



Looking southwest from the “Compass” at Woodward Park in Fresno

Skating in the Winter

By Adrian Apollo

Written: December 16, 2004

Posted: May 17, 2013, 5:24 am Pacific Time

As the wobbling earth careens past a winter sun, having shaken off the multicolored leaves of nature’s earnest endeavors, so too is the wintertime and the ushering in of a new year a good time for seeking inspiration and reflecting on one’s place in the world.

From far and wide come the occasional walkers, joggers, bikers and skaters of time present, converging upon the dreamtime splendor of the park trail. The color still left in the trees calls to mind the rush of biking through the falling leaves of time past, when the glory of the time with

our Summer Love had not yet faded, preparing us, on our solitary journey, for the spiritual renewal of the trail's comforting rest stop ahead.

The frost covering the floor of the grassy plain that surrounds us glistens like snow, while the cold eastern sun slings rays of glad tidings that land softly on our face, providing a hint of welcome warmth. The stillness of the scene serves as a gentle launching pad, which propels our sentiments upward.

We soar over the sea of houses and trees, as a lonely jay escorts us back to the day when we skated with True Love. There we are, on the tennis courts at school, exchanging fingertip touches, E.T. style, for fear that the earthly gods would express displeasure.

The winds blow our memories further afield and we're back skating down a country road, then sock-footing it across a field of thistles to beat the setting sun. Coming upon a secluded airstrip, we skate down the runway to the astonishment of onlookers on the other side who, having seen our "landing," wonder whence we came. How we do sometimes feel like visitors from another place, having to navigate through the throngs of those who don't think like we do, while seeking out the few who do.

Back in time present, riding the rumbling waves of concrete of the train-chasing bike trail between the railroad tracks and Santa Fe Avenue, we reach the end of the trail — Or is it the beginning? After sidestepping our inline skates down the steep slope of Santa Fe, we slide down the service road to the depths of our wild roots on the south bank of the river.

A gleaming white swan glides down over the water in a graceful arc, then touches down to rest. We stare and wonder, "Does She know how beautiful She is?"

We're at a nexus point where the hundred-some-year northward march of the city is now greeting the river from whose bed flowed rocks that were shaped into the streets and roads that grew from the original railroad station that started it all. Playing time backwards, we see the city packing itself back up onto trains that travel backwards over the river that flows back to the glacier that rises back into the sky as snowflakes of the imagination that show us how glad we feel that that snow fell and that river flowed under those trains that gave us such abundant life.

We will carry the memories of the serendipity of our travels — the eager father in the park collecting tumbleweed for his daughter to be fashioned into "snowmen" — the hundreds of hungry geese waddling around and alongside us as we skated — the two wayfaring dogs having their day in the sun, far away from hearth and home.

Stopping by the shopping mall late in the day, the undulating blues and greens of the twilight sky in the west speak to our imagination. And after too long a silence, the beacon atop the theater is once again spinning and casting its beams of hope to those who can see them with special eyes. It's like the heartbeat of our city — a city where so much is possible — to those who know how to dream.



The author

...[converging](#) upon the dreamtime splendor of the park trail...

...There we are, on [the tennis courts](#) at school...

...then sock-footing it across [a field of thistles](#)...

...we reach the end of [the trail](#)...

...Stopping by [the shopping mall](#) late in the day...

Key terms: Lewis S. Eaton Trail, [San Joaquin River Parkway](#)

Compass signs:

[Coming and Going](#)

[An Abundance of Birds](#)

[Current Events](#)

[The Valley of Change](#)

[Here Comes the Sun](#)

[HOME](#)