

Fair at Dusk

(FRAGMENT*)

By Juan García Ponce



Once the first feeling of fear that the unexpectedness of it caused went away, when from down below they shouted up at them not to be afraid, that the problem would be fixed in a few minutes, and they had a chance to show their bravery again calming her down, promising her, even, that they wouldn't swing the car at all, they spent their time quietly enjoying the whole thing, pointing out to each other the different characteristics of all the places, the church, the trees, the rooftops and, above all, the indescribable, formidable and continuous rumor of life, of indeterminate movement, of irrepressible joy, of unconscious and total abandon that the view of the whole fair produced and that from there could be contemplated as though they were in a unique, privileged theater box, feeling simultaneously part of the audience and part of the marvelous, irreplaceable spectacle that people make

when they try to squeeze the most out of any single moment of life, as though the idea were to satisfy an unrecognizable, infinite, imperishable hunger that would push them, blindly, toward any place that offered the possibility of finding the indispensable food; suddenly, though nothing fundamental had changed at least seemingly, without being able to explain himself clearly and much less exactly why he felt happy and tranquil, he foresaw, he perceived, he intuited, he felt more than understood, that sitting there with her at his side, he was also part of that order—because it was an order, a formidable, eternal order—and as such he had nothing to fear, nor anyone to fight, and he knew—and this was actually the only thing he could know and understand—that he would not be afraid again. And then, as though a struggle suddenly ceased, he relaxed, he felt a sensation of peace and rest and, without being able to explain why, he began to look at the view peacefully, trying, without much effort, to pick out the trees of his house among all the trees, until the engine started working again and, slowly, the car descended, taking him closer to the earth, the music, the noise, the people, the pain and the joy. ■■■

* Juan García Ponce, "Feria al anochecer," *Imagen primera*, Fiction Collection (Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana, 1963), pp. 23-24.