

Nature Dreaming: Rediscovering California's Landscapes
Featuring David Mas Masumoto Part 1: "to feel greatly"

By

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Cast of Characters

<u>Narrator:</u>	David Wittrock
<u>Robinson Jeffers:</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>Father Serra:</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>Miguel Costanso:</u>	Dan Maloney
<u>John C. Fremont:</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>Helen Hunt Jackson:</u>	Jessica Teeter
<u>Patrick Breen:</u>	Dan Maloney
<u>Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins:</u>	Jessica Teeter
<u>William Manley:</u>	Dan Maloney
<u>Dame Shirley:</u>	Jessica Teeter
<u>Henry David Thoreau:</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>John Rollin Ridge:</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>John Muir:</u>	Dan Maloney
<u>Caroline Churchill:</u>	Jessica Teeter
<u>Mark Twain:</u>	Dan Maloney
<u>J. Smeaton Chase:</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>Thomas Jefferson:</u>	Dan Maloney

NATURE DREAMING: REDISCOVERING CALIFORNIA'S LANDSCAPES
FEATURING DAVID MAS MASUMOTO PART 1: "TO FEEL GREATLY"

Introduction

MUSIC: CAL LEGS THEME PLAYS THEN FADES OUT

NARRATOR

What is the California Dream? Is it an imaginative expression of mind and spirit? Or is it sensed in a deep contentment of body and heart? For those of us who live in the Golden State, one thing seems clear: our dreams are deeply rooted in the character of our diverse and astonishingly beautiful landscapes, a part of the natural world which, according to poet Robinson Jeffers, has dreams of its own.

JEFFERS

Robinson Jeffers, "The Beauty of Things"

. . . man you might say, is nature dreaming, but rock

And water and sky are constant--to feel

Greatly, and understand greatly, and express greatly,
the natural

Beauty, is the sole business of poetry.

NARRATOR

Welcome to Nature Dreaming: Rediscovering California's Landscapes, featuring award winning writer and organic farmer David Mas Masumoto.

I'm David Wittrock, your host for this two part series which explores how men and women have recorded their dreams of California's natural world, written of wild and rural landscapes, and explored our rightful relationships to them. Here are stories of awe and despair, stories of spiritual awakening, and stories of our persistent optimism, optimism partly rooted in our rural and agrarian dreams.

This is Part 1: "to feel greatly," stories of fresh encounters . . .

MUSIC: CAL LEGS THEME PLAYS THEN FADES OUT

California, an Edenic Paradise

NARRATOR

California--or at least one idea of California--began with a kind of dream, as a story of spectacular adventure.

Poet, novelist, and scholar Juan Velasco tells how Garci Rodriguez de Montalvo, the author of the Adventures of Esplandian, helped to invent "California."

VELASCO

The idea of California being a special place, a land of imagination; a land of where dreams can be fulfilled and realized has been there from the very beginning.

If we look at the writing, for example, of Garcia Montalvo describing California as an island that is very, very close to paradise. And describing this island filled with griffins and women warriors, black Amazons. A place that is incredibly fantastic that is filled of adventure. Garcia Montalvo was sort of the Stephen Spielberg of early 1500s. In his early writing in 1510, in the is when we see Garcia Montalvo describing this island, this place called California, where things will be better. Where things will be able to get very, very close to paradise here on earth.

There is a sense of not only of getting new land, and perhaps making yourself better or enriching yourself fast. But there is also this other side of it that has to do with creating a new community, creating paradise on earth. And California, from the very beginning is part of that dream.

NARRATOR

Long after Garci Rodriguez de Montalvo, the dream of a unique California landscape endured, but, as with much else, the dreams were often tempered by contemporary longings. Certainly this was true of the nineteenth century pioneers who came here.

Gary Noy is the Director of the Center for Sierra Nevada Studies at Sierra College.

NOY

From reading the trail journals and trail diaries of people coming here, particularly during the Gold Rush period and right afterwards, they had a vision of California and some of it was quite unique. Some of them thought that the Sierra and the Foothills was tropical, and there were palm trees not pine trees in

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NOY (cont'd)

this part of the world, but they all viewed this as a great adventure, and this landscape of possibility and opportunity; and that when they got here, not only would they find beautiful skies, and gold everywhere, and palm trees, but they'd also find a better life, and they'd find a way to reinvent themselves, and to restart their life, which in some cases was not going well.

So, when they got here, their initial reaction was often disappointment, but then you start to read in their journals and their letters and their diaries that they found something else here, and they found that it wasn't the landscape that was moving them so much as it was them - I said that wrong. Let me see if I can get this right here. What they found was that the landscape was different than they expected, but when they got here, they realized that the land was moving them in a different direction, that this was a new home. That this was a new opportunity, and that the landscape, and its beauty, and its abundance and its opportunity, was so strong, and so powerful, that it redirected their mindset, and it redirected their value system.

