

# Soto essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Caroline Castro, AP Language and Composition Gary Soto Essay- A Summer Life February 3, 2012 In the well-written autobiographical narrative *A Summer Life* (1990), Gary Soto delivers an original assembly of aspects from himself as a six-year-old child. Soto asserts the scary realization of wants triumphing over what is ethical and he uses many examples of imagery, repetition and a chosen vocabulary to sketch out the ignorance that is evident in a child's mind.

Soto's purpose is to selectively illuminate feelings of morals, paranoia and imagination that play a leading role in the lives of young children in order to adequately contain the audience's attention and allow them to apply their own emotions. Given the excessive importance to detail and exquisite symbolism with angels, Soto is writing to a very diverse audience that has some sort of religious or spiritual background or knowledge and it seems he may even be reaching to engage parents' opinions on the matter. In the beginning of the narrative, Soto makes an almost instant connection to angels, depicting their presence as nearly everywhere.

Soto gives this repetition of angels as a tool to indicate his own take on religion while deceivingly making a child's perspective merely a mask. He elaborates the bond with himself and angels like a child would; using such words as "flopping". He offers only a youthful outlook on how to interpret the presence of God by using the examples of "God howling in the plumbing underneath the house..." and "I knew an apple got Eve into deep trouble..." as if he was aware of who the divine is but he isn't completely sure on how to explain God other than as he pictures God or angles.

Soto displays a series of naive gestures and vocabulary. He epitomizes guilt as being sweet, this showing his knowledge (at that age) of guilt. Soto also rudely nicknames a character, which is aware he has a pie, as Cross-Eyed Johnny. The frankness of the name is related to children's open honesty regardless if it isn't a polite flaw to call out. He also describes the grocer's head being bald and how it seemed to reflect light, this being another frank comment children commonly make, only because they are not yet experienced enough with life and people to comprehend an appropriate approach on the "abnormal". Throughout the narrative, Soto has a curious way of using symbolic mechanisms to play hand in hand with each other. On line 22-24, Soto describes a squirrel "nailing" itself high to the trunk of a tree; this could be interpreted as a crucifixion almost. When Soto elaborates on how he knows Eve had gotten into trouble because of an apple, it is echoing out his similarity and fear of choosing to steal an apple pie. When Soto denies Johnny's request to share some pie, Johnny says "Your hands are dirty." Johnny saying this could be depicted as dirty with sin.

Soto dispenses a superb personal narrative that embodies the wholeness of a guilty child, but a child none the less. He provides amazing examples of child-like reactions and words and mixes them into a close memory of himself being a regretful child that, like every other child, has sinned and has feared a punishment of some sort. He feared a more religious or orthodox punishment for his theft of a pie and he concludes his narrative with a depth of understanding (almost like a child that conquers a new task) that his sin wasn't going to be forgotten, but indeed forgiven.