

The posthumous opening voiceover sequence of Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* is one of the most famous monologues in movie history. "I was living in an apartment house above Franklin and Ivar," the voiceover begins.

William Holden's fateful journey — along one of the most famous roads in the state of California — turns out very badly indeed. As the film begins, his character is dead, face-down in the swimming pool of Gloria Swanson's decrepit Hollywood mansion. In this Hollywood movie about Hollywood movies, the story of how he got there manages to simultaneously illuminate the dusty nostalgic history of tinsel town, while giving us a classic allegory of failed ambition along these figurative boulevards of broken dreams.

**"The word 'voiceover' designates any bodiless voices in a film that tell stories, provide commentary, or evoke the past. When this voice has not yet been visualized — we get a special being, a kind of talking and acting shadow."**

— Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*

## **THE ROYAL ROAD** A film by Jenni Olson

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Growing up in the Midwest as a gender dysphoric tomboy — watching movies was a cherished relief from the awkward realities of daily life. Emulating the actors in my favorite classic Hollywood films, I happily acquired a new borrowed masculine persona.

Experiencing myself as a fictional character has been a mode of survival for me ever since.

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Picture two beautiful women: One in Los Angeles, and one in San Francisco.

You know, Casanova had a girl in every port across Europe.

Of course, *he* actually *had* them.

### **1. My Hollywood Love Story**

Juliet had everything I thought I wanted. She was smart, beautiful, funny... sexy. We flirted like crazy. But nothing more. That delimited intrigue was all she seemed to want — a protracted, and in a certain way satisfying, unconsummated flirtation. Did I mention she was also in a relationship, lived 600 miles away, and had even more intimacy issues than I do.

Truth be told, this all suited me fine. It was another classic odyssey of unrequited desire. A pursuit I know to be futile from the start. And a certain sad anxiety where I fear losing her even though she has never been mine to lose.

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Am I *too* available? I'm always so eager to spend time with her.

"I'll drop everything for ten minutes in your presence," I say — working the flirtatious melodrama for full effect when I call her.

I drop everything.

From my humble apartment in San Francisco's Mission District to her sunny bungalow in Los Angeles, runs the oldest road in the State of California: *El Camino Real*. I will retrace the steps of the pioneering Spanish Colonial missionary Father Junipero Serra in reverse. I will follow the Royal Road to her door.

I decide to take the train.

#

Father Junipero Serra, like his secular predecessor Christopher Columbus, has generally been glorified as a heroic figure who "settled" California by establishing the Mission system and converting the territory's previously undisturbed inhabitants to Christianity. Father Serra might also be seen as a villain — whose evangelical endeavor resulted in the subjugation of the Native Americans, the confiscation of their land and the destruction of their way of life. This 1770s West Coast decimation of the Native people parallels the genocide that the Pilgrims initiated at Plymouth Rock in the East, 150 years earlier.

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It's Friday morning at the Oakland Amtrak station. The Coast Starlight train is several hours late coming down from Sacramento due to freight traffic. I wander the waterfront at Jack London Square. The Jack London part is as awful as Fisherman's Wharf — a poorly conceived tourist trap to accommodate the masses coming to see the little cabin they found in the Yukon that Jack London supposedly once lived in. By curious logic of tourism the cabin is *here* as an attraction. He did live in Oakland for many years (but, of course, not in the log cabin).

The Port of Oakland *itself* is pure industrial beauty. A bustling expanse of ships and cranes and thousands of big boxcar containers in varying colors looking like so many enormous Legos from afar all stacked up in the harbor.

We pull out of the station, four hours late, rolling past the freight yards of West Oakland.

#

We pass alongside Monterey Road where I spot one of the roadside marker bells of El Camino Real.

The roadside bells dot the landscape from the Mission at Sonoma (up near Napa in Wine Country) all the way down to the border with Mexico.

The story of how they got there can be traced back to 1892 when a Pasadena librarian named Anna Pitcher devised a plan to erect a lasting trail of roadside milestones to mark the original historic thoroughfare.

The train proceeds south past California's ubiquitous faux Spanish Colonial Revival mini-malls with their red clay tile roofs housing Taco Bells and 7-11s. Like the bells of El Camino Real, they appear every few miles or so along the highway.

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*El Camino Real* (The Royal Road, or The King's Highway) evokes one very particular image and it's striking to think that, of course, the King of Spain never set foot on it. The king referred to was Carlos III — who envisioned and directed Spain's colonization of California starting in 1769.

