

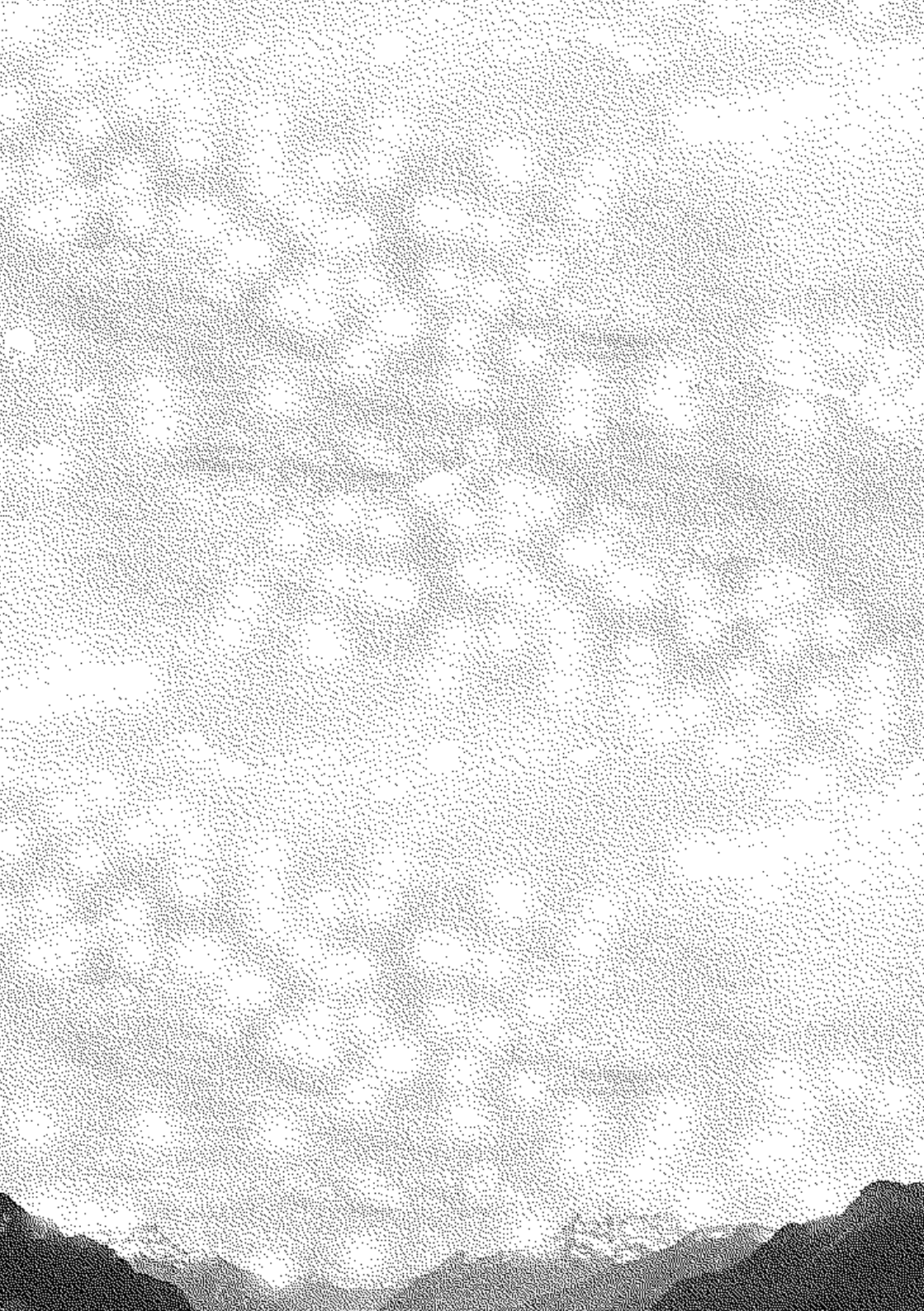
Modern Nature

**An Homage to
Derek Jarman
Part Six**

Never Stopping

**Texts by
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An echo, a dream, a story...

As his only known work of short fiction, Derek Jarman's *Through the Billboard Promised Land Without Ever Stopping* is a fever dream, a queer prophecy, a mirage – now “lost in a glitter of tar pitch, emulsion, and celluloid [dust].”[©] The story feels scorched, unraveling, unwilling to settle. As a way of tracing Jarman's legacy, this year, La Becque proposes a journey through the book's distortions, its dissonances, and its relentless pull toward the future.