Many people who came here, changed their occupations, reinvented themselves; changed their viewpoint toward economic activity, or toward their family, or toward their personal ambition because the land was so powerful in changing them, in what they saw, it motivated them to go in a different way.

NARRATOR

The raw California landscape--its special character, the opportunities it presents--is very much still with us, but that landscape, rich, promising, astonishingly beautiful, is also fragile.

ShaunAnne Tangney is a scholar and poet who grew up in California. Now a professor of English at Minot State University in North Dakota, she draws on her Californian roots in her work on American natural history writing.

TANGNEY

I think there's an inherent luxury about living in California. Now, I may think that because I grew up here in the 60s and 70s, which was a very golden time to make a pun out of the golden state. We had a lot of money; I was a kid and a teenager and schools were fat with opportunity and money, and all of that stuff.

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TANGNEY (cont'd)

So maybe that's part of the reason I attach this feeling of luxury with California. But if you read the literature, even -- yes, you have to go over the Sierras and you got to eat people. There's all that hardship stuff, but it's all in the attempt that I know when I get there, it'll be fat city. Even for 90-percent of us, it isn't. But we believe in that; that idea of luxury. California's a luxurious place. The weather is luxurious. The landscape itself is luxurious.

Green is green, it's money, it's -- you know, it is. But -- okay. Inherent in the word luxury, right? Is extravagance. What's extravagance? Using things up faster than you should, wasting your material resources, that's California too.

NARRATOR

In much of California, especially in the Central Valley, wild flowers grow alongside row crops and orchards where grow the fruits of our pastoral paradise--even today.

David Mas Masumoto is the award winning writer of such books as *Wisdom of the Last Farmer*, *Epitaph for a Peach*, and *Letters to the Valley*. He's also a third generation Central Valley farmer who grows grapes and some of the best organically raised peaches you'll ever eat. More than most, he's connected to the land through his work and through the history of his family. California landscape offered beauty and promise, but the Masumotos know that to realize the promise of the land we must invest hard work and our imagination.

MASUMOTO

From *Letters to the Valley*. Talking with grapevines, November.

Dear Dad,

Now I know why you're the first to go out and prune the vineyards every year. Snip, cut, slice. You're an old farmer caught in a ritual of nature. A cycle of life. A rite of passage from one year to the next. In your 80th season, pruning is like revisiting old friends.

Our Thompsons were planted four years before you were born. I suppose it's rejuvenating to work with something always older than you. If they can be productive year after year, why not old farmers. Like many farmers, you have been always a quiet man. But do you talk with your grapevines? I look at old farmers out early each winter, trudging into fields with pruning shears in hand.

Snip, cut, slice. Vine after vine, they prune a little

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MASUMOTO (cont'd)

each day keeping themselves busy, I suppose. And witness daily accomplishments with a sense of productivity, they look content. It's like visiting a cemetery and talking with neighbors who have passed on. Only these fields are still alive, and farmers honor that moment.

I believe old farmers full nature by pruning each winter, they speak clearly. They intend to see the grapes all the way through one more summer, and one more harvest.

A whisper I'm beginning to understand, as I too become an old farmer and learn to talk with my grapevines.

MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENE

Getting Here First

NARRATOR

Before the vineyards, the wheat fields, the orchards, the citrus, before anyone imagined a mural on an orange crate, native people lived throughout California, living lightly on a landscape that supported a myriad of cultures and languages and inspired a myriad of stories.

Georgiana Sanchez teaches American Indian Studies at California State University, Long Beach. A poet, scholar, and writer, she is also a Chumash descendant and, as you will see, an accomplished storyteller. Here she tells how her people arrived on the shores of California.

SANCHEZ

One of the things that really interests anthropologists, in regards to my own Smoich Chumash people, is the fact that our stories place us first on the islands off the coast of the mainland of California. Then we come to the mainland, instead of the other way around. That really intrigues them because these are really, really old stories, and I love it. It's especially beautiful and I'll do a quick little version, but our people lived only on the islands off the coast of what we now call California, and people were happy and healthy and they lived a long time, and of course, happy and healthy people make more people, and the islands got very crowded, so Conkanukmahwa, the Great Mystery Behind the Sun, said it's time for them to move to the mainland, and he chose the people who would go, and the way that they went was across a rainbow bridge, wishtoyo, a rainbow bridge. And Kagunupenawa said, "When you cross that rainbow bridge to the mainland, don't look down because

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SANCHEZ (cont'd)

if you do, you will get dizzy, and you will fall, and you will drown."