*El Camino Real* is still the name of the historic route today — though centuries of progress have now shattered the 600-mile path into a fragmentary set of thoroughfares. The present day route includes sections of Highways 101 and 280 and stretches of about a half dozen other state highways as well as a wide variety of city streets.

So, picture this: It's June of 1770, just six years before the Colonies of New *England* will declare independence from Great Britain. Meanwhile, over on the West Coast (in *New Spain*) — at the behest of King Carlos III, Father Junipero Serra and Gaspar de Portolá have already journeyed North from Baja California and established the Mission and Presidio at San Diego. Now they take over Monterey, and claim California as a possession of Spain. Over the next fifty years the missionaries facilitate Spain's Northward conquest of the territory by

founding an ambitious sequence of twenty-one Missions as far North as Sonoma. The route connecting them all is *El Camino Real*.

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L.A. is so completely different from San Francisco. The air at night is warm with a cool breeze. If you walk along Sunset Boulevard you can hear the streetlights humming, and then there's the crickets. On the side streets it's peaceful and people have the windows open so you can hear what's going on inside their houses – the dishes clatter after dinner or somebody's watching *Jeopardy* on TV.

I go straight to my hotel. Flip on the TV. Turner Classic Movies is showing *The Children's Hour*.

I remember seeing Shirley MacClaine's coming out speech when I was young. It perfectly expressed my own childhood experience of simultaneously knowing and not knowing that I was queer.

She confesses to Audrey Hepburn: "There's something in you and you don't know anything about it because you don't know it's there. I couldn't call it by name before, but I know now. It's there. It's been there ever since I first knew you."

And then she hangs herself.

#

Spending time in Los Angeles I cross paths with so many women. Mostly unavailable somehow – straight, married, crazy, what have you.

I'm invigorated by the sense of possibility here. People believe good things will happen at any moment. Their openness to new opportunities reflects an unrealistically optimistic worldview, which is either infectious or geographically instilled.

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She lives alone in one of those Spanish Colonial Revival creamy romantic bungalows that were all the rage in Southern California in the 1920s.

Like Barbara Stanwyck's house in *Double Indemnity*. But smaller.

Hugging her hello I'm struck by the sensuality, the sheer addictive quality of her being. She exudes this combined sexual promise and languorous attentiveness. Her warm sun-browned skin, the smell of some tropical body lotion, the way she holds her entire body against me as we embrace — it's like heroin.

I'm smitten and adoring. She's vaguely affectionate. She conveys this unmistakable vibe of being emotionally damaged — in some way that attracts me with the idea that I could actually kiss her and make it all better.

Here's one of my self-discoveries of the moment: That I have more in common with the crazy girls I've fallen for in the past, than I ever before realized. A revelation brought on in relation to Juliet as I realize her flirtatious, seductive, relentless efforts at hooking me in are a mirror image of my own behavior.

I want people to like me. To fall in love with me. Simply because it makes me feel better. I'm always searching for the thing that will make me feel better. And so often that thing is a girl.

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It's Monday morning. I'm leaving Los Angeles on board the Coast Starlight and I feel like Katharine Hepburn in David Lean's *Summertime* except my not quite Rossano Brazzi isn't on the platform waving a gardenia but sound asleep in Los Feliz (the happy place) while I melodramatically turn over the details of yesterday's encounter with Juliet in my mind.

And this is my consolation. A story — about how nothing happened.

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## 2. The New Girl

How quickly I move on! As usual I barely know her. Ten minutes of small talk at a party and, as calculated as ever, I'm full steam ahead pursuing her.

Amidst so many women, so much chaos and noise, I somehow end up right behind her in the line for the bar.

She's so gorgeous I can hardly bear to look at her. It's a challenge for me to pay attention to what she's saying when she speaks; I'm so distracted by her beauty.

I can't help but notice her relentlessly serious expression. Her face is classical — foreboding blue eyes under a strong brow with full square lips and a set jaw that conveys even more warning than her eyes.

I'm utterly infatuated, and the ring on her finger marks her as clearly unavailable.

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We have a surreptitious Friday lunch and a walk through the streets of San Francisco together.

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She doesn't seem to care deeply about anything. Not art or politics, material possessions, hobbies. There is her interest in nature that I don't really understand. I have an ostensible interest in this topic but I'm really more interested in why it interests *her*.

