

# OLD MAN

Ricardo Sánchez

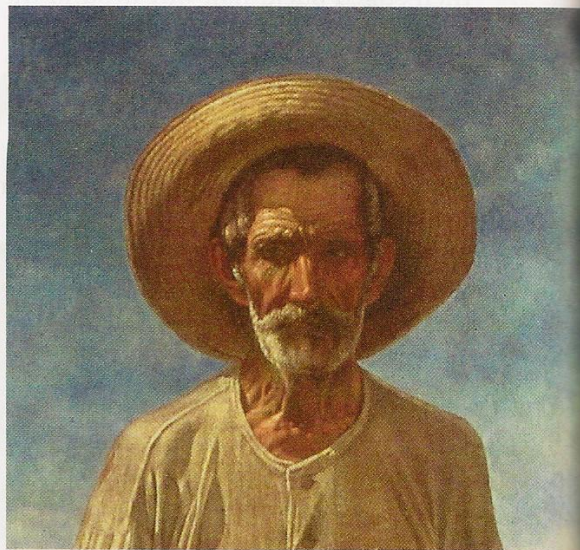
*remembrance  
(smiles/hurts sweetly)*  
October 8, 1972

old man  
with brown skin  
talking of past  
when being shepherd  
5 in utah, nevada, colorado and  
new mexico  
was life lived freely;

old man,  
grandfather,  
wise with time  
10 running rivulets on face,  
deep, rich furrows,  
each one a legacy,  
deep, rich memories of life . . .  
15 "you are indio,<sup>1</sup>  
among other things,"  
he would tell me  
during nights spent  
so long ago  
20 amidst familial gatherings  
in albuquerque . . .

old man, loved and respected,  
he would speak sometimes  
of pueblos,<sup>2</sup>  
25 san juan, santa clara,  
and even santo domingo,  
and his family, he would say,  
came from there:  
some of our blood was here,

1. **indio** (ēn' dyō) *n.* Indian; Native American.  
2. **pueblos** (pueb' lōz) *n.* here, Native American towns in central and northern New Mexico.



▲ **Critical Viewing** Does this painting convey an old man "wise with time"? Explain. **[Make a Judgment]**

**rivulets** (riv' yoo lits) *n.*  
little streams

**furrows** (fur' ōz) *n.* deep  
wrinkles

30 he would say,  
 before the coming of coronado,<sup>3</sup>  
 other of our blood  
 came with los españoles,<sup>4</sup>  
 and the mixture  
 35 was rich,  
 though often painful . . .  
 old man,  
 who knew earth  
 by its awesome aromas  
 40 and who felt  
 the heated sweetness  
 of chile verde<sup>5</sup>  
 by his supple touch,  
 gone into dust is your body  
 45 with its stoic look and resolution,  
 but your reality, old man, lives on  
 in a mindsoul touched by you . . .

Old Man . . .

3. **coronado** (kō rō nă' dō) Coronado explored what is today the American Southwest.  
 4. **los españoles** (lōs es pā nyōl' es) *n.* the Spaniards.  
 5. **chile verde** (chē' le vehr' de) *n.* green pepper.

### Literary Analysis

**Sensory Language and Imagery** How does the image in lines 9–12 appeal to one of the five senses?

**supple** (sup' əl) *adj.*  
 flexible and pliant

**stoic** (stō' ik) *adj.* calm and unbothered in spite of suffering

### Ricardo Sánchez

(1941–1995)



The poet Ricardo Sánchez was born in El Paso, Texas. His family had

roots in Spanish, Mexican, North American, and Native American cultures. Most of Sánchez's work is an exploration and celebration of his rich cultural heritage. His writing often includes both Spanish and English words. In the poem "Old Man," Sánchez offers a portrait of a grandfather who is remembered with love.

## Review and Assess

### Think About the Selection

1. **Respond:** How does Sánchez make you feel about his grandfather?
2. (a) **Recall:** What groups of ancestors did the grandfather teach the poet about? (b) **Analyze:** What feelings about their heritage did the grandfather pass on to the poet?
3. (a) **Recall:** How do you know that the grandfather is no longer living? (b) **Interpret:** Explain the meaning of the lines "but your reality, old man, lives on / in a mindsoul touched by you . . ." (c) **Generalize:** Explain how those lines could apply to older people of any culture or family.