Well, some of the people couldn't help it. When they got to - it was so beautiful. It looked like someone had scattered millions of crystals on the water, because they could see with their peripheral vision this sunlight glinting on the ocean. Some of them looked down and of course, they got dizzy and they fell, and some of them fell very hard and were stunned and taken down. Some of the stronger ones tried to come up and breathe, but they too fell down into the deep, and the darkness began to enfold them. Now, Hutash, the spirit of our mother the earth, she had compassion on the people, and she called out to Kaqunupenawa, "Kaqunupenawa, your people are dying." "Yes," said Kaqunupenawa. "Kaqunupenawaa, save your people, they are good people." And Kaqunupenawa said, "Yes." And the people who dying beneath the ocean, their bodies began to change. Their bodies became sleek and smooth, and they could stay under the water a long time. And you know, Chumash people tell this story to this day to remind us that the dolphins are our very close relatives.

NARRATOR

When Spanish explorers first touched California shores, they were looking for Eldorado, but they were also looking to establish presidios and missions, to tame the landscape as one means of achieving their political and religious aims. They realized that here was abundant potential. The redoubtable Father Serra said as much in a 1774 letter to a colleague.

SERRA

. . . all the missions have a considerable acreage under cultivation with every promise of a good harvest, and henceforward, will be in a position to increase the size of their crops and made good use of this wonderful soil. Without forgetting that God rules over all things, I think there is really solid ground on which to base my above mentioned predictions.

NARRATOR

But even Fr. Serra's persistence, his pastoral vision, was everywhere challenged by the strange wonders of California.

Miguel Costanso was an engineer accompanying Gaspar de Portola on his 1769 expedition along California's coast. Often astonished by what he encountered--Costanso was one of the first Europeans to

(MORE)

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NARRATOR (cont'd)

record a description of the coast redwood--he also discovered how un-firm terra firma could be here.

COSTANSO

The first vibration or shock occurred at one o'clock in the afternoon, and was the most violent; the last took place at about half-past four. One of the natives who, no doubt, held the office of priest among them, was at that time in the camp. Bewildered, no less than we, by the event, he began, with horrible cries and great manifestations of terror, to entreat the heavens, turning in all directions, and acting as though he would exorcise the elements. To this place we gave the name of Río de los Temblores

MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENE

NARRATOR

Other European explorers visited California's coast, among them visitors from England, Russia, and France. Jean-François de Galaup La Pérouse apparently agreed with the venerable Father Serra. "The soil," he wrote, ". . . is inexpressibly fertile. Every kind of garden plant thrives astonishingly."

John C. Frémont, was the "pathmarker" who in the company of Kit Carson mapped the Oregon Trail. In his "Geographical Memoir" he describes the Golden Gate and the sweep of fertile terrain adjacent to it. The year is 1846.

FREMONT

. . . The bay of San Francisco is separated from the sea by low mountain ranges. Looking from the peaks of the Sierra Nevada, the coast mountains present an apparently continuous line, with only a single gap, resembling a mountain pass. Approaching from the sea, and passing through this gate, the bay opens to the right and left, extending in each direction about thirty five miles, resembling an interior lake of deep water lying between parallel ranges of mountains. . . .

In many places it is overgrown with wild mustard, growing ten or twelve feet high, in almost impenetrable fields, through which roads are made like lanes. On both sides the mountains are fertile, wooded, or covered with grasses and scattered trees. On the west it is protected from the chilling influence of the northwest winds by the *cuesta de los gatos*, (wildcat ridge), which separates it from the coast.

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NARRATOR

Thus it wouldn't just be gold that drew American interest--it was first the land and its promise.

Helen Hunt Jackson captured that idea in her classic novel, "Ramona." Here, Father Salvierderra reflects on the appeal of the landscape and the coming of the Americans. The novel appeared in 1884, but the time of the setting is shortly after the close of the Mexican-American war of 1848, just after California become an American territory.

JACKSON

. . . Father Salvierderra drew near the home of the Señora Moreno late in the afternoon of one of those midsummer days of which Southern California has so many in spring. The almonds had bloomed and the blossoms fallen; the apricots also, and the peaches and pears; on all the orchards of these fruits had come a filmy tint of green, so light it was hardly more than a shadow on the gray. The willows were vivid light green, and the orange groves dark and glossy like laurel. The billowy hills on either side the valley were covered with verdure and bloom,--myriads of low blossoming plants, so close to the earth that their tints lapped and overlapped on each other, and on the green of the grass, as feathers in fine plumage overlap each other and blend into a changeful color.

The countless curves, hollows, and crests of the coasthills in Southern California heighten these chameleon effects of the spring verdure; they are like nothing in nature except the glitter of a brilliant lizard in the sun or the iridescent sheen of a peacock's neck.