I theorize that people are overwhelming to her somehow. She prefers the company of plants and animals. There's something spiritual to it as well, maybe. Something that makes her deeper than she appears to be.

Her charms are so much in her flaws. Her apparent lack of interest in her appearance: wearing unflattering clothes, not wiping the crumbs off her face. Don't ask me why this is so endearing, but it is.

In her presence it's necessary to tone down my enthusiasm lest I reveal the true extent of my interest in her. It's only on leaving her that I'm able to wallow in the details of our interactions. I cherish these aftermaths, the immediate reminiscing monologue where I tell myself everything that just happened.

There's so much to say. So much *not* to say.

If she's at home on this lazy Sunday what is she doing? Cleaning the house, doing dishes, or something at her desk? She could be in bed naked, fresh out of the shower. She could be thinking of me — though it's impossible to tell whether she ever does.

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I speculate wildly. Would there ever be any legitimate circumstance to steal a kiss from her? Some extraordinary disaster or temporary loss of sanity. A scenario involving apparent imminent death? Maybe an earthquake or some other natural catastrophe. These inconceivable melodramas punctuate my waking life.

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After a long lunch of trying to seduce her over burritos I lead her toward Mission Dolores asking how she feels about Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. You have to go through the whole chapel and museum thing before you get to the cemetery. Along the way, I give her my charming — or else tedious — jam-packed geographical history lesson outlining the colonization of New Spain, the Mexican Independence of 1821 and the Mexican-American War. We then move on for

more leisurely flirting in the cemetery (so I can show her the low angle shot set-up of Jimmy Stewart stalking Kim Novak). We make a quick dash through the gift shop, and emerge back to the harsh sunlight of the real world.

It's like coming out of a movie.

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**“American memory of the nation’s first foreign war is surprisingly dim, considering its momentous consequences... one suspects that most Americans are neither proud nor ashamed of the war but are simply oblivious to it. South of the border, it is a far different matter.”**

**— Don E. Fehrenbacher, “The Mexican War and the Conquest of California”**

When you think about the colonial origins of the United States, the first geographical aspect that comes to mind is that New England began, of course, as a British colony (hence the name “NEW England”).

The rest of the colonial geographic history of our continent has held far less prominence in our patriotic mythology, with the Westward expansion of the 1800s being attributed to simple Manifest Destiny.

**manifest destiny n.**

**The 19th-century doctrine that the United States had the right and duty to expand throughout the North American continent.**

**— The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition**

But ponder this: There were two other major European powers who had colonized large chunks of North America back in the day. *New France* was a huge territory, which included land north and south of the current Canadian border. Parts of this would eventually become known as The Louisiana Purchase. A steal when the U.S. bought it from France in 1803 for only about \$15 million dollars, this enormous acreage was a massive diagonal swath spanning the middle of the continent all the way from Louisiana up to Montana.

On the West Coast, Spain had established *New Spain*, which included: everything South of Oregon, the entire American Southwest, all of Mexico and points South. Not to mention Florida, which was eventually ceded by Spain to the U.S. in 1819.

In 1821, the Spanish colony of Mexico finally rose up and achieved independence from Spain. The territories of New Spain that would now fall under Mexican purview encompassed all of present-day Mexico and the states we now

know as: Texas, California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Wyoming, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado.

About 25 years later, in 1845, the year that Texas was annexed to the United States, President James K. Polk put forward a proposal to the Mexican government to purchase all this territory from them for approximately \$30 million dollars.

*Mexico* declined the offer.

Just a few months later the U.S. Army of Occupation invaded the — *disputed* — territory along the Texas/Mexico border, provoking Mexican forces to attack them. President Polk now had the justification he needed to declare war on Mexico.

The two-year war ultimately resulted in 13,000 US casualties, and more than 16,000 Mexican deaths.

Ohio congressman Joshua Giddings summed up the sentiments of many anti-War voices of the time, proclaiming:

**“In the murder of Mexicans upon their own soil, or in robbing them of their country, I can take no part either now or hereafter. The guilt of these crimes must rest on others. I will not participate in them.  
— Rep. Joshua Giddings, Ohio (May 13, 1846)**

Ask any Californian about the Gold Rush of 1849 and they can probably tell you several relevant facts. That same person’s historical knowledge is much less likely to extend one year back, to the State’s far more *significant* historical moment of 1848 — the year that the Mexican-American War concluded. The War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, with the Republic of Mexico ceding to the United States more than fifty percent of its territory.

