

## Fleeting Thoughts

*Our Father which art in heaven... Twinkle twinkle little star... Five seven three sixteen sixteen  
eighty-one two... Preheat the oven to 375° then mix your dry and wet ingredients... Turn left... If you're  
happy and you know it...*

The only way to survive is to think of something else. Anything, except what you're doing. It's impossible really. Something always slips out. Your only hope is that it's so muddled by the other stuff they miss it.

His left hand was on her lower back, and his right gripped her forearm. Though she was eight months pregnant and could not move quickly, there was no choice. They could hear the pursuers--every single thought that bounced around in those government-issued heads. But, the pursuers could hear them too. They had to move. Until they were out of range, they would not be safe.

*Five times five is twenty-five... Give me liberty or... It hurts... Conjunction junction what's... I know it  
does...*

When you're a natural-born listener, this is your life. You're running. There's no alternative. They want you dead. Your existence is illegal. Live in the city, and you're harder to sound out but more accessible. Live out of the city, and it takes longer to track you, but when they do, there will be fewer thoughts to mask yours. You can never hide because your mind never stops, so you run.

Her feet were sore and her abdomen cramping, but she couldn't dwell on the pain. She had to use all her mental strength to be as absolutely thoughtless as possible. To move. Just move. They had to keep going.

*There... We the people... Woods... For God so loved...*

Have a child as a natural-born, and you've just broken two laws. They don't like that. When they find out--which, again, they always do--you'll be running even more. So why risk it? We're still human.

Orange light from the setting sun poured itself over the sleepy world. In that peaceful time between times, as the diurnal retreat before the nocturnal play, all they could hear was the screaming thoughts of their pursuers. He squeezed her arm as they pushed their way through the wooded incline. She winced as her body constricted. They kept going. The vines and branches slowed them down. It would slow down the troops, too.

*Over the hill, if only... For the wages of... Just keep swimming... Night fall...*

Their range, unaffected by topography, is about a mile in every direction. Ours is farther. But they travel in troops. Having no reason for close proximity, they stretch themselves out in long lines. This extends their range beyond ours and removes any advantage we might have had. Not that we have ever been so naïve as to consider ourselves advantaged. Prey never does.

The orange light had been swallowed by the deep purple sky. They were crawling now. She bit her lip to contain the pain. Blood dripped down her chin onto his supporting hand. They had no idea what was at the end of the forest. It was better this way. Risky, but better. Whatever they didn't know could not be overheard.

*Those who hope in the LORD... We've done nothing... Run and not grow weary... I love you...*

*Walk and not be faint... I'm sorry...*

However, even monsters have limits. They might have forfeited their humanity when they sold their souls to the cause, but they have not lost their mortality. Eventually, they stop. No one can walk forever.

The thick forest extinguished the moonlight. They moved blind, but they moved. Until the voices stopped screaming or their legs stopped responding, they would move.

*Silence... I think... Keep... Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done...*

Sleep stops us, too. What then? One listens, and the other prays to God no one dreams anything important.

END