Dramatic Poetry

Dramatic poetry is poetry where the speaker is clearly someone other than the poet. Frequently dramatic poetry is in the form of a dialogue, where more than one character speaks. Often there is also a setting and a plot.

Incident in a Rose Garden
by Donald Justice

Gardener: Sir, I encountered Death 1
Just now among our roses
Thin as a scythe he stood there.

I knew him by his pictures
He had on his black coat
Black gloves, and broad black hat.

I think he would have spoken,
Seeing his mouth stood open.
Big it was, with white teeth.

As soon as he beckoned, I ran.
I ran until I found you.
Sir, I'm quitting my job.

I want to see my sons
Once more before I die.
I want to see California.

Master: Sir, you must be that stranger
Who threatened my gardener.
This is my property, sir.

I welcome only friends here.

Death: Sir, I knew your father.
And we were friends at the end.

As for your gardener,
I did not threaten him.
Old men mistake my gestures.

I only meant to ask him
To show me to his master.
I take it you are he?

scythe (n) an implement consisting of a long, curved single-edged blade with a long bent handle, used for mowing or reaping
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1. How does the gardener recognize Death? Why does he run away?

2. Describe Death’s personality. Interpret the lines “Sir, I knew your father,/ And we were friends at the end.”

3. How is the ending of the poem ironic?

4. Give an example of each of the following in the poem.
   
   **personification** (list a line and explain how it is personification):

   **repetition**:

   **simile** (list it and explain what it means):

   **alliteration**: