Directions: *read and analyze the poem below…*

The Whipping

*By Robert Hayden*

by [Robert Hayden](http://allpoetry.com/Robert%20Hayden)

The old woman across the way  
    is whipping the boy again  
and shouting to the neighborhood  
    her goodness and his wrongs.  
  
Wildly he crashes through elephant ears,  
    pleads in dusty zinnias,  
while she in spite of crippling fat  
    pursues and corners him.  
  
She strikes and strikes the shrilly circling  
    boy till the stick breaks  
in her hand.  His tears are rainy weather  
    to woundlike memories:  
  
My head gripped in bony vise  
    of knees, the writhing struggle  
to wrench free, the blows, the fear  
    worse than blows that hateful  
  
Words could bring, the face that I  
    no longer knew or loved . . .  
Well, it is over now, it is over,  
    and the boy sobs in his room,  
  
And the woman leans muttering against  
    a tree, exhausted, purged—  
avenged in part for lifelong hidings  
    she has had to bear.