

## 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*<sup>1</sup> and *amor*<sup>2</sup>  
15 learned bit by bit.  
She'd nod, smile, as his bow slid  
note to note, then the trio  
*voz*,<sup>3</sup> *guitarra*,<sup>4</sup> *violin*<sup>5</sup>  
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