

An old man said he's not the father.  
Watchmen demanded to see all the papers—  
the baby cried. Sheep blocked the road.  
Three cars, a Porsche, Triumph and a Ferrari  
pulled up. Three men stepped out  
and three women, more graceful than angels.  
They asked for directions. Fingered lambs.  
Give us some money, the watchmen pleaded.  
They gave them Dior perfume, a fur coat  
and a check from the Bank of England.  
The three women stood quietly,  
glancing at the stars.  
What about that bright one?  
There was white frost.  
In the hut, the little voice fell silent.  
A Porsche, Triumph and a Ferrari  
on a trip, humming like dragonflies.  
Shepherds told the herd to move on.  
  
Is the child dead?  
Children never die.

*Translated by Nicholas Kolumban*

### Town / Gary Soto

When you looked back  
The blind whose pupils were just visible  
Under a whiteness, and yet  
Fading like twin stars,  
Opened their hands  
And you turned away.  
The town smelled of tripe  
Pulled from an ox  
And hanging—  
Smoke, fruit wrinkling  
Or bearded with gnats.  
The streets shone with rain.

After the rain  
You wore the heat like a shirt,  
You drank until your mouth  
Hung open and no longer

Bothered to shrug off  
The flies.

Back at the room  
You laid under a slow fan  
Only to get up  
And watch from the window  
A pup snap  
The ankle of a woman  
Carrying bricks. She kicked the dog  
And went on.

Again you turned away  
Afraid to think that it was night  
And along with the poor  
You would sleep with spiders,  
Dust in your throat  
And going down.

## Hoeing / Gary Soto

During March while hoeing long rows  
Of cotton  
Dirt lifted in the air  
Entering my nostrils  
And eyes  
The yellow under my fingernails  
The hoe swung  
Across my shadow chopping weeds  
And thick caterpillars  
Who shriveled  
Into rings  
And went where the wind went  
When the sun was on the left  
And against my face  
Sweat the sea  
That is still within me  
Rose and fell  
From my chin  
Touching land  
For the first time