

## *The Golden Fleece*

All the gold is not confined to Fort Knox, or – as the Gatlin Brothers' famous song suggests – “in a bank in the middle of Beverly Hills in somebody else's name.” A goodly portion of it was hanging above our heads for all of the citizens of Southeast Tennessee to behold this past Friday.

It was in a sunset. Not just any sunset, but one of the most magnificent solar spectacles I have ever witnessed. This heavenly display was also observed by my wife, Lola, and by Kathleen Preston as we were on the way to a local restaurant to meet Forrest Preston and Mike and Joan Carter for dinner.

I am a great admirer of sunsets, but this one was breathtaking. The clouds resembled fleece – golden fleece – stretched along a blue expanse of the western sky. Its brilliance illuminated the heart.

On the southern and northern edges, as if to frame this exquisite fabric tastefully, regal columns of clouds spouted heavenward. No traces of gold could be found within these vertical pillars. They were pure purple.

As I watched the sun sink lower behind the horizon, suddenly rays of gold seemed to project from the fleece, extending heavenward and to the landscape below. They provided gleaming banisters on which – in a fellow's mind – a person could slide through the atmosphere, descending from the hues of heaven into a sea of autumnal colors below.

And as my feet touched the earth in that imaginary journey, the lights above began to go out. The gold and the purple faded. Twilight was making its advance.

The glorious show was over, and I could only console myself with the assurance that another day would bring another sunset.

What is there about a sunset that so captivates the human spirit?

Perhaps it is because there is a little bit of art appreciation in all of us. The sky becomes a great canvas, and we watch the Master Painter at work.

Or maybe the “other-worldliness” of the sky attracts us. We grow weary of the ugliness that man has created, despoiling the forests and rivers, and we are hungry for the contrast that the arch over the earth provides.

Or very likely we see it as God's seal on the day. What each of us has done leading up to that sunset has now become part of history. It is duly recorded.

(more)

But a sunset is also the promise of another day, for if the sun sets, it shall also rise and we shall have new opportunities for achieving the goals we set for ourselves.

If life is too busy for a person to drink in the beauty of a sunset, then life is too busy, indeed.

--Beecher Hunter