

Grandmother

by Sameeneh Shirazie



Sameeneh Shirazie (1967-) was born in Karachi, Pakistan. She grew up in a warm and loving family. Her grandmother, whom she greatly loved and admired, lived with them and probably also did the chores in the house. Shirazie, who respected her grandmother and saw her as a central figure in her own life, dedicated this poem to her.

Shirazie also lived in Australia and the Middle East. The subject of much of her poetry is about change, love and family. Today she works at the Royal University for Women in Bahrain.

Form and Structure:

The poem consists of one long stanza. It has neither a regular rhyme pattern nor regular beat. Although the lines differ in their lengths, they are short and concise. Actually, this piece of literature is more a short account than a poem.

The speaker:

A girl or a young woman who describes an ordinary or routine short meeting with her grandmother. The grandmother is a tired woman as a result of the housework she does. She wants to share her thoughts and feelings with someone.

Contents:

The speaker in the poem is a granddaughter, probably a young woman, who is describing a visit, like many others before, with her grandmother. She doesn't intend to stay for a long time, she is just passing by ("...I was simply going to say 'Salaam' and walk away"). However, when she asks her grandmother how she is feeling, it seems that her grandmother has just waited for the opportunity to share her thoughts, feelings and experiences with someone (even though they were quite simple and insignificant), so she tells her about her routine, her tiring chores ("...how she'd washed the sheets", "She'd also sunned the mattresses") and how she is getting weaker and older day by day ("...why the towel got so heavy...", "...such tired bones and so much to do"). The

more she talks, the more the young lady realizes how she, and maybe all the other members of her family, take the grandmother for granted, relating to her impersonally, never stopping to think about her need for love and appreciation, seeing her just as an old life, another old person who'll die soon.

Setting:

The poem takes place in the grandmother's room. It seems that it is late in the day, after she has finished her chores.

Theme:

The theme is the subject of the poem. The poem is about the relationship between a grandmother and her granddaughter. It's about family ties.

The central idea of the poem is the way we relate to members of our family, especially the elders. The message conveyed in this poem is that we should not take them for granted. The poem proves to us how important it is to listen to them and show care and sympathy. It also shows that family ties, in general, are very important and that we should spend more time with our loved ones.

Tone:

The tone is the attitude or emotions expressed by the speaker in the poem. The speaker feels regret, guilt and sorrow for taking her grandmother for granted. It's a tone of regret, of guilt, of sorrow. If we read the poem again, we can also find a tender tone, a caring tone, a loving tone and a relieved tone.

Analysis and Interpretation:

The poem "Grandmother" deals with a common issue: the relationship between different generations in the family, in this case a grandmother – granddaughter relationship in a close-knit family.

When the granddaughter visits her grandmother, she doesn't intend to have a long conversation with her (" I hadn't asked her much, just how she felt..."). When she asks her grandmother how she feels, she doesn't show enough interest in her grandmother and doesn't seem to be interested in her feelings and thoughts. However, her grandmother's unexpected, honest reply makes her see her grandmother from a

different perspective and brings the young woman to an important realization ("...and so many words would have been trapped inside") which causes her to feel emotional and filled with guilt ("...and my eyes filled with tears") – if she walked away, her grandmother would not have the chance to pour her heart and share her feelings. The granddaughter, and through her the readers too, realize that a routine greeting ("Hi, how are you?" not even waiting for the standard reply: "Fine, thank you!") is not enough, and old family members are human beings who deserve time, attention, respect, compassion and appreciation.

At the beginning of the poem, the speaker's point of view or perspective is self-centered. She sees her grandmother only in relation to herself, not as an individual in her own right. By the end of the poem, her perspective has changed. She views life through her grandmother's eyes and realizes that she has taken her for granted. She understands that she has related to her impersonally, and not with all the love and appreciation she should have for her grandmother. The poet implies that family ties can enrich our lives and give us satisfaction at any age. The society described in the poem is a traditional one. The woman works in the house. We see that the grandmother is busy working at home and draw a conclusion that she is tired of her housework. She'd like to stop working hard for some time and talk to someone caring and loving instead.

The message:

The message conveyed in this poem is that we mustn't take members of our family, especially the elders for granted. The poem proves to us how important it is to listen to them and show care and sympathy. It also shows that family ties, in general, are very important and that we should spend more time with our loved ones.

HOTS:

Distinguishing different perspectives/points of view – Different people see things differently. The ability to identify points of view is called "distinguishing different perspectives". The way the granddaughter sees her grandmother changes in the poem. In the beginning, she doesn't think she should dedicate a long time to her grandmother. She takes her grandmother for granted. In the end, she realizes that her grandmother is a human being who needs to be listened to and have her feelings and thoughts shared with. She shouldn't take her grandmother for granted anymore. She should respect and appreciate her grandmother.