

# A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

ALFONSE TAPIA

"A Penny for your thoughts."

What could I answer, when, in reality, I had been thinking of absolutely nothing. I was just looking at nature; nature who has always done something to me. I cannot put my finger on it, but I can feel it vaguely with a certain weakness that causes a disengagement from the powers of description. As mysterious as night itself; like the flame glowing in the fireplace, or the tobacco smoke, lazily drifting along to nowhere. It is in that way that I watch the always vanishing 'something' that is forever there in nature.

Even as a little boy I must have felt it when I used to sit up in bed and stare at the vast darkness through my bedroom window as my elbows rested on the window sill. Usually my thoughts were worries. Most likely I had "skipped" school that day and I was concerned only with the punishment that was sure to follow if my secret were unfolded. Yet, in a way, I was happy because I felt that it was worth it. Soon, as the beauty of the night took command, my worries would gradually thin out and presently I could hear the crickets singing their same song over and over again. The tall grass would rustle and moan in the night breeze. Perhaps I would see a rabbit go merrily bouncing up and down as it dodged bits of shrubbery that rose from the damp-smelling earth. Or perhaps the moon

would be at work with her white beam, casting dim silhouettes here and there. Little images of the moon would gently twinkle in the reflection from the smooth and glassy surface of the leaves, which seemed to play with the little glimmering spots of a moonlight night. Or again, a muffled horn of a distant automobile breaking through the grave-still night where the fireflies danced, blinked, and danced again.

Then, suddenly, the slow murmur of voices coming from the porch of the house, which had been taking a back seat during this time, would be interrupted by the scraping of chairs on the tile floor, thus warning me of my mother's approach. And so, I would scamper under my sheet and make believe that I was sleeping as I should have been two hours ago. After a few clickings and shuttings of doors and windows, mother would shyly tiptoe into my room, kiss me on the forehead, tuck the sheet around me a bit cozier, and gently tiptoe out again.

Restful assurancement of the world at peace, sprinkled with the grains of sand spread by the Sandman, came upon me as the song of the crickets grew fainter and fainter; as my eyelids became heavier and heavier . . . as mysterious as the night itself; like the flame glowing in the fireplace, or the tobacco smoke, lazily drifting along to nowhere.

## LIBYA

VIRGINIA HURT

As far as one could see stretched the shimmering sands of the Sahara. The fury of the day seemed to beat upon the earth and the burning glare of the desert set

weaving heat-waves into motion above the shifting hillocks, which the scorching wind swept into being and inevitably demolished with its swaying motion.