U.S. historians of the War often emphasize the idea that Mexico had not been successfully governing this Northern territory or its people. Implying that the American take-over was not so much an act of outright aggression as an inevitable foregone conclusion.

While President Polk’s expansionist aggression had considerable popular support, there were also many contemporary detractors, including the young Illinois Congressman Abraham Lincoln and U.S. Army second lieutenant, Ulysses S. Grant.

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**“For myself, I was bitterly opposed to the measure, and to this day**



**regard the war which resulted, as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation... in their desire to acquire additional territory.”**

**— Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters, 1839-1865***

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It's not difficult to understand why the United States as a country would want to forget about the Mexican American War. In the ongoing climate of anti-Mexican sentiment, it's easy to see the importance of remembering.

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The modern re-romanticizing of California's Spanish Missionary era begins in the 1880s when the state's burgeoning tourism industry reconstructs this heritage into a romanticized, nostalgic past. The painful truths of conquest are successfully buried under tales of heroic missionary priests and grandly picturesque Spanish-California ranches.

These disingenuous parables may have soothed the collective conscience of California's Anglo inhabitants. They also provided a convincing fairy tale backdrop for what remains a prominent ethos of the state's cultural fabric — the idea that it is a land of pioneers and visionaries; of angels and saints.

The glorification of Mission founder Junipero Serra across the state of California is another example of this prolific mythologizing — there are scads of schools, streets, businesses and public buildings named after him and dozens of statues dotting the landscape from Mexico to Oregon. Not to mention the Junipero Serra bronze that represents the State of California in the National Statuary Hall in Washington DC. Yes, this Spanish speaking immigrant is one of our two statuary representatives there, standing alongside former California governor and U.S. President, Ronald Reagan.

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At this moment, we're standing upon the spot which was the Northern terminus of El Camino Real as Junipero Serra knew it in his lifetime (or so the historic marker tells us). This landscape looks considerably different than when Mission Dolores was founded in 1776. Except for the height of the trees, it appears very *similar* to how it looked in 1957 when it was documented in Technicolor VistaVision for one of the greatest Hollywood movies ever made.

I think of Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* as a sort of cinematic ode to nostalgia — it's a cautionary tale really, about the pull of the past and the futility of striving for things that are unreachable precisely because they only exist in the long ago.

Jimmy Stewart stars as Scottie, the retired police detective with a fear of heights. Kim Novak is the mysteriously obsessed Madeleine, with whom he falls in love. Caught up in his own travelogue of desire, Scottie follows Madeleine through the streets of San Francisco. Supposedly seeking a cure to Madeleine's strange psychological malady, they drive 90 miles down El Camino Real, to the film's tragic, pivotal location at Mission San Juan Bautista.

Was Hitchcock's choice of the name Madeleine — for one of his most memory-obsessed characters — an intentional allusion to Proust?

Madeleine's ostensible fugue state is induced by her obviously unhealthy, too-vividly experienced attraction to some very particular San Francisco history — she supposedly believes she had a previous life as the fictional Mission-era mistress Carlotta Valdez.

"Where do you go? What takes you away?" Scottie asks Madeleine as he tries to uncover the mystery of her attraction to the past.

A question we might also ask of Scottie as his obsession deepens in the latter half of the film. And ultimately of ourselves as well, as *Vertigo* succeeds in bewitching us under the same spell our protagonists endure. We too are entangled in the pull of the past, the desperate struggle against loss.

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Early in the film Scottie goes to meet his old friend Gavin Elster at his shipyard office. Out the window of the studio set behind him we see the rear-projected image of the cranes at the San Francisco Dry Docks down at Pier 70.

"The things that spell San Francisco to me are disappearing fast," says Elster, voicing a perennial lament clearly as old as the city itself.

In *Vertigo*'s original screenplay (in a lengthy reflection removed from the final shooting script) Gavin Elster gives an impassioned description of the siren lure of San Francisco and its impact on his wife.

"You know what San Francisco does to people who have never seen it before," Elster begins.

"All of it happened to Madeleine, but with such an intensity as to be almost frightening.

