Mother to Son

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps.
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Langston Hughes
**Reading 1**

METAPHOR: ________________________________

---

**Reading 2**

EXTENDED METAPHOR: ________________________________

---

**DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POEM SENTENCE / PHRASE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s had tacks in it,”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And splinters”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And boards torn up,”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t you set down on the steps”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For classroom use only by a single teacher. Please purchase one licensure per teacher using this product.
The theme of this poem is ___________________________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT 1</th>
<th>SUPPORT 2</th>
<th>SUPPORT 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the message of this poem? How does Langston Hughes convey the message in the poem?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Oranges

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.

Gary Soto
Reading ①

POEM STATS

TITLE: ____________________________

STYLE: ____________________________

WORDS/PHRASES THAT REPEAT: ____________________________

OPENING / CLOSING LINE: ____________________________

Reading ②

DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMAGES</th>
<th>PLACES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTS</th>
<th>FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Reading 3

## Making Meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Oranges”</th>
<th>What this means…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first time I walked With a girl, I was twelve, Cold, and weighted down With two oranges in my jacket.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I peeled my orange That was so bright against The gray of December</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The poem “Oranges” is about ________________________________________.
Analysis

What does this poem say about young love?
How does Gary Soto present his message in the poem?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

Emily Dickinson
### REACT TO THE POEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The poem made me</th>
<th>The poem made me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEEL…</td>
<td>THINK…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MOOD ANALYSIS

The mood of this poem is ________________________________ .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT 1</th>
<th>SUPPORT 2</th>
<th>SUPPORT 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The message of this poem is __________________________________________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I shall not live in vain if...</th>
<th>MESSAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If I can <strong>stop one heart from breaking</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I can <strong>ease one life the aching</strong>,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or <strong>cool one pain</strong>,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or help one <strong>fainting robin Unto his nest again</strong>,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis**

What is the message of this poem?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________


Nothing Gold Can Stay

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Robert Frost
### Reading 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think the title means?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What situation is described?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your first impressions of the poem?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reading 2

**CLOSE READING**

1. What is the message in the poem?

2. What word choices help bring Frost’s subject to life?

3. What is the rhyme scheme in the poem?

4. Find example of alliteration in the poem.
### METAPHOR ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METAPHOR</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature’s first green is gold.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her hardest hue to hold.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her early leaf’s a flower;\But only so an hour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Analysis

What is the theme of “Nothing Gold Can Stay?”
How does Frost convey his message in the poem?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Abandoned Farmhouse

He was a big man, says the size of his shoes on a pile of broken dishes by the house; a tall man too, says the length of the bed in an upstairs room; and a good, God-fearing man, says the Bible with a broken back on the floor below the window, dusty with sun; but not a man for farming, say the fields cluttered with boulders and the leaky barn.

A woman lived with him, says the bedroom wall papered with lilacs and the kitchen shelves covered with oilcloth, and they had a child, says the sandbox made from a tractor tire. Money was scarce, say the jars of plum preserves and canned tomatoes sealed in the cellar hole. And the winters cold, say the rags in the window frames. It was lonely here, says the narrow country road.

Something went wrong, says the empty house in the weed-choked yard. Stones in the fields say he was not a farmer; the still-sealed jars in the cellar say she left in a nervous haste. And the child? Its toys are strewn in the yard like branches after a storm--a rubber cow, a rusty tractor with a broken plow, a doll in overalls. Something went wrong, they say.

Ted Kooser
Reading 1

Write down three details from the poem that tell you something about each of the elements below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Man</th>
<th>Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Farm/Farmhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading 2

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Find figurative language examples of the following:

PERSONIFICATION
(a human trait or action given to something that is not human)

SIMILE
(a comparison using like/as)

ALLITERATION
(the repetition of a consonant sound)
**Poet’s Words**

He was a big man, says the size of his shoes on a pile of broken dishes by the house; a tall man too, says the length of the bed in an upstairs room; and a good, God-fearing man, says the Bible with a broken back on the floor below the window, dusty with sun; but not a man for farming, say the fields cluttered with boulders and the leaky barn.

A woman lived with him, says the bedroom wall papered with lilacs and the kitchen shelves covered with oilcloth, and they had a child, says the sandbox made from a tractor tire. Money was scarce, say the jars of plum preserves and canned tomatoes sealed in the cellar hole. And the winters cold, say the rags in the window frames. It was lonely here, says the narrow country road.

Something went wrong, says the empty house in the weed-choked yard. Stones in the fields say he was not a farmer; the still-sealed jars in the cellar say she left in a nervous haste. And the child? Its toys are strewn in the yard like branches after a storm—a rubber cow, a rusty tractor with a broken plow, a doll in overalls. Something went wrong, they say.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet’s Words</th>
<th>In Your Own Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He was a big man, says the size of his shoes on a pile of broken dishes by the house; a tall man too, says the length of the bed in an upstairs room; and a good, God-fearing man, says the Bible with a broken back on the floor below the window, dusty with sun; but not a man for farming, say the fields cluttered with boulders and the leaky barn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman lived with him, says the bedroom wall papered with lilacs and the kitchen shelves covered with oilcloth, and they had a child, says the sandbox made from a tractor tire. Money was scarce, say the jars of plum preserves and canned tomatoes sealed in the cellar hole. And the winters cold, say the rags in the window frames. It was lonely here, says the narrow country road.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Something went wrong, says the empty house in the weed-choked yard. Stones in the fields say he was not a farmer; the still-sealed jars in the cellar say she left in a nervous haste. And the child? Its toys are strewn in the yard like branches after a storm—a rubber cow, a rusty tractor with a broken plow, a doll in overalls. Something went wrong, they say.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What happened in this farmhouse?

_______________________________________________________________________

What kind of event is Kooser trying to portray?

_______________________________________________________________________
Analysis

Explain how Ted Kooser portrays the aftermath of a traumatic event in the poem “Abandoned Farmhouse.”

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________