came into the alley,  
(20) Her apron flapping in the breeze,  
Her hair mussed<sup>4</sup>, and said, “Let me help you,”  
And punched me between the eyes.

Gary Soto

~ Gary Soto

Bryl-creem: hair gel  
grenades: an explosive weapon  
Chale: slang “Forget that, No way”  
mussed: messy, ruffled, disorder

## Unit 1 Review: Voice Multiple Choice Practice

**Directions:** Annotate using the terms from the word bank below. This is practice for the **Reading Comprehension & Analysis** section of your Unit Exam.

occasion/setting	persona	theme/purpose	tone
diction	audience	genre	imagery

- 1. The words “Chale” and “Daddy-o” are colloquial, and create a familiar or relaxed tone. Why does Soto direct this diction at the “imaginary priest”?**
  - Soto implies that the speaker did not respect any authority figure when he was ten years old.
  - The speaker uses these casual terms affectionately, to show that he is comfortable with priests.
  - By showing disrespect toward the priest, who deserves formal diction and a respectful tone, Soto highlights the speaker’s disregard for all authority except his grandmother’s.
  - Soto reveals the speaker’s ignorance through his word choice; the speaker is unaware that colloquial word choice is inappropriate for a priest.
- 2. The description of “fingers of blood” in line 10 most likely means**
  - the speaker hurt himself
  - the speaker hurt his mean teacher
  - the speaker would like to hurt his mean teacher
  - the speaker’s grandma made him bleed
- 3. Soto’s use of verbs like “hurled” (line 8), “flicked” (line 11) and “kicked” (line 14) and “broke” (line 15) most strongly convey which literary device and purpose?**
  - The imagery shows an active and carefree occasion.
  - This diction shows the speaker’s passive approach to life.
  - The theme of the poem is to take action over one’s life in order to achieve his or her goals.
  - The speaker’s imaginary aggression is contrasted with his grandmother’s powerful influence over his behavior.
- 4. What is the relationship between the title “Behind Grandma’s House,” and the occasion of this poem?**
  - The speaker conveys his imagination as reality, while the title reveals to the audience that the occasion is in his childish mind.
  - The contrast between the positive connotation of grandma and the violent nature of the poem conveys irony.

## Unit 1 Review: Voice Multiple Choice Practice

- c. Using a location in the title of the poem helps make the experience more vivid for the audience.
  - d. The title demonstrates that the author, speaker, and grandma all share a value of home.
- 5. How does the last line, “And punched me between the eyes” reveal Soto’s purpose?**
- a. Soto signals the speaker’s coming of age through this violent detail.
  - b. Eyes symbolize vision, clarity, and understanding, which the speaker lacks.
  - c. The diction and abruptly short sentence enact his grandmother’s power over the speaker’s perception.
  - d. The end of the poem reveals that the speaker is actually grateful to his grandma for her authoritative presence in his life.