She was like a child come home. Everything about the city excited her; she had to walk all the hills, explore the edge of the ocean, see all the old houses and wander the old streets; and when she came upon something

unchanged, something that was as it had been, her delight was so strong, so fiercely possessive! These things were hers.”

Elster’s monologue goes on to make the claim that: “something in the city possessed her.”

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Most people develop attachments to the cities in which they live. I came to San Francisco with no special affection for it. And then, of course, I fell in love.

Like many people, I came here to reinvent myself and to find happiness. This city was built on people like me: pilgrims trying to find themselves, in a place where crazy chosen paths are a virtue and self-discovery is a civic value.

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I’ve been filming the landscapes of San Francisco since just a few years after I arrived here. In capturing these images on film, I’m engaged in a completely impossible and yet partially successful effort to stop time. I now own the landscapes that I love. I preserve them in the amber of celluloid so that I might re-experience these visions of dappled sunlight, the calm of a warm afternoon and the framing of an alley as it recedes into the distance. These images serve as a reminder of what once was and as a prompt to appreciate what now *is*.

In some kind of poetic, cinematic justice — as the city possessed Madeleine, I possess *it* in return.

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One of the main reasons I’m so attracted to landscapes and buildings is the sense that, unlike people, they tend to endure for many generations. They possess an intimacy with the past that no person, however old, can approach.

How to describe my deep spiritual belief about this? Of how the things that remain unchanged and aging all around us, in this ever-changing world, actually anchor us to our current selves. And in the aching knowledge of the old, the lost, the forgotten — can be found the moment in which we come fully alive to *this day*.

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I once went to a Tony Kushner lecture where, in the midst of singing the praises of dialectics and Socialism, he eloquently railed against the bourgeois decadence of nostalgia. Being a painfully nostalgic person, I’ve felt guilty ever since.

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*Tony Kushner Audio: "Everything new is better than everything old. 'The bad new things instead of the good old things,' wrote that great dialectical playwright, poet and theorist Bertolt Brecht. I love the rigor of that challenge. To be able to risk the Satanic temptation and a retreat backwards towards what's easy, familiar and safe — the remembered past which is always misremembered. To always be on guard against nostalgia. To be able to see the future in the bad new things."*

Aside from introducing the burden of Tony Kushner's disapproval into my life, this speech has prompted me to reflect at length and somewhat obsessively, on my aversion to the *bad new things* and my affection for the old. To this day, I suffer from a compulsion to defend my overly intense attachment to the past.

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### **3. In Defense of Nostalgia**

In the same way that outdoorsy people experience feelings of calm and wholeness from spending time in nature, there are also those of us who discover a profound serenity in the man-made environment of yesterday. All of this is not simple nostalgia, not Proust and the madeleine and not an escapist luddite rejection of forward movement into the future. But rather, it is an attempt at mindfulness. And a strategy — in this exceptionally digital age — for staying connected to the physical, analog world in which we live.

By reconnecting us to our humanity, I believe nostalgia could be the very thing that saves us.

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### **4. The Story of My Life**

Amidst my own lifelong pursuits of various women, I ponder the question: Who are my fictional brethren?

Classic literature gives us four characters who have come to define the male figure in romantic love: Lothario, Don Juan, Romeo and Casanova.

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines Lothario as: "a man whose chief interest is seducing women" — and cites the source of the name as a character in Nicholas Rowe's 1703 British play, *The Fair Penitent*. The Spaniard Don Juan, dates back to the early 1600s. Again, the character's name would become synonymous with a womanizing rogue.

Shakespeare's Italian paramour Romeo has the better reputation of these archetypal lovers, being the tragic figure with honorable romantic intentions — unlike the others who are all generally recognized as anti-heros.

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**anti-hero n**  
**somebody who is the central character in a story but who is not brave, noble, or morally good as heroes traditionally are.**

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Unlike these three fictional characters, Giacomo Casanova was a real-life 18<sup>th</sup> Century Italian writer whose legendarily provocative memoir, *The Story of My Life* enthusiastically recounts his seductions and sexual encounters with innumerable women.

Entirely written in French in the last decade of his life, the controversial 3,700 page manuscript wasn't published until 1821, and then only in a considerably edited and censored form. It wasn't until 1960 that the complete uncut French version was published, with the first complete uncensored English translation not arriving until 1966 — more than 150 years after his death.