The invited artists slip through the cracks, vibrating with Jarman's ghosts, tuning into static – the white-hot hum of a world in flux. Ruins whisper. Waves twist. Noise bleeds into light. We walk through the ashes of dreams, hands outstretched, brushing the edges of something unnamed, yet coming into being. As Jarman drifts between worlds, memories blur – smudged and shimmering. Through the atmosphere, sound leaks through the gaps: glitching, looping, and intensifying. Voices warp, stretch, and fracture. And silence pulses with electricity.

The performances are transmissions from the in-between: heated signals, or sonic mirages likely to vanish before you can fully catch them. In the background, Dungeness winds stir the surface of Lake Geneva and tug at the bones of history. Past crises still thrum beneath the skin of the present, and Jarman's visions endure – burning, phosphorescent. This land, this promised land, lingers just out of reach, fraying at the edges – an acid-bright afterimage. The road stretches ahead: a ribbon of light, asphalt melting in the sun, neon flickering in the rearview mirror. Driving ahead, headlights cut through the fog. There's no map, just the one drawn in the pit of our stomachs. A convoy of questions, of artists, of bodies bearing stories, wounds, and whispers. Where are we going?

The air is thick with radio static: songs from past revolutions, unsent love letters, the drone of a planet in pain. We listen. We respond. And every turn in the road is a decision. How do we carry all of this? The road doesn't run straight: every bend is a chance to swerve, to double back before pressing on. Some pull over, building rest stops, shelters, and places to gather. Others push ahead, driven by urgency, by hunger, and by the need to outrun collapse... And at the horizon, nothing is guaranteed. The land shifts and blurs. A dream still spilling forward. The only way through is to keep moving, keep listening, and keep making noise. Never stopping.



Somewhere along a salt-stung coast, you begin to move. Maybe you're walking. Maybe you're driving. The distinction blurs after a while. The horizon flickers, like it's caught in the grain of an old film, and the sky is too bright to look at directly. There's warmth in the air, but it doesn't seem to come from the sun – it feels more like memory. A kind of fever. The road ahead ripples with heat. There's no map. No clear destination. Just a sense that forward is the only direction that still makes sense.

As the car hums beneath you, the radio catches static and scraps of voices, half-lost in transmission. One of them sounds like Derek Jarman. You catch fragments: something about a promised land, something about drifting.

Then, the billboard: blank, then bright, then gone. You pass it before you can figure out what it was.

That's when the story begins. Not with arrival, but with motion. Legacy doesn't unfold in order. Memory doesn't wait to be understood. And nothing here is fixed.

From now on, you're inside.
Keep going.

Chapter I

Pictures from the Billboard

Will Ballantyne-Reid

An Echo, a Dream, a Story

The first place you arrive isn't a city, or a room, or even a place. It feels like a desk slowly reverting to its origins – wood becoming tree again, the scent of grass rising through the grain, as if the surface had been shaped not just by design, but by the memory of hands that once imagined it. It's scattered with images from places that feel familiar. A garden with no beginning.

The lake is still humming behind you when the path curves unexpectedly and brings you here, though it isn't clear how. You barely have time to take it in before Will appears, already smiling, halfway across the room to greet you. Not rushing, just bright. Everything about them shimmers with welcome. They carry the energy of a kid who's just discovered a new room in a house they thought they knew.

"Hi! I was wondering when you'd get here," they say, like you were old friends, long delayed but finally back on track. "You're just in time. It's all unfolding."