Father Salvierderra paused many times to gaze at the beautiful picture. Flowers were always dear to the Franciscans. Saint Francis himself permitted all decorations which could be made of flowers. He classed them with his brothers and sisters, the sun, moon, and stars; and all members of the sacred choir praising God. It was melancholy to see how, after each one of these pauses, each fresh drinking in of the beauty of the landscape and the balmy air, the old man resumed his slow pace, with a long sigh and his eyes cast down. The fairer this beautiful land, the sadder to know it lost to the church,--alien hands reaping its fulness, establishing new customs, new laws. All the way down the coast from Santa Barbara he had seen, at every stopping place, new tokens of the settling up of the country, farms opening, towns growing; the Americans pouring in, at all points, to reap the advantages of their new possessions. It was this which had made his

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JACKSON (cont'd)

journey heavy hearted, and made him feel in approaching the Señora Moreno's, as if he were coming to one of the last sure strongholds of the Catholic faith left in the country.

NARRATOR

"Ramona" was probably the most famous novel to address the destructive side of American rule on Mexican California, especially the pastoral cattle culture that had, in places, thrived here. Another was the 1885 novel "The Squatter and the Don," by Maria Amparo Ruiz deBurton, the first novel written in English by a Californio woman, and one that attempted to address the proper--that is sustainable--relationship between human beings and the California landscape.

Again, Juan Velasco.

VELASCO

So, The Squatter and the Don is definitely one of those texts that a lot of Latino critics have used to point at that moment in history in which things turn bad. And what is interesting about that book is that shows very clearly that it's not like that moment in history was paradise or ideal at all. But it shows this tremendous traumatic moment in which Hispanics, Californians realized that they were not going to be important, main characters in history -- in California history anymore.

But it also shows the tremendous contradictions, especially in terms of class. And sometimes, of course, gender. But you can see by the way history is represented, that it's a turning point for Hispanics and Latinos in which California was not home anymore.

DE BURTON

Plant wheat, if you can do so without killing cattle. But do not destroy the larger industry with the smaller. If, as the Don very properly says, this is grazing country, no legislation can change it. So it would be wiser to make laws to suit the county, and not expect that the county will change its character to suit absurd laws. (51)

MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENE

Overland Journeys, Gold, New
Encounters, Changing Dreams

NARRATOR

It's easy to forget that Americans were drawn to California before the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill. The dream of a united continent--Manifest Destiny--was appealing, but more appealing were the stories that visitors--trappers and explorers among them--brought back of the golden land. But many American settlers who set out for the west underestimated the difficulty, the ill-starred Donner Party perhaps the most famous. Trapped by Sierra snows, hunkered down in a place of unfathomable beauty, some survived by eating the flesh of companions who had starved, as Patrick Breen's journal for 1847 flatly records.

BREEN

Frid 26th Froze hard last night today clear & warm Wind S: E: blowing briskly Marthas jaw swelled with the toothache; hungry times in camp, plenty hides but the folks will not eat them we eat them with a tolerable good appetite. Thanks be to Almighty God. Amen Mrs Murphy said here yesterday that thought she would commence on Milt. & eat him. I dont that she has done so yet, it is distressing.

Mar. 1847

Mond. March the 1st So fine & pleasant froze hard last night there has 10 men arrived this morning from Bear Valley with provisions we are to start in two or three days & cash our goods here there is amongst them some old they say the snow will be here untill June..

NARRATOR

And the sheer numbers of American settlers streaming west was noticed by those who had long lived here, and thoughtful men and women worried about the impact on the land and on their own lives. Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins' 1883 memoir "Life Among the Paiutes" vividly captures the unrest.

WINNEMUCA

"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 weeping. 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

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WINNEMUCA (cont'd)

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-nuts this summer, and we can lay up great supplies 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."

So ended my father's dream. During that day one could see old women getting together talking over what they had heard my father say. They said,--

"It is true what our great chief has said, for it was shown to him by a higher power. It is not a dream. Oh, it surely will come to pass. We shall no longer be a happy people, as we now are; we shall no longer go here and there as of old; we shall no longer build our big fires as a signal to our friends, for we shall always be afraid of being seen by those bad people."

"Surely they don't eat people?"

"Yes, they do eat people, because they ate each other up in the mountains last winter."

NARRATOR

The Sierra Nevada was not the only natural barrier that challenged overland travelers. The desert offered its own challenge, and its own kind of beauty.

Poet and writer Ruth Nolan is Professor of English at College of the Desert in Palm Desert, California. Her work primarily focuses on the Mojave and other California deserts. .

NOLAN

And there are many different ways that people experience or interpret the desert; for example, the desert as a place of danger, the desert as a place of exile, where you get sent to the desert from somewhere else because you are in trouble, or because you run out there to escape trouble, to make a new start, to look for that sense of utopia, to build your dream out of

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NOLAN (cont'd)

nothing, and also a sense of refuge and home.

