
Oranges

by Gary Soto

Gary Soto

Oranges

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
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
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,
Until we were breathing
Before a drugstore. We
Entered, the tiny bell
Bringing a saleslady
Down a narrow aisle of goods.
I turned to the candies
Tiered like bleachers,
And asked what she wanted -
Light in her eyes, a smile
Starting at the corners
Of her mouth. I fingered
A nickle in my pocket,
And when she lifted a chocolate
That cost a dime,
I didn't say anything.
I took the nickle from
My pocket, then an orange,
And set them quietly on
The counter. When I looked up,
The lady's eyes met mine,
And held them, knowing

Very well what it was all
About.

Outside,
A few cars hissing past,
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.
I peeled my orange
That was so bright against
The gray of December
That, from some distance,
Someone might have thought
I was making a fire in my hands.

Poetic Themes and Devices Student Response Sheet #1

After reading the poem, "Oranges" by Gary Soto, please answer the following questions.

1. The theme of the poem could best be identified as:

- a. heartbreak
- b. first love
- c. poverty
- d. winter



2. The setting of the poem is:

- a. a town
- b. a farm
- c. an apartment complex
- d. a mall

3. Which of these adjectives best describes the sales lady in the drugstore?

- a. suspicious
- b. impatient
- c. nervous
- d. generous

4. What does the poet want us to understand in the following passage?

*"The lady's eyes met mine And held them,
knowing Very well what it was all
About."*

Poetic Themes and Devices Student Response Sheet #2



5. Find one simile in the poem. Identify and explain its meaning.

6. "Oranges" contains many sensory details which enable us to understand more clearly the incident the poet is writing about. Create a graphic organizer that shows at least two words or phrases from the poem that appeal to each of the following senses: sight, sound, touch, **Smell,** + taste.

**Poetic Themes and Devices
Student Response Sheet # 4
Performance Event
Student Prompt**

Read the poem, “Oranges,” again carefully. Create a graphic organizer which shows in chronological order at least six main events that occurred during the boy’s date with the girl. On the next page, write a paragraph or more summarizing those events.