They gesture to the chairs, and you step closer and sit. It isn't a workspace so much as a constellation of fragments: postcards, scribbled notes, old photos, texts, plants everywhere... A thin red thread winds loosely through it all, more suggestion than structure.

Will hands you a zine. Not with ceremony, but a quiet kind of pride.

"It's not finished," they say quickly, though their glow says otherwise. "But it's already working. It listens. It changes depending on who's holding it."

You open it. The wind shifts slightly.

Inside: a lighthouse blinking at the edge of a page. A photo of a fogged-up train window. A handwritten note: An echo, a dream, a story.

You don't read the zine so much as move through it, like rummaging through a box of traces: a note in the margin, a blurry photograph, a pebble from

Dungeness. Will's publication doesn't narrate; it maps. Not with clarity, but with feeling. This is pilgrimage as porous research. Through images and fragments, the zine drifts across terrain touched by Jarman or Will: Prospect Cottage, Paris, New York, a moment of stillness at La Becque. It doesn't document. It plays back.

"Some things come back," Will says, as if answering your thought. "Just not always how you expect."

And they're right – something has shifted. As you turn the pages, things realign. The layout has moved. Certain words stand out. Certain images pulse.

"It's part dream kit," Will says. "Part portal. Part... I don't know. Invitation?"

They beam, then soften.

"I mean, it's just research. But research that breathes. You know?"

You do.

Vanessa arrives then, not dramatically, just naturally, like someone stepping into a scene already underway. Their conversation begins before you can track it: soft, fast, full of sparks. They don't speak to perform, but to exchange. Everything they say deepens the other's thought. They talk about legacy not as something preserved, but something passed on. About the billboard as both invitation and threshold.

Jarman hovers of course – not directly, but as texture. A shared language. You can feel him in the margins, smiling crookedly at the paper arrangement, as if he knew exactly what game was being played.

When it's time to go, Will hands you a small stone.

"This one's buzzing," they say, almost sheepish. "For when you need grounding. Or when you want to skip ahead a few steps."

The stone is warm. It vibrates faintly. You slip it into your pocket. Your chest opens just slightly, like the tempo of the world has shifted into a better key.

And just like that, the scene blurs and dissolves. The light bends sideways. The ground tilts forward.

And you're moving again.

Chapter II

Blue Belly

Erell Le Pape & Loréleï Nelle

Tremblements, ou Derek dans la baleine

You turn down a side path and stumble into signal interference. Erell and Loréleï are already there, kneeling beside a dream that won't settle. You don't know how this is possible, exactly, but you've landed inside a whale's belly. The air is salty, fishy, and thick, full of looped voices. Sound turns to vapor.

They're speaking in tongues, or maybe just humming. Their hands move like time-lapse flowers, opening and closing. The space they've built is soft and unstable. Threads of light tether the corners together. It really does feel like falling into someone else's dream.

As you watch, gestures repeat, distort, loop again. Images refuse to hold. Time buckles.

They're tuning into histories that were never broadcast, into futures that exist only in feedback. What you see may not be what's happening. What you hear might already be gone.

As their hands reach into the static, pulling out rhythms, Erell whispers something into a speaker. Loréleï answers with a mirror. Together, they're building a ritual for the incomplete. A celebration of failure. A funeral for endings that never end.

"Tu m'as dit l'importance de co-deuiller. Avant ou après l'amour, I don't remember exactly," Loréleï whispers.

Erell smiles. Or cries. Or both. She knows exactly how to answer that.

Their work is a ritual of distortion. They stitch soundscapes from broken memories, set ceremonies inside broken hearts. A song stutters overhead: one frame of fire, one of water, one of a hand reaching for nothing. You think you see yourself in it. Or Jarman. Or someone else entirely.

They gather what doesn't fit, what resists language. They dive into the heart of a dream, where everything is blurred, raw, beautiful, and half-erased.

That's where they are, both of them.

Inside.

Inside the belly of the blue.

Inside the belly of grief.

