Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout
Would not take the garbage out!
She’d scour the pots and scrape the pans,
Candy the yams and spice the hams,
And though her daddy would scream and shout,
She simply would not take the garbage out.
And so it piled up to the ceiling:
Coffee grounds, potato peelings,
Brown bananas, rotten peas,
Chunks of sour cottage cheese.
It filled the can, it covered the floor,
It cracked the window and blocked the door
With bacon rinds and chicken bones,
Drippy ends of ice cream cones,
Prune pits, peach pits, orange peel,
Gloppy glumps of cold oatmeal,
Pizza crusts and withered greens,
Soggy beans and tangerines,
Crusts of black burned buttered toast,
Gristly bits of beefy roasts…
The garbage rolled on down the hall,
It raised the roof, it broke the wall…
Greasy napkins, cookie crumbs,
Globs of gooey bubblegum,
Cellophane from green baloney,
Rubbery blubbery macaroni,
Peanut butter, caked and dry,
Curdled milk and crusts of pie,
Moldy melons, dried up mustard,
Eggshells mixed with lemon custard,
Cold french fries and rancid meat,
Yellow lumps of Cream of Wheat.
At last the garbage reached so high
That finally it touched the sky.
And all the neighbors moved away,
And none of her friends would come to play.
And finally Sarah Cynthia Stout said,
“OK, I’ll take the garbage out!”
But then, of course, it was too late
The garbage reached across the state,
From New York to the Golden Gate
And there, in the garbage she did hate,
Poor Sarah met an awful fate,
That I cannot right now relate
Because the hour is much too late.
But children, remember Sarah Stout
And always take the garbage out!
“Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out”

1. The poet uses *hyperbole* (exaggerated expression generally intended for humor) to humorously imitate the type of story that is meant to teach a moral. At what point in the poem does the hyperbole begin to take over? In other words, at what point does the poem begin to sound unrealistic and outrageous?

2. Shel Silverstein also uses *alliteration* (the repetition of initial consonant sounds) to help create an interesting sound pattern to the poem. List at least five examples of alliteration used in the poem.
   a. ____________________________
   b. ____________________________
   c. ____________________________
   d. ____________________________
   e. ____________________________

3. This poem is set up in one long stanza. When you examine the rhyme pattern, the stanza is mostly broken into a series of rhyming couplets (two lined verses). Identify the two lines where this pattern first becomes interrupted? ____________________________

   Why do you think Silverstein decided to change the rhyme scheme at that point?

4. How does the poet use imagery to help create a visual picture of the scene being described? What are some of the descriptions he uses that help to create sensory images for the reader?

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