When he was in his early sixties, his heyday having passed and reduced to serving as a librarian for a nobleman outside of Prague, Casanova became severely melancholic. Legend has it that on the advice of his doctor he began to write his memoirs and was cured of his melancholy. He claimed that in the last years of his life he spent 13 hours a day writing.

Casanova has also been hailed for his philosophical reflections and aphorisms. Perhaps anticipating the doubts of future readers over the veracity of his exploits he self-effacingly jokes:

*"I was foolish enough to write the truth. Never give way to this temptation, if it assails you."*

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What's up with my whole Casanova thing anyway? And it really is more Casanova by way of Walter Mitty, isn't it? In other words, nothing ever happens.

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**"The moon rises,  
O road of great dreams!**

**O road without end.”  
— Jules Laforgue, “Solo By Moonlight”**

I imagine California has this whole unique genus of greenery that thrives on, is actually nourished by, the exhaust of automobiles. The thick vines and dense ground-cover attached to our overpasses and freeway clover leaves are testament to this.

Highway 280 South, also know as the Junipero Serra Freeway, used to have a huge wooden sign just South of the San Francisco city limits that said: “The World’s Most Beautiful Freeway.” They took it down a few years ago.

This ash gray ribbon of road stretches North to South conveying a hundred thousand little cars — like a giant slot car track set down upon this stunning natural landscape. And the more you think about it the sadder it seems. Because, of course, it’s not the freeway that’s beautiful. Maybe someone realized this and decided to take the sign down.

#

Why do I feel this desire to confess? Is it really such a bad thing that I drive six blocks out of my way anytime I’m in her neighborhood just for that rush of excitement I get from driving past her house and for the thrilling extremely unlikely possibility that I would run into her and be able to say that I just happened to be driving past on my way to where I really was going?

Her presence in this city makes every walk to the corner store exciting.

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We start having regular get-togethers. We go to great lengths to avoid calling them dates. Coffee, a movie, a meal, a walk in the park.

I’m meeting her at that quaint French café in the Lower Haight. I will get there early.

I’ll be at a little quiet table in the corner window — immersed in *Death In Venice* — when she arrives. This will give her the opportunity to observe *me*, seemingly unguarded and vulnerable, before *I* see *her*. I will appear deeply interested in something that is not her. Giving the illusion that I actually care about anything else right now.

As she interrupts me — lost in thought — I raise my eyes to hers with a look of surprised pleasure on my face. She feels she has gotten to know me more deeply in that moment.

But that's not how it goes. She's on her cell phone when she arrives. She merely glances at me, and taps the window to let me know she's there.

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"I am waiting for you to love me," says Frank O'Hara in his poem "[The Light Comes On By Itself]".

Could there be any more precise characterization than this?

The masochism of my longing is like an end in itself.

#

William Wyler's *Roman Holiday* — starring Audrey Hepburn as the duty-bound princess prevented from pursuing her love for American journalist Gregory Peck — resembles such other classics of forbidden heterosexual love as *Brief Encounter*, *Summertime*, and even *American Beauty*. In these aching melodramas, we sense from the start that the longed for romantic connection will not be consummated. The impossibility of them ever being together becomes the point of the story.

So, that is the trick. How to construct the tale in which our two protagonists seem destined for togetherness, And to get the viewer so invested in that outcome that they will be not just emotionally moved, but satisfied in a certain perfect way, by the ultimate thwarting of that desire.

The journalist and the princess; the doctor and the married woman; the spinster and the married man; the married man and the teenage girl.

You and me.

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All I want to do is read novels and go to the movies. I crave the catharsis of narratives. Those contained portrayals of life that give us the vicarious desolation and heartbreak, inspiration and triumph we don't even know that we need.

It is in our own acts of storytelling that we must continue to try — to evolve from false bravado into true courage.

I continue to search for inspiration in the movies just like I did when I was little. I'm inordinately obsessed with the stories of others, seeking within them the key to sharing my own.

Like Madeleine I'm captivated by the past, like Scottie I have often pursued the affections of unavailable women. And like Alfred Hitchcock I want to tell you a story about love and loss and San Francisco that reveals more about me than I ever expected to say.

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**road *n.***

- 1. A way used for travelling between places.**
- 2. (figuratively) A path chosen in life.**

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**monologue *n***

- 1. a long speech given by a character in a story.**
- 2. a long speech made by one person that prevents anyone else from talking.**