You sit with them, inside their vision, for a long time. Time bends. Nothing resolves. And when you leave, you feel changed – or maybe disassembled. On your way out, they hand you a vial. "Plant this in silence," they say.

You walk, barefoot now, into a clearing where something is already growing. In this space, rituals glitch. The body becomes a transmitter. From their signal, blooming, a cello begins to sound in the distance.

The next chapter is already unfolding.

Chapter III

The Garden's Instrument

Damsel Elysium

Ballet for Instruments

The pace shifts. The air thickens with scent – green things, turned earth, the faint tang of resin. Light falls differently here. Slower somehow. The edges of things – leaves, stones, your own hands – feel more textured, more alive.

The trees part into a clearing.

At first, you think you're looking at a sculpture. But then it moves, slowly, with intention. A shoulder turns. A bow lifts.

And there they are: Damsel Elysium, folded into a cello like they grew from the same seed.

The cello sounds like breath. There's no melody you can follow, just a murmur in your ribs, a hum at the base of your throat. The music feels like it's coming from underground.

Their body moves in sync with the instrument: slow, repetitive, precise. You can't tell where the dance ends and the sound begins.

Strips of Super-8 film hang from the sky. They twist in the breeze, catching flashes of sunlight; grainy images, flickering and fading. You catch glimpses: a hand submerged in water, a face turned skyward, a flame. But one frame seems to loop: a boy walking backwards into the sea. You're not sure if you're watching or remembering it.

The space around you has changed. Even the air feels like it's listening.

Damsel Elysium opens their eyes and looks your way.
"You followed the fire," they say.

You nod. It's the only answer that makes sense.

They reach into a cluster of flowers and pull out a string, frayed and faintly glowing, and offer it to you without explanation.

"When this vibrates," they say, "don't resist it. It's how the land remembers itself." You tie it around your wrist. It tightens, gently. Not binding, just anchoring.

You sit in the grass.
And the music goes on.

The string Damsel Elysium gave you thrums louder with every step you take. It pulls you through bramble and signal drop, into a vast room carved from shadow. There are no walls, only edges that refuse to cohere.

Then, without warning, low frequencies crack the floor beneath you. You feel them in your teeth.

Chapter IV

Ghost Frequency

Nkisi & Tiran Willemse

A Work in Process

They're already there, waiting. Nkisi stands like a conductor wired into the grid itself, eyes closed, head tilted slightly, listening to frequencies beyond human range. Tiran moves in circles. Never repeating. Just orbiting. His body is both a warning and an invitation.

The air between them feels stretched, like it might tear.

A beat drops, but it doesn't land. It fractures. Something outside the spectrum cracks open. The sound grows teeth.

Ghosts begin to arrive, not as apparitions, but as pressure. You feel them at the base of your skull. Every ancestral echo, every untranslatable word, every frequency that was once outlawed – they're here, dancing.

Tiran's movements defy prediction: too fast, then still. He flickers between styles like a radio scanning channels – club, ritual, refusal, collapse. Nkisi summons layers from nothing: rhythms that spin like galaxies, then vanish mid-spin. There's no stage. Just a trembling membrane between what is lost and what can still be summoned.

You try to speak, but your mouth fills with sound.

Above you, the sky acts like a neon sigil – hovering in the dark. Not a word. Not a symbol. A force. You reach for it, and your fingers burn. Watching them feels like learning a new vocabulary, written in vibration. A sentence that could only be danced. A name without vowels.

When the sound drops, Tiran steps forward and places a symbol on your chest. Nkisi whispers:

"This is the frequency of departure."

You carry it like fire.

In silence, you stagger to the threshold. Your body feels rearranged. Your shadow lags behind, still pulsing.

The ground softens again into grass. Your breathing syncs with the rhythm of the lake. Somewhere nearby, something is singing. Not a voice, exactly – more like a pattern. A familiar presence. The garden has found its frequency.

And without knowing why, you step toward it.

Chapter V

Hot spots

Aho Ssan & ASIA

100 Soleils

You emerge into a city, but nothing is stable. Buildings bend toward you. Traffic moves like breath. Neon signs blink in Morse code you almost understand.

