

Name:

Period:



## Poem Analysis:

### “When I Was Growing Up”

#### I. Prediction

Before reading the poem take a look at the poem’s title and based on the title make a prediction of what this poem will be about.

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#### II. Comprehension Questions

1. What was life like for the speaker growing up and why?
2. Why is being Chinese described as “limiting” by the speaker?
3. After reading the third stanza, what type of influence do you think the media has on young girls and why?
4. What advise would you give the speaker?

### III. Analysis:

<p><b>Tone:</b> What is the speaker's tone? How do you know?</p>	
<p><b>Mood:</b> What kind of mood does this poem create? How do you feel after reading it?</p>	
<p><b>Theme:</b> What is the theme of message of this poem?</p>	
<p>Identify as many examples of <b>figurative language</b> as you can in your poem (3 examples <i>minimum</i>).</p>	
<p>What do you <b>visualize</b> when you read this poem? Write down any images that come to mind.</p>	
<p>What <b>questions</b> do you have about the poem? What is still unclear?</p>	

## **When I Was Growing Up (Excerpt)**

I know now that once I longed to be white.  
How? you ask.  
Let me tell you the ways.

when I was growing up, people told me  
I was dark and I believed my own darkness  
in the mirror, in my soul, my own narrow vision

when I was growing up I read magazines  
and saw movies, blonde movie stars, white skin,  
sensuous lips and to be elevated, to become  
a woman, a desirable woman, I began to wear  
imaginary pale skin.

when I was growing up, I was proud  
of my English, my grammar, my spelling,  
fitting into the group of smart children,  
smart Chinese children, fitting in,  
belonging, getting in line.

when I was growing up, I hungered  
for American food, American styles  
coded: white and even to me, a child  
born of Chinese parents, being Chinese  
was feeling foreign, was limiting,  
was unAmerican.

I know now that once I longed to be white.  
How many more ways? you ask.  
Haven't I told you enough?

Nellie Wang