



A Visit to Grandpa's by Dylan Thomas

Simile → In the middle of the night I woke from a dream full of whips and lariats as **long as serpents**, and runaway coaches and mountain passes, and **wide, windy** gallops over cactus fields, and I heard the old man in the next room crying, "Gee-up!" and "Whoa!" and **trotting** his tongue on the roof of his mouth. ← Alliteration
← Connotation

It was the first time I had stayed in grandpa's house. The floorboards had squeaked like mice as I climbed into bed, and the mice between the walls had creaked like wood as though another visitor was walking on them. It was a mild summer night, but curtains had flapped and branches beaten against the window. I had pulled the sheets over my head, and soon was roaring and riding in a book.

"Whoa there, my beauties!" cried grandpa. His voice sounded very young and loud, and his tongue had powerful hooves, and he made his bedroom into a great meadow. I thought I would see if he was ill, or had set his bedclothes on fire, for my mother had said that he lit his pipe under the blankets, and had warned me to run to his help if I smelt smoke in the night. I went on tiptoe through the darkness to his bedroom door, brushing against the furniture and upsetting a candlestick with a thump. When I saw there was light in the room I felt frightened, and as I opened the door I heard grandpa shout, "Gee-up!" as loudly as a bull with a megaphone.

He was sitting straight up in bed and rocking from side to side as though the bed were on a rough road and the knotted edges of the counterpane were his reins; his invisible horses stood in a shadow beyond the bedside candle. Over a white flannel nightshirt he was wearing a red waistcoat with walnut-sized brass buttons. The overfilled bowl of his pipe smouldered along his whiskers like a little, burning hayrick on a stick. At the sight of me, his hands dropped from the reins and lay blue and quiet, the bed stopped still on a level road, he muffled his tongue into silence, and the horses drew softly up.



Matching Exercise

Match the term with the definition and then give examples from the text:

Simile	Giving an inanimate object human qualities.	
Imagery	Comparing one thing to another using 'like' or 'as'.	"as long as serpents" "squeaked like mice"
Connotation	A word which imitates sound.	
Alliteration	Use of vivid/descriptive language to create an image.	
Onomatopoeia	A meaning/description associated with a specific word.	
Personification	The repetition of a letter sound to achieve a specific affect.	



Possible Tasks

Task:

Annotate the extract from 'A Visit to Grandpa's' using the techniques included in the table.

Extended Writing Task:

Discuss how effectively Dylan Thomas creates description in his writing.

You could possibly use the following as an opening:

The descriptive writing that Thomas uses in the piece is evocative and uses techniques effectively to create a sense of atmosphere and the anecdotal descriptions allow for Thomas to present his experience with realism.

Descriptive Writing Task:

Write your own description of a person you know well. Your aim is to describe the person vividly so that your reader will get an accurate impression of their appearance and personality.

Remember to try out some of Dylan Thomas' techniques in your writing.