Aho Ssan stands at an intersection, sculpting bass from passing cars. His fingers shape the air like clay. Asia walks beside him, her violin a ribbon of gold sound. Her bow draws lines through fog and smoke. Together, they fold the noise of the world into a poem.

Their music isn't about beauty. It is beauty, unfolded from dust, rebuilt from ruin.

They lead you through alleyways of feedback and melody. They pause beside a bus stop and play a lullaby to the machines. In their city, sound is sacred. Intimacy is infrastructure.

They hand you a mirror, its surface fogged with breath. You can still feel the warmth clinging to the glass, like the mirror itself just exhaled.

"Look carefully," they say. But it's not just one voice. Both of them are speaking at the same time, from slightly different angles.

Their voices don't cancel each other out – they weave together like twin melodies in different registers. One low, steady, resonant. The other brighter, quicker, edged in light. Each sentence lands whole, but the meaning lives in the space between them.

"You might not recognize yourself," says one.
"But that doesn't mean it's not you," says the other.

In the mirror, your reflection shifts. Not distorted, just different. Like a memory from someone else's future. You glimpse yourself in a version of time you haven't lived yet, your face touched by something distant and warm.

Then you see a sun.

Then another.

Then a hundred.

They don't rise or fall. They surround you, slowly, silently, as if you've stepped inside the heart of a constellation. And the light – it doesn't blind. It knows. You feel seen from every angle, every age.

Your body casts no shadow. There's nowhere to hide, and you don't want to.

You slip the mirror beside the stone, the vial, the string, and the burned symbol. The bag is getting heavier.

Still, you keep walking.

Chapter VI

It Happened by Chance

Time is Away

Oracle

The final place isn't a place.

It's a silence shaped like a question. A loop folded into another loop.

You don't step into it so much as drift – like realizing too late you were already dreaming. There's no clear threshold, but somehow, you know you've crossed it. Everything is quieter here. Slower. You feel it in your bones, in the tiny muscles behind your eyes.

You can see multiple voices standing beside the apparatus like timekeepers, though they don't move like clock hands. They move like breath. Like memory adjusting its weight. The sound they conjure is soft at first. Then it widens. Bleeds. Stretches. Like a garden blooming in reverse.

Leaves curl inward with a soft crackle. Petals fold back into buds like they were never open. The air thickens with the sound of undoing: roots threading upward through the soil with a slow, resonant hum; vines retreating from trellises like old tape rewinding.

Somewhere beneath it all, a faint melody begins to surface. Familiar, but unreadable. The sound of memory being unsaid.

You lie down. The floor – or is it grass? – is cold and dry against your back. Overhead, shadows rearrange your outline. The sun folds inward, its light retreating across the ground, like time itself has turned away and the day is slowly unspooling.

And Jarman is there.
Not as a figure. Not even as a ghost.
But as temperature.

You close your eyes and see him – just once, maybe. He's barefoot beside the phallos of Dionysos, holding a few wild blue flowers, thinking of the

lions of Apollo. The third knot in the rosary of unease had warned of an early winter.

It was decades ago, or yesterday.

Jarman and some friends had once accidentally slept inside the sanctuary at Delphi, on the very ground where oracles had spoken across centuries.

The memory trembles. Or maybe it's your breath.

Then: a voice again.

On tape? In your head? From the garden? From the past?

You drift even more.

Time is Away turn the space into a prism – fractured, slow, glowing with echoes. At the end, there is no end. Just a soft return to silence. Like stepping out of light and into dusk. Before you leave, they hand you a small disc of glass: cool, translucent, rough at the edges.

"It doesn't reflect," they say, "it refracts."

You don't know what it means. But the moment you hold it, the quiet deepens.

You stand up slowly, like rising through water. Your bag pulses with the weight of every object gathered. Each one hums in its own frequency. You don't know what to do with them.

You step outside.

The road is still there, faintly glinting. The sky has split open, just a little.

