



A Summer Life

Gary Soto

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Gary Soto writes that when he was five what I knew best was at ground level. In this lively collection of short essays, Soto takes his listener to a ground-level perspective, recreating in vivid detail the sights, sounds, smells, and textures he knew growing up in his Fresno, California, neighborhood. The things of his boyhood tie it all together: his Buddha splashed with gold, the taps of his shoes, and the engines of sparks that lived beneath my soles, his worn tennies smelling of summer grass, asphalt, the moist sock breathing the defeat of baseball. The child's world is made up of small things—small, very important things. A respected poet and an innovator of the short essay form, Soto offers nearly snapshot-like glances of moments unique in form yet universal in content. Growing up Chicano and male, Soto gives us a rag-tag race through his neighborhood, speaking equally as well to the childhood experiences of us all. Anyone who remembers the fifties or who knows anything about growing up in the fifties will relish Soto's rich poetic descriptions. Teachers and students of writing will relish Soto's rich poetic descriptions. Teachers and students of writing will also find inspiration in these tightly knit and highly imaginative stories. Soto offers much more than humorous and poignant recollections; he wraps each memory in a poetry that lingers pleasantly in the reader's mind.

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