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**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 some distance,   
Someone might have thought   
I was making a fire in my hands.

**Multiple Choice:** Use “Oranges” to answer the following questions

1. At the time the incident takes place, the speaker’s attitude toward the girl is—

a. romantic and eager to please

b. passionate and a bit jealous

c. affectionate but superior

d. shy and frightened

2. The imagery of the breath in lines 6-7 and the breathing in line 20 stresses—

f. the coldness of the day

g. the speaker’s nervousness

h. the speaker’s poor health

i. the girl’s hunger

3. The speaker puts the orange on the counter because—

a. he knows it will look tempting

b. he wants the girl to see how generous he is

c. he does not have another nickel

d. he knows the saleslady is fond of oranges

4. The imagery of the orange in lines 50-55 is—

f. ironic because readers would not expect a twelve-year-old to enjoy eating fruit

g. paradoxical because he still has the orange after he gave it to the saleslady

h. symbolic because it represents the brightness in the boy’s mood

i. sarcastic because the boy really wanted a chocolate, not an orange

5. “Oranges” is a narrative poem because—

a. it describes a time and place

b. it tells a story

c. it conveys the speaker’s feelings

d. it uses free verse instead of rhymed stanzas

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

**Single Selection OER--“Oranges”**

Prompt: What do the images of the porch light, the girl’s rouge and eyes, and the oranges contrasted with the other images of the poem stress about the speaker’s feelings or impressions? Use evidence from the poem to support your answer.

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**Crossover OER—“Oranges” and Romeo & Juliet**

Prompt: Explain how Romeo and speaker in the poem are similar. Use evidence from both texts to support your answer.

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