

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## SOCRATIC CIRCLE "On Turning Ten" by Billy Collins

READ the poem below as many times as you need.

On the poetry side:

1. Circle any words you do not know
2. Underline words or phrases that pop out at you

On the blank side:

1. Write down next to each paragraph what you think the author is trying to say

The whole idea of it makes me feel  
like I'm coming down with something,  
something worse than any stomach ache  
or the headaches I get from reading in bad  
light—a kind of measles of the spirit,  
a mumps of the psyche,  
a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.

You tell me it is too early to be looking back,  
but that is because you have forgotten  
the perfect simplicity of being one  
and the beautiful complexity introduced by  
two.

But I can lie on my bed and remember every  
digit.

At four I was an Arabian wizard.

I could make myself invisible  
by drinking a glass of milk a certain way.

At seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince.

But now I am mostly at the window  
watching the late afternoon light.

Back then it never fell so solemnly  
against the side of my tree house,  
and my bicycle never leaned against the  
garage

as it does today,  
all the dark blue speed drained out of it.

This is the beginning of sadness, I say to  
myself,  
as I walk through the universe in my sneakers.  
It is time to say good-bye to my imaginary  
friends,  
time to turn the first big number.

It seems only yesterday I used to believe  
there was nothing under my skin but light.  
If you cut me I could shine.

But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life,  
I skin my knees. I bleed.