Oranges

By Gary Soto

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 nickel in my pocket,
And when she lifted a chocolate
That cost a dime,
I didn’t say anything.

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,

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 a distance,
Someone might have thought

I was making a fire in my hands.
“Oranges” by Gary Soto

In the box below, design a graphic organizer that shows the relationship between these parts of the story: characters, setting, problem, plot, resolution

Summarize the poem using an SWBST (Somebody Wanted But So Then) statement.

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________
CITING TEXTUAL EVIDENCE: Prove the statements by stating details from the poem. Include line numbers.

1. I know it is cold outside. Why? (6 reasons)
   - (line______)........................................................................................................
   - (line______)........................................................................................................
   - (line______)........................................................................................................
   - (line______)........................................................................................................
   - (line______)........................................................................................................
   - (line______)........................................................................................................

2. I know the narrator is ashamed that he does not have enough money for the candy. Why? (3 reasons)
   - (line______)........................................................................................................
   - (line______)........................................................................................................
   - (line______)........................................................................................................

USE SLAMS RULES: Find lines of support from the poem to answer the questions below. Explain why the evidence from the poem supports your answer.

3. What does the woman behind the counter understand?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. When did the characters smile? Why could these times be important?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
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Writing Activity: Change the narrative.
What would happen if the saleslady made the boy pay? How would this affect the “date” if she did?
Write your ideas on a piece of notebook paper in prose. Include dialogue where appropriate.