The contrast between beauty and ugliness; between safety and danger, between nurturing and threat; between allure and repulsion, and a place that can kill you, but can also engender in you the ability to rebirth, which, if you look at desert narratives throughout history and throughout the world, there's a long tradition of people going to seek vision and spiritual reconnection by going to the desert where everything falls away. But that's also a dangerous journey to take because the desert can kill you.

NARRATOR

William Lewis Manly appreciated these contradictions more than most. In 1849, the Vermont native set out for California determined to make a fortune in the gold fields. Optimistic to fault, Manly had no idea that he and his wagon-train companions would blunder into the forbidding, almost impassable terrain of Death Valley. Manly recorded his experience in "Death Valley in 49." Here, he and a companion seek to find a way out of their dilemma.

MANLEY

A perpendicular wall, or rather rise, in the rocks was approached, and there was a great difficulty to persuade the horses to take exertion to get up and over the small obstruction, but the little mule skipped over as nimbly as a well-fed goat, and rather seemed to enjoy a little variety in the proceedings. After some coaxing and urging the horses took courage to try the extra step and succeeded all right, when we all moved on again, over a path that grew more and more narrow, more and more rocky under foot at every moment. We wound around among and between the great rocks, and had not advanced very far before another obstruction, that would have been a fall of about three feet had water been flowing in the canon, opposed our way. A small pile of lone rocks enabled the mule to go over all right, and she went on looking for every spear of grass, and smelling eagerly for water, but all our efforts were not enough to get the horses along another foot. It was getting nearly night and every minute without water seemed an age. We had to leave the horses and go on. We had deemed them indispensable to us, or rather to the extrication of the women and children, and yet the hope came to us that the oxen might help some of them out as a last resort. We were sure the wagons must be abandoned, and such a thing as women riding on the backs of oxen we had never seen, still it

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MANLEY (cont'd)

occurred to us as not impossible and although leaving the horses here was like deciding to abandon all for the feeble ones, we saw we must do it, and the new hope arose to sustain us for farther effort. We removed the saddles and placed them on a rock, and after a few moments hesitation, moments in which were crowded torrents of wild ideas, and desperate thoughts, that were enough to drive reason from its throne, we left the poor animals to their fate and moved along. Just as we were passing out of sight the poor creatures neighed pitifully after us, and one who has never heard the last despairing, pleading neigh of a horse left to die can form no idea of its almost human appeal. We both burst into tears, but it was no use, to try to save them we must run the danger of sacrificing ourselves, and the little party we were trying so hard to save.

NARRATOR

The discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848 changed the face of the landscape forever. For those that noticed, the Sierra foothills were indescribably beautiful. And if they didn't always nourish their fortunes, those who came here sometimes nourished their souls. One of these was Louise Amelia Clapp, who came to the gold mines in 1851 to join her husband, a physician. Writing under the name, "Dame Shirley," she recorded her experiences in a series of letters. Here's what she saw when she first arrived.

DAME SHIRLEY

September 13, 1851

But what a lovely sight greeted our enchanted eyes, as we stopped for a few moments on the summit of the hill leading into Rich Bar. Deep in the shadowy nooks of the far down valleys, like wasted jewels dropped from the radiant sky above, lay half a dozen blue-bosomed lagoons, glittering and gleaming and sparkling in the sunlight, as though each tiny wavelet were formed of rifted diamonds. It was worth the whole wearisome journey, danger from Indians, grizzly bears, sleeping under the stars, and all, to behold this beautiful vision.

NARRATOR

Gary Noy, Director of the Sierra College Center for Sierra Nevada Studies.

NOY

Dame Shirley is a classic example, I think, of somebody who's changed by the landscape. She comes here, comes

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NOY (cont'd)

to these gold fields really not expecting much, or really not desiring to be there, and in a relatively short period, she wasn't here that long; in her letters you start to see this transformation of her, from somebody who is reluctant, at best, to be there, to somebody who comes to love this wild and dangerous life. When she finally leaves Rich Bar, and she's going to miss the wildflowers, and the people, and the place, it's a very different Dame Shirley than you see at the beginning, and it changed her; the land changed her, and her reaction to it, I think, was a very, very powerful influence.

DAME SHIRLEY

November 21, 1852

My heart is heavy at the thought of departing forever from this place. I like this wild and barbarous life; I leave it with regret. The solemn fir trees, "whose slender tops are close against the sky" here, the watching hills, and the calmly beautiful river seem to gaze sorrowfully at me, as I stand in the moon-lighted midnight, to bid them farewell. Beloved, unconventional wood-life; diving Nature, into whose benign eyes I never looked, whose many voices, gay and glad, I never heard, in the artificial heart of the buy world--I quit your serene teachings for a restless and troubled future. Yes, Molly, smile if you will at my folly; but I go from the mountains with a deep heart sorrow. I look kindly to this existence, which to you seems so sordid and mean. Here, at last, I have been contented. The "thistle seed," as you call me, sent abroad its roots right lovingly into this barren soil, and gained an unwonted strength in what seemed to you such unfavorable surroundings. You would hardly recognize the feeble and half-dying invalid, who drooped languidly out of sight, as night shut down your straining gaze and the good ship *Manilla*, as she wafted her far away from her Atlantic home, in the person of your now perfectly healthy sister.

