

## **Ode to Mi Gato**

by Gary Soto

He's white  
As spilled milk,  
My cat who sleeps  
With his belly  
Turned toward  
The summer sky.  
He loves the sun,  
Its warmth like a hand.  
He loves tuna cans  
And milk cartons  
With their dribble of milk.  
He loves  
Mom when she rattles  
The bag of cat food,  
The brown nuggets  
Raining into his bowl.  
And my cat loves  
Me, because I saved  
Him from a dog,  
Because I dressed him In a hat and a cape  
For Halloween,  
Because I dangled  
A sock of chicken skin  
As he stood on his Hind legs.  
I love mi gato,  
Porque I found  
Him on the fender  
Of an abandoned car.  
He was a kitten,  
With a meow  
Like the rusty latch  
On a gate.  
I carried  
Him home in the loop  
Of my arms.  
I poured milk  
Into him, let him  
Lick chunks of  
Cheese from my palms,  
And cooked huevo  
Until his purring  
Engine kicked in

And he cuddled  
Up to my father's slippers.  
That was last year.  
This spring,  
He's excellent at sleeping  
And no good  
At hunting.  
At night  
All the other cats  
In the neighborhood  
Can see him slink  
Around the corner,  
Or jump from the tree  
Like a splash of  
Milk. We lap up  
His love and  
He laps up his welcome.

