

Shine Bright LLCE Cycle Terminal

File 7 On the road

Hitting the road p. 83

Young writer Sal Paradise's encounter with free-spirited Dean Moriarty marks a new turn in his life. The two friends are on a road trip from New Jersey with Dean's girlfriend, Marylou.

We all jumped to the music and agreed. The purity of the road. The white line in the middle of the highway unrolled and hugged our left front tire as if glued to our groove. Dean hunched his muscular neck, T-shirted in the winter night, and blasted¹ the car along. He insisted I drive through Baltimore for traffic practice; that was all right, except he and Marylou insisted on steering² while they kissed and fooled around³. It was crazy; the radio was on full blast. Dean beat drums on the dashboard till a great sag⁴ developed in it; I did too. The poor Hudson—the slow boat to China—was receiving her beating.

“Oh man, what kicks⁵!” yelled Dean.

Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*, 1957

1. make a very loud sound
2. *tenir le volant*
3. behave in a silly way
4. *renforcement*
5. strong feeling of excitement

A Native American point of view p. 85

The constant movement of the white emigrants was a source of trouble for the native population. Sarah Winnemucca recalls her father's warning to the Northern Piutes in the 1840s.

My father told his people his fearful dream, as he called it. He said,

"I dreamt this same thing three nights, – the very same. I saw the greatest emigration that has yet been through our country. I looked North and South and East and West, and saw nothing but dust, and I heard a great weeping¹. I saw women crying, and I also saw my men shot down by the white people. They were killing my people with something that made a great noise like thunder and lightning, and I saw the blood streaming from the mouths of my men that lay all around me. I saw it as if it was real. Oh, my dear children! You may all think it is only a dream – nevertheless, I feel that it will come to pass. And to avoid bloodshed, we must all go to the mountains during the summer, or till my father comes back from California. He will then tell us what to do. Let us keep away from the emigrant roads and stay in the mountains all summer. There are to be a great many pine-nuts² this summer, and we can lay up great supplies³ for the coming winter, and if the emigrants don't come too early, we can take a run down and fish for a month, and lay up dried fish. I know we can dry a great many in a month, and young men can go into the valleys on hunting excursions, and kill as many rabbits as they can. In that way we can live in the mountains all summer and all winter too."

Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life among the Piutes: their Wrongs and Claims*, 1883

1. crying 2. pignons 3. provisions

Escaping the Dust Bowl p. 86

Set during the 1930s, the Joads are driven from their farm in Oklahoma by the “Dust Bowl” and set out for California on Route 66 along with thousands of other poor families in the hope of finding jobs, land and a better future.

Chapter 13

Al drove in and nosed the Hudson¹ up to the hose. As they pulled in, a stout man, red of face and arms, got up from a chair behind the gas pumps and moved toward them. [...] He strolled toward the truck, looking truculent² and stern.

“You folks aim to buy anything? Gasoline or stuff?” he asked.

Al was out already, unscrewing³ the steaming radiator cap⁴ with the tips of his fingers, jerking his hand away to escape the spurt⁵ when the cap should come loose.

“Need some gas, mister.”

“Got any money?”

“Sure. Think we’re beggin’?”

The truculence left the fat man’s face. “Well, that’s all right, folks. He’p yourself to water.” And he hastened to explain. “Road is full a people, come in, use water, dirty up the toilet, an’ then, by God, they’ll steal stuff an’ don’t buy nothin’. Got no money to buy with. Come beggin’ a gallon gas to move on.”

Chapter 17

Two hundred and fifty thousand people over the road. Fifty thousand old cars—wounded, steaming. Wrecks along the road, abandoned. Well, what happened to them? What happened to the folks in that car? Did they walk? Where are they? Where does the courage come from? Where does the terrible faith come from?

[...] The people in flight from the terror behind— strange things happen to them, some bitterly cruel and some so beautiful that the faith is retired forever.

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, 1939

1. car 2. aggressive 3. dévisser 4. *bouchon du radiateur* 5. giclement

How Americans fell in love with taking road trips p. 87

Although still new to the American scene by 1920, the road trip thus had begun to take on a shape familiar to modern eyes. Above all, the automobile was assuming a dominant role in popular recreation as more and more Americans incorporated it into their visions of recreation and leisure. As costs fell and reliability¹ increased, as the successful outings of the few began to inspire the many, and as the thrill of this new technology spread through an ever-wider range of the populace, motoring for pleasure insinuated itself as a notion in the minds of many Americans. Indeed, less than a decade after the turn of the 20th century, author William F. Dix could assert that the automobile had become nothing less than a “vacation agent” for motor-savvy² Americans as it “opens up the countryside to the city dweller, [and holds out the promise of] great national highways stretching from ocean to ocean and from North to South.” Over those highways, he continued, “would sweep endless processions of light, graceful, and inexpensive vehicles... carrying rich and poor alike into a better understanding of nature and teaching them the pure and refreshing beauties of the country.”

