

Sometimes an event from our childhood is unexpectedly brought to mind by a familiar and related sight, sound, or smell. Read this selection about a childhood memory and answer the questions that follow.

## Growing Tomatoes

by Alex Kuo

In 1944, when I was very young, my family lived in a huge house outside Chungking, just a stone's throw from the river that flooded every spring. We had goats, ducks, geese that chased after me, and a vegetable garden. I remember my father gathering giant tomatoes from his garden and juicing them into a large porcelain bowl on the square dining room table. I still remember the glassfuls tasting dank and dark. To this day I still cannot stand its rawness. . . .

Since I've moved to Idaho and live in my own house, I've been raising vegetable gardens in the backyard every season. Among the corn, squashes, eggplant, spinach and beet I've always saved room for a few tomato plants, even though I never eat them but give them away to friends at harvest time.

In the middle of the summer I would sometimes walk out of the house and listen to these plants grow, often flicking tiny black aphids\* from off their stems and leaves. In these moments the tangy odor of their leaves draws childhood recollections of a father dead nineteen years, images of his hands immersed in the white bowl of tomato juice from his garden, his saying *Drink it, drink it, it's only good for you, it's vitamin C.*

Tonight, at exactly my father's age in 1944 and nearly five thousand miles and fifty years from my past, I wake to hear the tomato leaves brushing gently against the back door of my house in the breeze, and soon after, the fruit bursting like blood in the burgeoning quarter moon.

\*aphids: small insects that feed on sap from plants.

"Growing Tomatoes" by Alex Kuo, from *Lipstick*, Soho Press, 2001.

1. What is the *main* idea of this selection?
- A moving to America
  - B the power of memory
  - C drudgery in his garden
  - D a guide to gardening
2. The speaker *most likely* grows tomatoes for which of the following reasons?
- A to connect with his childhood memories
  - B to make unusual beverages
  - C to have gifts to give away
  - D to juice them for their nutritional value
3. Which quotation *best* suggests the speaker's fondness for his childhood?
- A "I still remember the glassfuls tasting dank and dark."
  - B "To this day I still cannot stand its rawness . . . ."
  - C "I've always saved room for a few tomato plants,"
  - D "In these moments the tangy odor of their leaves draws childhood recollections"
4. The speaker's comparing himself to his father at the same age *best* accomplishes which of the following?
- A provides closure to this memory by connecting the past with the present
  - B contrasts the destinies of the two men by focusing on their separate types of gardens
  - C shows how the speaker's taste has changed over time
  - D suggests that he regrets leaving his boyhood home
5. Based on the tone of the selection, which of the following *best* describes the taste of tomato juice and the later memories connected with it?
- A pleasant, evoking fond memories
  - B sour, suggesting things best forgotten
  - C bittersweet, connecting with both happy and sad memories
  - D refreshing, disconnecting self from an unhappy childhood

### End of Set

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***Answers to  
English I Textual Analysis Sample Items***

<b>Passage Title</b>	<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Correct Answer</b>	<b>Thinking Skill</b>	<b>Objective Number</b>
Growing Tomatoes	1	B	Analyzing	2.01
Growing Tomatoes	2	A	Analyzing	5.01
Growing Tomatoes	3	C	Analyzing	5.01
Growing Tomatoes	4	A	Analyzing	4.02
Growing Tomatoes	5	C	Integrating	5.01