

1975

Hoeing

Gary Soto

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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