

“Oranges”  
by Gary Soto

5 The first time I walked  
With a girl, I was twelve,  
Cold, and weighted down  
With two oranges in my jacket.  
December. Frost cracking  
Beneath my steps, my breath  
Before me, then gone,  
As I walked toward  
10 Her house, the one whose  
Porch light burned yellow  
Night and day, in any weather.  
A dog barked at me, until  
She came out pulling  
At her gloves, face bright  
15 With rouge. I smiled,  
Touched her shoulder, and led  
Her down the street, across  
A used car lot and a line  
Of newly planted trees,  
20 Until we were breathing  
Before a drugstore. We  
Entered, the tiny bell  
Bringing a saleslady  
Down a narrow aisle of goods.  
25 I turned to the candies  
Tiered like bleachers,  
And asked what she wanted -  
Light in her eyes, a smile  
Starting at the corners  
30 Of her mouth. I fingered  
A nickel in my pocket,  
And when she lifted a chocolate  
That cost a dime,  
I didn't say anything.  
35 I took the nickel from  
My pocket, then an orange,  
And set them quietly on  
The counter. When I looked up,  
The lady's eyes met mine,  
40 And held them, knowing  
Very well what it was all  
About.

Outside,  
A few cars hissing past,  
45 Fog hanging like old  
Coats between the trees.  
I took my girl's hand  
In mine for two blocks,  
Then released it to let  
Her unwrap the chocolate.  
51 I peeled my orange  
That was so bright against  
The gray of December  
That, from some distance,  
Someone might have thought  
55 I was making a fire in my hands.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Post Reading**

-Use line numbers in parentheses to cite evidence and examples from the poem.

Example: “The first time I walked” (Soto 1).

-Use a slash / to mark the break between lines

Example: “The first time I walked / With a girl, I was twelve” (Soto 1-2).

1) Purpose of poem:

2) What does the woman behind the counter understand?

3) Identify the similes in the poem:

4) Identify the metaphors in the poem:

5) Identify imagery (sensory details) in the poem:

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1) Purpose of poem:

- The purpose of the poem is to express the feelings of a young teenage boy who is trying to act grown up and confident as he takes a girl on a date for the first time.

2) What does the woman behind the counter understand?

- The woman behind the counter understands that the boy is trying to impress his girl, so she does not embarrass him even though he does not have enough money to pay for the chocolate. She accepts one of his oranges in addition to the nickel as payment for the chocolate, even though she probably doesn't usually accept a trade as payment. This shows her empathy for his situation.

3) Identify the similes in the poem:

“Tiered like bleachers” (Soto 26).

“Fog hanging like old / Coats between the trees” (Soto 44-45).

4) Identify the metaphors in the poem:

“I peeled my orange/ That was so bright [. . .]

Someone might have thought/ I was making a fire in my hands” (Soto 52-55).

5) Identify imagery (sensory details) in the poem:

“Frost cracking / Beneath my steps, my breath / Before me, then gone” (Soto 5-6).

“Porch light burned yellow / Night and day” (Soto 10-11).

“Face bright / With rouge” (Soto 14-15).

“Light in her eyes, a smile / Starting at the corners / Of her mouth” (Soto 28-30).

“A few cars hissing past, / Fog hanging like old / Coats between the trees” (Soto 43-45).

“I peeled my orange / That was so bright against / The gray of December” (Soto 51-53).