NOY

I mean the - I think one of the unique things about the Gold Rush period literature is that there is a mix between this rollicking adventure and the sadness. For everybody who came, I haven't found anyone who is contrary to this, everyone saw it as the great adventure of their life, but the vast majority of people failed. They failed as miners. The communities they lived in failed and yet, they saw it as this great opportunity, and that the failure during that time period, was not to come to the gold fields and fail,

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NOY (cont'd)

and strike out, the great failure during that time period, was not to go in the first place.

NARRATOR

English-born writer James M. Hutchings captured a different idea in his "The Miner's Ten Commandments," that the landscape, the riches, the opportunity meant nothing without home.

HUTCHINGS

A new Commandment give I unto thee--if thou hast a wife and little ones, that thou lovest dearer than thy life, that thou keep them continually before thee, to cheer and urge thee onward until thou canst say, "I have enough--God bless them--I will return." Then as thou journiest towards thy much loved home, with open arms shall they come forth to welcome thee, and falling upon thy neck weep tears of unutterable joy that thou art come; then in the fullness of thy heart's gratitude, thou shalt kneel together before thy Heavenly Father, to thank Him for thy safe return. AMEN --So mote it be.

NARRATOR

And back east, Henry David Thoreau scoffed at the venality of the whole '49er enterprise in an 1852 journal entry.

THOREAU

The recent rush to California and the attitude of the world, even of its philosophers and prophets, in relation to it appears to me to reflect the greatest disgrace on mankind. That so many are ready to get their living by the lottery of gold-digging without contributing any value to society, and that the great majority who stay at home justify them in the both by precept and example! . . .

Did God direct us to get our living, digging where we never planted,--and He would perchance reward us with lumps of gold? It is a text, oh! for the Jonahs of this generation, and yet the pulpits are as silent as immortal Greece, silent, some of them, because the preacher is gone to California himself! The gold of California is a touchstone which has betrayed the rottenness, the baseness of mankind. Satan, for one of his elevations, showed mankind the kingdom of California, and they entered into a compact with him at once.

MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENE

Settling for Awe

NARRATOR

John Rollin Ridge, also known as Yellow Bird, is credited with writing the first novel by a Native American. "The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murietta" appeared in 1854, but embedded in the bloody tale of the outlaw Joaquin, is the lyric, "Mount Shasta, Seen from a Distance," a stark reminder that the communities taking form are overmatched by the awesome landscape--a warning against humanity's hubris.

RIDGE

Behold the dread Mount Shasta, where it stands,
Imperial midst the lesser hight, and like
Some mighty, unimpassioned mind, companionless
And cold. The storms of Heaven may beat in wrath
Against it, but it stands in unpoluted
Grandeur still; and from the rolling mists up heaves
Its tower of pride e' en purer than before.
Each wintry shower, and white winged tempest leave
Their frozen tributes on its brow, and it
Doth make of thorn an everlasting crown.
Thus doth it day by day, and age by age,
Defy each stroke of time--still rising higher
Into Heaven!

NARRATOR

The jolt that shocked Miguel Costanso in 1769 was a useful warning about the indifference of the natural world to the human creatures who lived within it. It's a warning that John Muir wasn't interested in heeding, feeling in the power of the earth not a warning but an invitation to worship. Here's his description of the 1872 Inyo Quake, which reshaped parts of the Yosemite Valley.

MUIR

At half past two o'clock of a moonlit morning in March, I was awakened by a tremendous earthquake, and though I had never before enjoyed a storm of this sort, the strange thrilling motion could not be mistaken, and I ran out of my cabin, both glad and frightened, shouting, " A noble earthquake! A noble earthquake! " feeling sure I was going to learn something. The shocks were so violent and varied, and succeeded one another so closely, that I had to balance myself carefully in walking as if on the deck of a ship among waves, and it seemed impossible that the high cliffs of the Valley could escape being shattered. In particular, I feared that the sheer fronted Sentinel Rock, towering above my cabin, would be shaken down, and I took shelter back of a large yellow pine, hoping that it might protect me

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MUIR (cont'd)

from at least the smaller outbounding boulders. For a minute or two the shocks became more and more violent--flashing horizontal thrusts mixed with a few twists and battering, explosive, upheaving jolts,--as if Nature were wrecking her Yosemite temple, and getting ready to build a still better one.

