**Oranges**

**By: Gary Soto**

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| 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. |