**“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 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.