Then, suddenly, out of the strange silence and strange motion there came a tremendous roar. The Eagle Rock on the south wall, about a half a mile up the Valley, gave way and I saw it falling in thousands of the great boulders I had so long been studying, pouring to the Valley floor in a free curve luminous from friction, making a terribly sublime spectacle--an arc of glowing, passionate fire, fifteen hundred feet span, as true in form and as serene in beauty as a rainbow in the midst of the stupendous, roaring rockstorm. The sound was so tremendously deep and broad and earnest, the whole earth like a living creature seemed to have at last found a voice and to be calling to her sister planets. The Upper Yosemite Fall, glowing white in the moonlight, seemed to know nothing of the earthquake, manifesting no change in form or voice, as far as I could see or hear.

After a second startling shock, about half past three o'clock, the ground continued to tremble gently, and smooth, hollow rumbling sounds, not always distinguishable from the rounded, bumping, explosive tones of the falls, came from deep in the mountains in a northern direction.

NARRATOR

Writers like Muir, who spent years exploring California's natural world, knew that world best, but many of the writers who stopped to visit told stories that entranced readers and fed an ever growing appetite for news of the Golden State.

NOY

The travel literature that I'm really partial to is, end of the Nineteenth Century, female travel writers. There's Caroline Churchill and there's Grace Greenwood and others, who write about this at a time when activity by women in this regard, was very unusual and quite unique. Is they traveled around and they wrote about it from their sensibility, and many times, in the beginning; Grace Greenwood is this great example, they find it forbidding in the beginning, but they come to, as Grace Greenwood writes very dramatically about, in "The Bridal Veil Falls," that soon she came to be botanizing and shouting poetry in

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NOY (cont'd)

everyone's ear, because she was so moved by this landscape.

And you find it with Caroline Churchill, who, in her writings, writes about the difficulties of the actual traveling experience, but then she gets to Lake Tahoe, and she's so moved by what she sees there.

NARRATOR

From Caroline Churchill's 1884 travel book, "Over the Purple Hills, or Sketches of Travel in California."

CHURCHILL

In our steamboat route we pass a place known as Emerald Bay. Here, in one view, the blue water, the violet and the most exquisite green, all come before the sight in rotation. It seemed to me that the waters of this bay, and the hills around must be peopled with spirits, fairies, or some unearthly beings. One realizes that this lake lies near heaven; it is the only way to satisfy the imagination in regard to its unearthly colors and indescribable beauty.

NARRATOR

Mark Twain helped establish California's early literary voice. But where Churchill saw "indescribable beauty," Twain saw a "sad poverty of variety," but of course, he may have been protesting too much in his 1872 romp, "Roughing It."

TWAIN

. . . I will remark here, in passing, that all scenery in California requires distance to give it its highest charm. The mountains are imposing in their sublimity and their majesty of form and altitude, from any point of view--but one must have distance to soften their ruggedness and enrich their tintings; a Californian forest is best at a little distance, for there is a sad poverty of variety in species, the trees being chiefly of one monotonous family--redwood, pine, spruce, fire--and so, at a near view there is a wearisome sameness of attitude in their rigid arms, stretched downward and outward in one continued and reiterated appeal to all men to "Sh!--don't say a word!--you might disturb somebody!"

NARRATOR

Twain might have been anticipating J. Smeaton Chase, who explored California's coast on horseback and despite his assertions of unworthiness, managed to capture the pure spirituality of the raw California landscape. It wasn't sameness he found, but

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NARRATOR (cont'd)

solemnity--what drew us and still draws us--to the natural world. From Chase's 1913 travel book, "California Coast Trails" a glimpse of sunset somewhere south of Big Sur.

CHASE

Higher still, and near the crest, I came into a region of magnificent yellowpines and redwoods. It was sundown, and the view was a remarkable one. The sun shone level, and with a strange bronze hue, through a translucent veil of fog. Below the fog the surface of the ocean was clear, and was flooded with gorgeous purple by the sunset. On the high crest where I stood, a clear, warm glory bathed the golden slopes of grass and lighted the noble trees as if for some great pageant. There was a solemnity in the splendor, an unearthly quality in the whole scene; that kept me spellbound and bareheaded until, fatefully, imperceptibly, the sun had set.

MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENE

Pastoral Eden

NARRATOR

Not all encounters with California's landscape were charged with the drama of desert crossings, narrow escapes from mountain passes, or the overwhelming perceptions of nature's majesty. Soon, a more pastoral, gentler California dream emerged, or rather re-emerged, the persistent pastoral dream shared by many early settlers and experienced long before by the people who first came here, generations putting down roots in a California paradise.