The car is waiting, humming softly, as if it never stopped.

You get in. Turn the key.

The radio clicks on.

And a voice comes through the static – quiet and steady:

"There is no promised land.

There is only the promise to keep moving."

So you do.

You drive on.



The billboard never appears again – not visually. But sometimes you hear it: in the crackle of tape, in a half-forgotten line of poetry, in a drumbeat too slow to dance to. You glimpse it out of the corner of your eye. You dream of it.

Six encounters. Six stations. You carry them all now: the stone, the vial, the string, the burned mark, the mirror, the glass.

It wasn't a program. Not a sequence. But a shared field – a constellation of artists singing from the same ruptured sky. Each one holding a thread, a shard, a light.

Jarman's voice drifts through it all, not as author, but as catalyst. His legacy isn't fixed. It's a weather front. A film loop. A rite. A glitch.

And you, dear reader—
Still there?

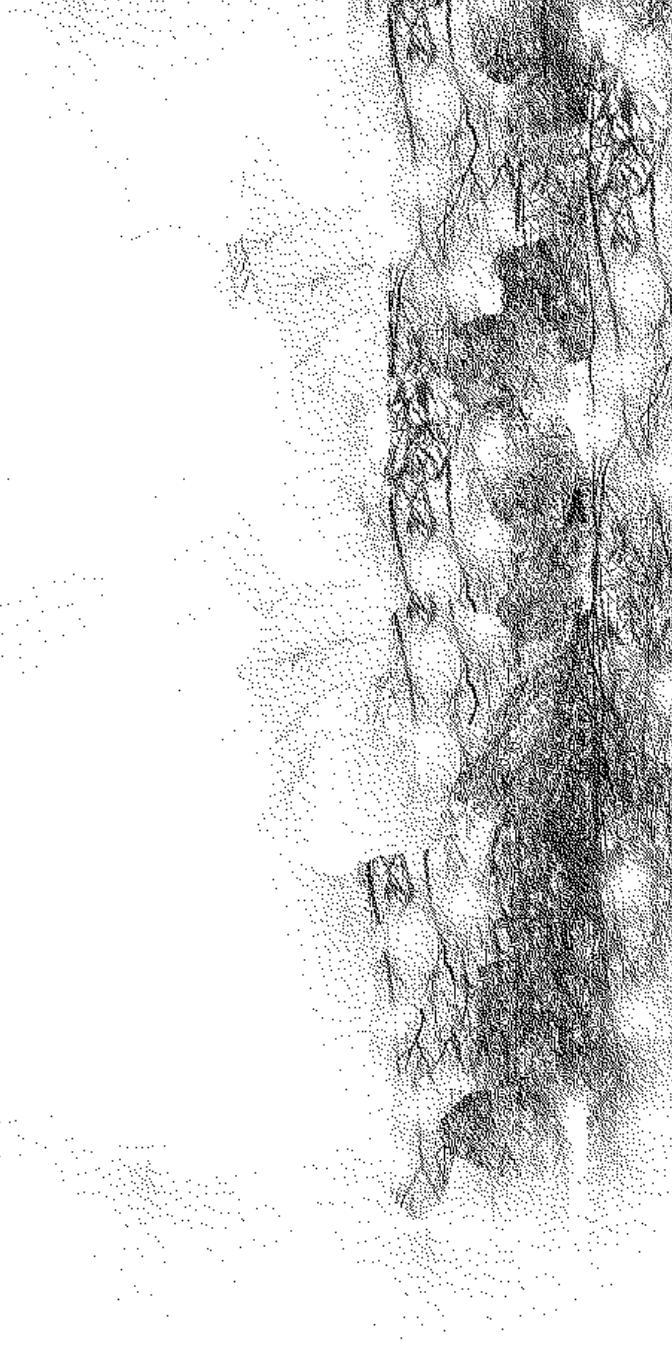
Good.

We all hum with someone else's dream.

You're not lost. You're in motion.

And the road?
Well... it never ends.





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