

Name: _____ Date: _____

Analyzing Poetry

Below is Rebecca Kai Dotlich's poem "What I'm Made Of." Read the poem a few times. Then answer the questions on the next page. This activity is meant to be completed in groups or as a class.

What I'm Made Of by Rebecca Kai Dotlich



Go to
Scope Online
to hear this
poem read
aloud.

- 1 Of open doors and closed ones
of rainstorms and race cars and dreams of
walking on the moon.
Of barn doors and basketball hoops
5 of maple donuts on autumn days
and bikes and guitars and dirt roads
by campsites, of visits to cities with
neon signs, I'm made of grit and brave,
hush and wind, of rockets and robots
10 and snowforts, of fishing poles
and beach lights and pines near
bridges and old Cedar Road.
I'm made of broken and craggy,
of riddle and map and Highway 10,
15 of fist bumps and scoreboards.
Of struggles with spelling
and genius with numbers,
of iron and snowfall and wonder.

Directions: Work with your group to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers!

Note: To keep things simple, we refer to the speaker as "she" in this activity—but the speaker is not necessarily female.

People usually don't use phrases that start with the word *of* without giving a bit more information to let you know what they are talking about. For example, someone might say, "The hallway was full of open doors and closed ones," but they wouldn't walk up to you and just say, "Of open doors and closed ones." You wouldn't understand what they were talking about.

In this poem, the speaker does use phrases starting with *of*. You can figure out what the speaker means by looking at other parts of the poem.

1 What two words could the speaker add to the beginning of line 1 and to other places where an *of* phrase is used if she wanted to turn those phrases into complete sentences?

2 Explain how you figured out the answer to question 1.

Now let's look at the kinds of things that the speaker says she is made of.

3 Find at least two words or phrases in the poem that refer to **weather**. List them here:

4 Find at least three words or phrases in the poem that make you think of **places**. List them here:

5 Find at least one word or phrase in the poem that describes a **sound**. Write it here:

6 Find at least six words or phrases that give you a clue about **activities or hobbies** that the speaker enjoys. List them here:

7 Find the lines in the poem that tell you one of the speaker's **strengths** and one of her **weaknesses**. Write them here:

8 Find the place where the speaker reveals one of her **goals**. Write what she says here:

Now let's consider the meaning of certain lines in the poem.

9 In line 1, the speaker says that she is made "of open doors and closed ones." What might she mean? Are the doors a metaphor for something?

10 In line 14, the speaker says she is made "of riddle and map." What might she mean?

11 In line 18, the speaker says she is made "of iron." What might she mean?

12 Also in line 18, the speaker says she is made "of snowfall." What images, qualities, or emotions does *snowfall* make you think of? Are they similar to or different from the qualities or emotions you associate with iron?

13 Now think about the very last word in the poem: *wonder*. What kind of word is *wonder*? What do you think the speaker means when she says she is made of wonder?

One last question:

14 Why or how do you think the speaker chose the particular things that she names in this poem? For example, why might the speaker have listed guitars rather than some other objects in her life—socks or pencils or books? Why might the speaker have named Highway 10 rather than some other road?