



Nickel and Dime

Gary Soto

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"I'm outta here! I got a future!" crows Roberto Silva when he is down-sized out of his job as a security guard at a bank in Oakland. But Roberto's future isn't the one he was looking forward to. This is the 1990s, and upward mobility in the city requires resources that Roberto is short of. Before he knows it, he is living in an abandoned quonset hut and then on the street, where he crosses paths with poet Silver Mendez, a survivor of the 1960s whose luck has run out, and Gus Hernandez, a compadre from his days at the bank. The ups and downs of the lives of men who are always looking for a way to earn a cup of coffee with plenty of sugar and cream, their desperate ingenuity, their hunger, their dauntless optimism have never been brought to life as vividly as in this sweet, sad, funny trio of interlocking stories by one of America's most original writers.

"An utterly distinct literary experience. No one writes like Gary Soto. Rather than falling into the trap of politicizing his subjectsi;½blaming Anglos, blaming the church, blaming anyone at alli;½he simply presents the lives of these three men with emphasis on the minute details, the micro-decisions, the often-perverse impulses that actually comprise so much of human existence. By doing so, he achieves universality."--Gerald Haslam



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