Peter J. Blodgett, *Time*, 2015

1. *fiabilité* 2. knowledgeable about cars

The making of *The Straight Story* p. 88

In 1994, an elderly man named Alvin Straight rode a lawnmower¹ 300 miles across the Midwest of America to visit his ailing² brother. It was a slow, uneventful journey, which took six weeks. Of all film-makers, David Lynch seemed the least likely to be attracted to such a tale. [...] So how did he come to direct the spiritually profound road movie *The Straight Story* (1999)? For that, we have to thank Mary Sweeney, his longtime editor, producer, and thenpartner.

Having not spoken to [his brother] for almost a decade, Straight wanted to make peace. But there was a stumbling block: because of his failing eyesight, Straight no longer had a driver's license, and he didn't trust public transport. So, instead, he hitched a homemade 10-foot-trailer to his rickety³ old Airens lawn tractor, and set off on the open road.

Sweeney remembers the story resonating on a personal level. "Growing up in Wisconsin," she tells me down the phone, "I easily connected with that kind of stoic, non-verbal, stubborn, idiosyncratic⁴ American character.

The film's an allegory insomuch as the people Straight encounters, from a teenage hitchhiker early on to a fellow Second World War veteran towards the end, reflect the passage of time.

Patrick Smith, *The Daily Telegraph*, 2017

1. tondeuse 2. ill 3. branlant 4. peculiar

Of Mice and men p. 90-91

George Milton and Lennie Small are two migrant ranch workers, who move from place to place in search of new job opportunities during the Great Depression in the United States. They are on the banks of the Salinas River, not far from Soledad, in California.

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up the hills toward the top. On the sand banks the rabbits sat as quietly as little gray, sculptured stones. And then from the direction of the state highway came the sound of footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves. The rabbits hurried noiselessly for cover. A stilted¹ heron labored up into the air and pounded down river. For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.

They had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other. Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons. Both wore black, shapeless hats and both carried tight blanket rolls slung over their shoulders. The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features².

Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping³ shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely. The first man stopped short in the clearing, and the follower nearly ran over him. He took off his hat and wiped the sweat-band with his forefinger and snapped the moisture off. His huge companion dropped his blankets and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse. The small man stepped nervously beside him.

"Lennie!" he said sharply. "Lennie, for God' sakes don't drink so much." Lennie continued to snort into the pool. The small man leaned over and shook him by the shoulder. "Lennie. You gonna be sick like you was last night."

Lennie dipped his whole head under, hat and all, and then he sat up on the bank and his hat dripped down on his blue coat and ran down his back. “Tha’s good,” he said. “You drink some, George. You take a good big drink.” He smiled happily.

George unslung his bindle⁴ and dropped it gently on the bank. “I ain’t sure it’s good water,” he said. “Looks kinda scummy.”

Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water and wiggled his fingers so the water arose in little splashes; rings widened across the pool to the other side and came back again. Lennie watched them go. “Look, George. Look what I done.”

George knelt beside the pool and drank from his hand with quick scoops. “Tastes all right,” he admitted. “Don’t really seem to be running, though. You never oughta drink water when it ain’t running, Lennie,” he said hopelessly. “You’d drink out of a gutter⁵ if you was thirsty.”

He threw a scoop of water into his face and rubbed it about with his hand, under his chin and around the back of his neck. Then he re- placed his hat, pushed himself back from the river, drew up his knees and embraced them. Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly. He pushed himself back, drew up his knees, embraced them, looked over to George to see whether he had it just right. He pulled his hat down a little more over his eyes, the way George’s hat was.

George stared morosely at the water. The rims of his eyes were red with sun glare. He said angrily, “We could just as well of rode clear to the ranch if that bastard bus driver knew what he was talkin’ about. ‘Jes’ a little stretch down the highway,’ he says. ‘Jes’ a little stretch.’ God damn near four miles, that’s what it was! Didn’t wanta stop at the ranch gate, that’s what. Too God damn lazy to pull up. Wonder he isn’t too damn good to stop in Soledad at all. Kicks us out and says, ‘Jes’ a little stretch down the road.’ I bet it was more than four miles. Damn hot day.”

Lennie looked timidly over to him. “George?”

“Yeah, what ya want?”

“Where we goin’, George?”

Of Mice and men, John Steinbeck, 1937

1. guindé 2. traits 3. falling 4. bag 5. caniveau