



I Was Just Thinking...

"I LOVE SUNSETS," writes the young girl in Abilene, Tex. "Sometime for me would you write about sunsets? I think they're certainly one of God's great works."

They are, Stephanie. Whatever may preoccupy my mind, I have only to pass a window which frames the sun's farewell and I am lost in wonder.

At this moment, for example, I was on my way to the kitchen. I passed the particular haven which is my workroom view and was trapped in the magic meshes of the end of day. And now I have no interest at all in whether dinner becomes reality or burns in the process.

The flame of sun in clouds melts into mauve. The memory of light above it is gold and yellow and some quite elusive color I have never seen before. I will not see it again, only this once, for each sunset is like no other, as each day is never the same for any man.

And now the light is pale and old but no less lovely. The pines are dreams and the land sleeps. The heaven once blue in brilliance is tired and gentle, as though even the color of it was meant to induce rest for the weary body and solace for the tired sight. The clouds, feather-white in the morning, are soiled with use and awkward as a child who loses his grace when he falls asleep at play.

But the drama of day's decline is not yet complete, for I have learned to wait for the first star, the signal of night. It is a particularly bright star, this one, and I seem to remember I have heard something scientific about it. But I am as disinterested in the vital statistics as in my kitchen waiting.

All I know about the star is all I need to know—that it lifts my eyes to its beacon and soothes me somehow as it might if I were a lone sailor sighting the lighthouse of home.

So we sit here together, the sunset and I. One of us moves and changes and dims and passes away. The other rests unchanged and waits the beginning of the new play produced by night.

This is Longfellow's "between the dark and the daylight," but night for me will never lower. Night for me neither threatens nor forebodes nor sets upon me like a heavy curtain. Perhaps a part of the exhilaration within me is the knowledge that beyond night comes another dawn, another day. Perhaps that is a part of the enchantment, that darkness is not forever and light always lies over the far horizon.

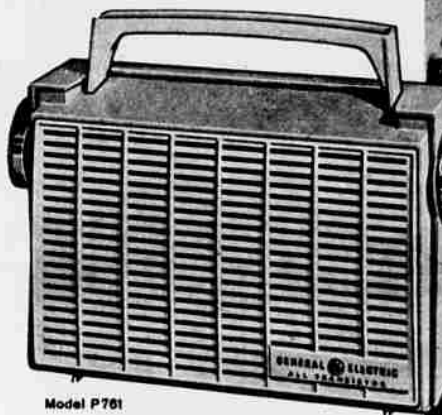
I can write no longer, for suddenly the sun remembers earth and gives it a final glory of rose and turns a gray sky blue again like an echo. And there in the branch of the young tree I see it waiting.

The shining symbol of a promise.

The first star.

Fatty Johnson

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