

Gentle on my mind

It is raining this morning. Not your usual summer storm, but a nice, steady wetting of the earth. The ground has been so dry lately and the grass is brown and scorched. My zinnias have been standing for days with their tongues hanging out and looks of utter dejection upon their pretty faces. Even the leaves of my majestic oak tree were hanging limp and forlorn. But this shower, this heavenly gift, has lightened the hearts of everything. My marigolds are jumping up and down, waving their arms, and shouting at the top of their lungs. My daisies are dancing around the petunias and even the wise old oak tree is smiling in sweet content.

I like the stillness that rain always brings. The quiet and solitude. Gone for a while are the shouting children and the barking dogs. The chainsaw lies still and mute and even the traffic is passing my house on padded feet.

And in this tranquility the rain has brought, my mind has slipped into the past. I can remember, as a young boy, how I hated to wake up on Saturday morning and find it raining. I lived for the week-end baseball games and when they

Country Philosopher

Amos Arthur Holmes



were cancelled I was so terribly disappointed. And on those days when I was shut in, when the rain kept me locked in the prison of my home, it was always my mother who saved the day. She would take out her huge quiz book and we would sit at the kitchen table.

"Amos, name me three Indian tribes that start with the letter A."

"Apache, Arapaho, and Aztec."

I was such a dumb kid. I did so badly in school and I was in such desperate need of praise. After I had answered the question my mother would look at me, and say, "Amos, that's very smart of you. Do you realize there are hundreds of adults who couldn't have answered that question?"

I loved that dear, plump woman so much. I look back in awe at all the kindnesses she gave to me when I was young. To think that she would stop her housework, her canning, her ironing, just to brighten the spirits of a lonely boy on a rainy day... well... that was sort of magnificent. Wasn't it?

I can remember taking part in a Sunday School performance when the rest of the class stood petrified with fear and when I sang that hymn with great gusto. My singing wasn't very good, but it was awfully loud. And I can remember the delicious feeling that swept over me when I saw the look of pride upon my mother's face.

But the nicest, warmest, most

secure feeling in this world was when my mother tucked me in bed at night. She would adjust the covers, smile at me, kiss my forehead, and quietly leave the room.

You know, if right now I had the chance to make a wish that God would fulfill... I think that wish would be awfully selfish. I would not ask for peace on earth or the erasure of hatred and greed. I would ask that tonight when I get in bed (a fifty-five year old little boy) my mother would come into my room and bend to kiss me on my forehead.

It is still raining. I can see it pinging off my flowers and hear it falling on my roof. It is a time to fill my mind with solace and beauty, of boyhood joys and a mother's love. The skies are gray and foreboding and the humidity is dense and heavy.

And isn't it a lovely day?

Send letters to Box 348,

Leonardtown, 20650.

Letters must be signed.