

The Living Photograph

My small grandmother is tall there,
straight-back, white broderie anglaise shirt,
pleated skirt, flat shoes, grey bun, the
a kind, old smile round her eyes.
Her big hand holds mine,
White hand in black hand.
Her sharp blue eyes look her own death in the eye.

It was true after all; that look.
My tall grandmother became small.
Her back round and hunched.
Her soup forgot to boil.
She went to the awful place grandmothers go.
Somewhere unknown, unthinkable.

But there she is still,
in the photo with me at three,
the crinkled smile is still living, breathing.

Jackie Kay

1. Based on stanza 1, state one personality trait of the grandmother.

2. In stanza 1, how can you tell that the grandmother was a fashionable person?

3. In stanza 1, how does the grandmother's attire describe her personality?

4. Explain '*her sharp blue eyes look her own death in the eye*' in stanza 1?

5. In stanza 2, which line indicates that the grandmother's back was bent forward?

6. In stanza 2, what does the phrase '*her soup forgot to boil*' tell you about the grandmother?

7. In stanza 2, the persona states her grandmother went to an awful place. What do you think actually happened to her grandmother?
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8. In stanza 2, the persona describes how aging has affected the grandmother physically . State one of the effects.
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9. Who are the two people in the photograph?
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10. Compare the grandmother in stanza 1 and 2. State one difference.
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11. Do you think the persona has a good relationship with her grandmother? Give a reason to support your answer.
- Response : _____
- Reason : _____
12. Do you think *The Living Photograph* is a suitable title for the poem? Give a reason to support your answer.
- Response : _____
- Reason : _____
13. What is the advantage of taking photographs with your loved ones? Suggest another way to keep the memory of a loved one alive.
- Advantage : _____
- Suggestion : _____
14. Losing one's memory is a naturally common symptom of getting old. How can you help your grandparents who are becoming more forgetful? Suggest two ways.
- Suggestion 1 : _____
- Suggestion 2: _____
15. Should the elderly be sent to an old folks' home? Give a reason for your answer.
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SUGGESTED ANSWERS: The Living Photograph :

1. Loving / Fashionable/ Sophisticated/ Tolerant
2. From the way she dressed and the type of material she chose for her shirt.
3. Her attire describes that she is fashionable/ trendy/ immaculate/ prim and proper.
4. The phrase tells that the grandmother is not intimidated by the idea of death and is prepared for it.
5. "Her back round and hunched".
6. The phrase tells us that the grandmother had started to be forgetful/ absent-minded/ become senile, even in her normal routines like boiling the soup.
7. The persona's grandmother actually had died/ passed away.
8. She became smaller in size / Her back became hunched.
9. The persona and her grandmother.
10. In stanza 1, the grandmother had tall (physique/ frame/ build) @ had straight back whereas in stanza 2, the grandmother had smaller/ shrunk (physique/ frame/ build) @ had hunched/ round back.
11. Yes because she still keeps the photograph of her and her grandmother eventhough her grandmother had passed away.
12. Yes because whenever the persona looks at the photograph, she feels her grandmother's presence as if her grandmother is still living.
13. The advantage is that you can keep the memory you had with them alive even when they are not around. One way is to have certain similar items/ things that can invoke the memory you all had together.
14. Suggestion 1 : Display important things in writing so that my grandparents can always read and be reminded about those things.
Suggestion 2 : Record important events in video or pictures so that I can always replay or show those events/ pictures back to my grandparents when there is a need.
15. Yes, they should be because it can help them socialize with their peer and share problems that young people may not understand/ empathise with.
No, they should not be because they may feel that they are not wanted and not cared for.