MASUMOTO

(MASUMOTO NOV 18:45-23:17)

. When my grandparents immigrated from Japan over 100 years ago, and arrived in this Fresno area of California, they were aliens, they were immigrants, non-English speaking new land with the intent of staying. They weren't migrants and sojourners expecting to make a fortune here and go back. The immigration patterns were very different.

So when they arrived here, some of their stories still resonate. On our farm, we have vines 100 years old. Some of these vines my grandparents pruned. And to me, it's significant, not just working with the soil and earth that they walked on and worked, but literally the vine. And seeing the pruning scars from decades, generations ago still being evident on a vine.

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That adds the sense of continuity. And the sense of the timeline I work with on the farm, writing my stories, because there's a sense of not just the immediacy, the season of stories, this year of stories, this decade of stories; this is this generation of stories that's part of a long line of farmers, long line of people working the land, especially this land too.

That changes things. There's a sense of connection you have with the past and the present for the future. Because again, you look at a 100-year-old vine, and understand that this vine is amazing; it still is productive, it still produces, and how am I adding to this timeline by my pruning it this year, and next year and the year after. Seeing things on the land that my parents did. Or my grandparents.

An example is our farm is full of hardpan rock. Hardpan is this evil rock that was -- it's not even a true rock, right? It's really mineralized clay with all the moisture sucked out of it. So it can't even claim itself to be a rock. But it's a terror to farmers, because it's hard to farm; plants don't grow well in hardpan, if you have a hardpan sheet, water doesn't penetrate, roots don't grow very well.

There are places on this farm that my grandparents moved those rocks out of to try to make it better. There's another place in the farm my dad used dynamite to break up these chunks of rock and move it out. And now, I'm blessed by their work, because these healthy vines stand there. I occasionally still find chunks of hardpan, and I'll move it out. And whenever I do that, I think of that continuity of generations, and I'm just part of that.

NARRATOR

Again, ShaunAnne Tangney.

TANGNEY

We still buy the idea of the label on the orange crate, even though it never was like that. There was never the handsome cherubic little boy holding the orange, it's some fat grower on the phone with a broker in Chicago.

as much as we in California like to say we love the land, and our state is so beautiful and our state is more amazing than any other state. And we've got all these things from Yosemite to wheat fields to beaches. I think we like the idea of it more than we

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TANGNEY (cont'd)

like the real thing of it. How many people live in this state now? How many people ever go backpacking? How many people ever walk up and down an orange grove? Or a rice patty? We love the image, we love the label, how connected are we really?

MASUMOTO

Stories and seasons on a farm, on the land, they're intertwined and can't be separated, nor do I want to separate them. One, there's this natural rhythm of work that we do. We grow perennial crops, that every year they produce, but every year they go through their fall, winter, spring and summer cycle. And farmers view those cycles both as a work rhythm, but also as, I think, an emotional rhythm.

NARRATOR

David Mas Masumoto

MASUMOTO

Example being, you forget farmers don't get paid weekly or monthly. They basically get a check once a year. That tells them how they're doing. So it changes this notion of what season are we in? It's not a season of making money, it's the season of maybe planting, or the season of renewing crops. And there's a season of harvest, and then there's the postmortem. The fall season, when you're trying to figure out what has happened, assessing things. And then the season dormancy, of winter, of work where you're reflecting and recollecting yourself.

NARRATOR

In 1781 Thomas Jefferson wrote about his vision of an agrarian America, a vision that if never fully realized in California has still become part of our collective imagination, maybe our vision of our best selves.

JEFFERSON

. . . we have an immensity of land courting the industry of the husbandman. Is it best that all our citizens should be employed in its improvement, or that one half should be called off from that to exercise manufacturers and handicraft arts for the other? Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which he keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth. . . . While we have land to labour then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work-bench, or twirling a distaff.

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NARRATOR

Listen for part two of "Nature Dreaming": to understand greatly, stories of landscape, work, and community. For now, here again is David Mas Masumoto.

MASUMOTO

From Four Seasons and Five Senses.

Farm music. [Hums]. I own a Buddhist tractor. When it's running well, I hear the [hums] of a finely tuned engine, and a potential for great work. I believe that in the past, most farmers connected spiritual beliefs farm sounds.

But many of these deep, spiritual farm sounds and songs are lost in modern farming. I have never heard a folk song about planting, harvest or change of season in California. I have no chant to bless a new tractor or plow, although the Armenians in Fresno delightfully still have a blessing of the grapes. I cheat and go to their ceremony, hoping their good luck will rub off.

Few farmers talk to their trees or vines anymore. Farming in California is just over 100 years old. Perhaps that's not enough time for folk cultures to adapt to changes. Today, we have little spiritual work, we mostly do business.

[Hums]. But that's precisely why I hope to hear a Buddhist chant from my tractor.

CREDITS

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CREDITS (cont'd)

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