

“The Knife” by Richard Selzer

1. What is the tone of the passage?

- A. Absurd
- B. Reverent
- C. Ironic
- D. Condescending
- E. Respectful

B is the correct answer since the author uses many words associated with religious ceremonies.

2. How would you describe the diction and style of this passage?

- A. Scholarly and Complex
- B. Cultured and Elaborate
- C. Picturesque and Flowery
- D. Precise and Deliberate
- E. Matter of fact and Emotionless

D is the correct answer because Selzer uses precise diction- the exact right word in the exact right place without extra words. The style is deliberate because of the way he expertly shifts throughout the passage.

3. The shift in point of view from first person in the first sentence to third person in the last sentence has the effect of \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. It draws the reader in “deeper still” creating a more intimate reading.
- B. It shifts the perspective to the reader emphasizing the tranquility of the scene.
- C. It creates a more authoritative approach to create a more trusting mood.
- D. It produces a sense of emotional distance, mimicking the process the surgeon must go through to settle himself before surgery
- E. It generates a more formal mood creating a didactic tone.

D is the correct answer because Selzer shifts from first person to second person to third person to show the “stillness” and “resolve” the surgeon must have in order to achieve the impersonal persona he needs to perform a successful surgery.

4. In paragraph 3, how is the speaker portrayed?

- a. opportunistic trespasser
- b. jaded, confident professional
- c. respectful, appreciative interloper
- d. creative observer

Explanation of #4:

C is the answer because there is definitely a sense that the surgeon doesn't belong there, as evidenced by "deeper still" and "secret" and "sense of trespassing." Appreciation and respect are shown through "gleaming, illuminating, sweetly vulnerable."