

Mother

"singing Mexican songs
one phrase at a time ..."

Father

"... strummed the guitar
or picked the melody
with quick fingertips ..."

Maestro Pat Mora

Sound is very important to poetry. The words in this poem were chosen both for their musical effect and for their meaning.

He hears her
when he bows.
Rows of hands clap
again and again he bows
5 to stage lights and upturned faces
but he hears only his mother's voice

years ago in their small home
singing Mexican songs
one phrase at a time
10 while his father strummed the guitar
or picked the melody with quick fingertips.
Both cast their music in the air
for him to snare with his strings,
songs of *lunas*¹ and *amor*²
15 learned bit by bit.
She'd nod, smile, as his bow slid
note to note, then the trio
voz,³ *guitarra*,⁴ *violin*⁵
would blend again and again
20 to the last pure note
sweet on the tongue.

Vocabulary Development: **maestro** (mis' trō) *n.* great musician
snare (snar) *v.* catch or trap

1. *lunas* (lōō' nās) *n.* Spanish for "moons."
2. *amor* (ā mōr') *n.* Spanish for "love."
3. *voz* (vōs) *n.* Spanish for "voice."
4. *guitarra* (gē tār' rā) *n.* Spanish for "guitar."
5. *violin* (vē ō lēn') *n.* Spanish for "violin."

Reader's Response: Would you like to know the family described in this poem? Why or why not? because you see that they are

◆ Activate Prior Knowledge

Do you have a happy memory you like to replay in your mind? Describe it briefly.

When I was in the
beach with my
family

◆ Literary Analysis

Sound devices make a poem pleasing to listen to. **Onomatopoeia** is the use of words whose sounds suggest their meaning. Circle the word in the underlined sentence that sounds like the action it describes.



◆ Reading Check

Whom does the violinist hear when the audience applauds?

the voice of his
mother singing
Mexican songs and
his father playing
the guitar