

# 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.  
5 December. Frost cracking  
Beneath my steps, my breath  
Before me, then gone.  
As I walked toward  
Her house, the one whose  
10 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.

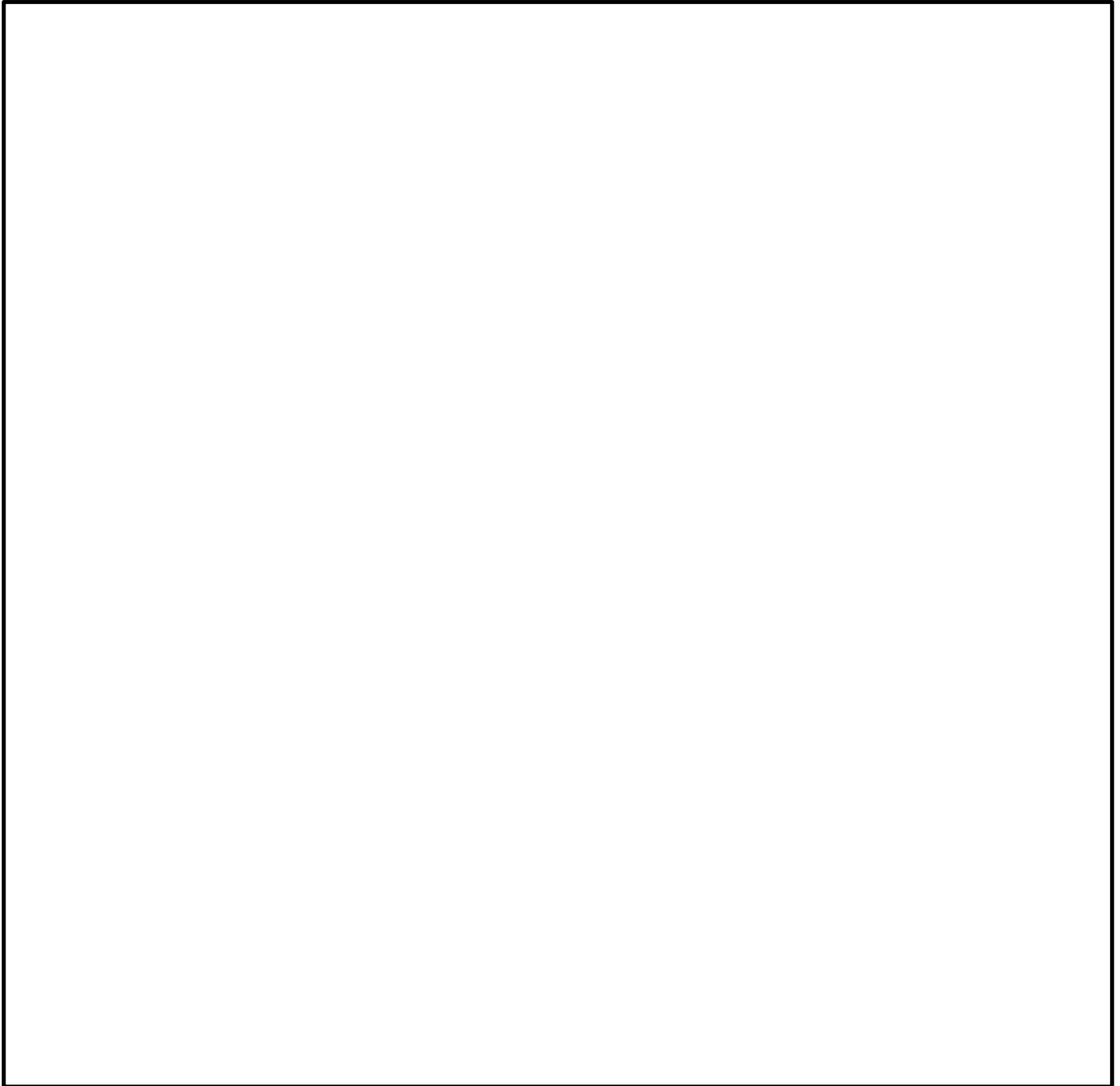
Outside

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

**“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?

---

---

---

---

---

---



**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.