



Analyzing Poetry Using Poems from *Neighborhood Odes* Grade Six

Read the poem and analyze it by answering the questions that follow.

Ode to La Tortilla

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|------|--------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|
| | They are flutes | | Rising. Mamá |
| | When rolled, butter | (30) | Tells me to turn |
| | Dripping down my elbow | | It over, and when |
| (5) | As I stand on the | | I do, carefully, |
| | Front lawn, just eating, | | It's blistered brown. |
| | Just watching a sparrow | | I count to ten, |
| | Hop on the lawn, | (35) | <i>Uno, dos, tres...</i> |
| | His breakfast of worms | | And then snap it out |
| (10) | Beneath the green, green lawn, | | Of the pan. The tortilla |
| | Worms and a rip of | | Dances in my hands |
| | Tortilla I throw | | As I carry it |
| | At his thorny feet. | (40) | To the drainboard, |
| | I eat my tortilla, | | Where I smear it |
| (15) | Breathe in, breathe out, | | With butter, |
| | And return inside, | | The yellow ribbon of butter |
| | Wiping my oily hands | | That will drip |
| | On my knee-scrubbed jeans. | (45) | Slowly down my arm |
| | The tortillas are still warm | | When I eat on the front lawn. |
| (20) | In a dish towel, | | The sparrow will drop |
| | Warm as gloves just | | Like fruit |
| | Taken off, finger by finger. | | From the tree |
| | Mamá is rolling | (50) | To stare at me |
| | Them out. The radio | | With his glassy eyes. |
| | On the window sings, | | I will rip a piece |
| (25) | <i>El cielo es azul...</i> | | For him. He will jump |
| | I look in the black pan: | | On his food |
| | The face of the tortilla | (55) | And gargle it down, |
| | With a bubble of air | | Chirp once and fly |
| | | | Back into the wintry tree. |

by Gary Soto

Questions Over "Ode to La Tortilla"

1. What are "they" in line one?
2. Why repeat "green, green"?
3. a. Line 44 signals a shift from the present tense to _____.
b. What does this change in tense illustrate?
4. a. Define the word "gargle."

b. What do you usually think of when you hear the word "gargle"?

c. What inference can you make about the way the bird is eating the tortilla?

Identify the figurative language in the lines below.

A. simile B. metaphor C. personification

_____ 5. "They are flutes
When rolled,..."

_____ 8. "The tortilla
Dances in my hands"

_____ 6. "Warm as gloves just
Taken off, finger by finger"

_____ 9. "The yellow ribbon of butter"

_____ 7. "The face of the tortilla"

_____ 10. "The sparrow will drop
Like fruit
From the tree"