

Joanne Case
3rd Grade
Poem — Carlo

Carlo walks with a white cane.
By himself.
From his apartment to the bus stop to school.
From the classroom to the bathroom and back.

He reaches for my arm in crowded places
And I lead him.
The cafeteria is a mess of growling appetites.
Both our noses know the lunch menu without looking.

Carlo pays for white spaghetti with red meat sauce, plus a yellow apple.
By himself.
He pays three dollar bills and ten cents—a dime.
He knows dimes have bumpy edges and are smaller than pennies.
He can feel which side has the face.

Outside in the sun, we skip, kick, build.
Carlo is the line leader when it's time to come inside.
Sasha can't sneak away; Carlo hears her shoes scrape the gravel.

Carlo can do everything except see.

No windows down in our basement classroom to warn us of the storm.
When thunder explodes and wind hammers hail nails,
The light bulbs fade, and the room goes dark.
I open my eyes wide, but the black seems blacker.
Though I shake with worry and helplessness, I try to be brave for Carlo.

But Carlo says we're in his world now.
I reach for his arm and he leads me, he leads everyone.
By himself.
Out the door, down the hall, through the gym, up the stairs,
Out of our fears, up to the gray light of the storm.
Through his world for two minutes,
Back into ours.

Back into comfort, now a little bit wiser.

Lexile: 600

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Which phrase from the poem would make the best title?

- a. Be brave for Carlo
- b. Carlo walks with a white cane
- c. **Carlo can do everything except see**

How did Carlo feel during when the lights went out?

- a. **comfortable and kind**
- b. amazed and amused
- c. worried and tired

What is the main reason the author describes Carlo paying for his lunch?

- a. To give an example of Carlo needing help
- b. To explain how Carlo decided what to eat
- c. **To show how Carlo uses his sense of touch**

According to the poem, Carlo uses his sense of hearing mostly _____.

- a. at lunch in the cafeteria
- b. **outside in the school yard**
- c. in the basement classroom

Which room do the students walk through during the storm?

- a. **gym**
- b. cafeteria
- c. storage room

The poem is told from the point of view of _____.

- a. Carlo
- b. **Carlo's friend**
- c. a narrator

How does Carlo get to school?

- a. He is dropped off in front of the school.
- b. **He catches and rides the bus alone.**
- c. He is led by a friend in a large group.

The second last line of the poem reads: "Back into **ours**." What is meant by "ours"?

- a. **our world of sight**
- b. our school
- c. our fear of the dark