

Nature Dreaming: Rediscovering California's Landscapes
Featuring David Mas Masumoto Part 2: "to understand greatly"

By

Terry Beers

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Santa Clara University

Terry Beers
English Department
Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, CA 95053
tbeers@scu.edu

Cast of Characters

<u>Narrator:</u>	David Wittrock
<u>Robinson Jeffers "Beauty of Things":</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>Thomas Jefferson:</u>	Dan Maloney
<u>Mary Austin:</u>	Jessica Teeter
<u>John Muir:</u>	Dan Maloney
<u>Jack London:</u>	Jessica Teeter
<u>Clarence King:</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>Josiah Royce:</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>Mark Twain:</u>	Dan Maloney
<u>Frank Norris:</u>	Dan Maloney
<u>Arnold R. Rojas:</u>	Kevin Hearle
<u>Robinson Jeffers "Shine Perishing Republic":</u>	Jessica Teeter

NATURE DREAMING: REDISCOVERING CALIFORNIA'S LANDSCAPES
FEATURING DAVID MAS MASUMOTO PART 2: "TO UNDERSTAND GREATLY"

Introduction

MUSIC: CAL LEGS THEME PLAYS THEN FADES OUT

NARRATOR

What is the California Dream? Is it our 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 2: "to understand greatly," stories of landscape, work, and community . . .

MUSIC: CAL LEGS THEME PLAYS THEN FADES OUT

Toward a Pastoral Paradise

NARRATOR

It's true that California's diverse geography includes rugged mountain ranges, forbidding deserts, jagged and dangerous coastline, all of it astonishingly beautiful. But, as we have seen in Part 1, an early and persistent dream of California was as a pastoral paradise, an Edenic land of beauty and fair weather, a place where there could be small, sustainable family farms set amidst a golden land of bounty. Where did this dream come from?

One answer is that it is an ancient dream of peoples across the globe. But especially for Americans who journeyed here, it was a particularly American dream, one articulated early in our history by Thomas Jefferson. Writing in 1781, Jefferson captured the idea--complete with religious overtones-- in "Notes on the State of Virginia."

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.

NARRATOR

Jefferson's agrarian ideal was never fully realized, of course, not in California. But his words captured a powerful idea, one rooted in the democratic impulse and in the value of self-reliance tempered by the duty everyone owed to the common weal.

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. He feels deeply an attachment to the earth, one that those who don't live close to the land may feel much less.

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MASUMOTO

When you move off the land, move into a city, you are removing yourself from that direct connection with nature and the forces of nature.

And a simple example is the weather. City folks don't pay attention to weather unless it affects their golf game or tennis game, at the most.

Out on the farm, not only is weather part of the rhythms of your work, it affects your sleeping patterns. We just finished with the raisin harvest. When a storm might come in and I have raisins out in the fields exposed to the elements, I'm listening to if I hear the sound of sprinkles, and if that sprinkles last for five or ten minutes, and if it changes from sprinkles to harder rain, and then I can't sleep. I've learned to sleep very lightly, because I listen to those sounds of nature as it's part of the land and the work that I do.

People who don't live on the land, they become isolated and insulated. And they're insulated not only in those direct ways, hearing the sound of rain, knowing the length of day, and how that affects crops, work and patterns -- sleep patterns.

But also, insulated from, I think, from their emotional state. When you're out on a farm and working with the land, your work becomes fused with your emotional state of mind. You can't separate them, nor do I want to, because I think that drives the passion of my work.

When you move off the land, I think you become much more compartmentalized in what you do. Even in terms of your emotional state, relative to nature, such as weather. You may be grumpy because a morning rain got you late for work, that's very different than becoming depressed because a morning rain destroyed part of your crop.

So, there's emotional connection that I think people who live on the land, they aren't insulated from, and they're actually stimulated by that emotional connection.

NARRATOR

Robinson Jeffers was the California poet who seemed to speak with the most authority about the relationship of human beings to the non-human world. In a 1923 lyric, "Point Joe," he anticipates David Mas Masumoto's point, that those who live close to the land are stimulated by an emotional connection, an appreciation of Nature's permanence as expressed in "a thousand graceful subtleties."

JEFFERS

Point Joe has teeth and has torn ships; it has
fierce and solitary beauty;

(CONTINUED)

Walk there all day you shall see nothing that will not
make part of a poem.

I saw the spars and planks of shipwreck on the rocks,
and beyond the desolate

Sea-meadows rose the warped wind-bitten van of the
pines, a fog-bank vaulted

Forest and all, the flat sea-meadows at that time of
year were plated

Golden with the low flower called footsteps of the
spring, millions of flowerets,

Whose light suffused upward into the fog-flooded its
vault, we wandered

Through a weird country where the light beat up from
earthward, and was golden.

One other moved there, an old Chinaman gathering
seaweed from the sea rocks,

He brought it in his basket and spread it flat to dry
on the edge of the meadow.

Permanent things are what is needful in a poem, things
temporally

Of great dimension, things continually renewed or
always present.

Grass that is made each year equals the mountains in
her past and future;

Fashionable and momentary things we need not see nor
speak of.

Man gleaning food between the solemn presences of land
and ocean,

On shores where better men have shipwrecked, under fog
and among flowers,

Equals the mountains in his past and future; that glow
from the earth was only

A trick of nature's, one must forgive nature a thousand
graceful subtleties.

MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENE

Land, Light, Community, Spirit,Balance

NARRATOR

Gary Noy is Director of the Center for Sierra Nevada Studies at Sierra College. Here he talks about how the writer Mary Austin began to feel the pull of landscape, "the news of the land, of its trails and what is astir in them. . . ."

NOY

Mary Austin is another example of someone who finds the landscape to be, in the beginning, rather forbidding and scary to her, but she comes to love it. And her descriptions of the streets of the Sierra, for instance, and the "Land of Little Rain" is so powerful, and her descriptions of the people that she finds here, when she goes to the little town of Grapevines, which is Lone Pine today, and describes the people and the smells, and the experience, and the colors. This is somebody who is being changed, and it's the natural world she finds herself in. This extraordinary, majestic landscape she finds herself in the shadow of, in the Eastern Sierra, makes her a different person.

AUSTIN

All the streets of the mountains leads to the citadel; steep or slow they go up to the core of the hills. Any trail that goes elsewhere must dip and cross, sidle and take chances. . . .

Who shall say what another will find most to his liking in the streets of the mountains. As for me, once set above the country of the silver firs, I must go on until I find white columbine. Around the amphitheaters of the lake regions and above them to the limit of perennial drifts they gather flock-wise in splintered rock wastes. The crowds of them, the airy spread of sepals, the pale purity of the petal spurs, the quivering swing of bloom, obsesses the sense. One must learn to spare a little of the pang of inexpressible beauty, not to spend all one's purse in one shop. There is always another year, and another. . . .

The light filtering through the snow walls is blue and ghostly, but serves to show seeds of shrubs and grass, and berries, and the wind-built walls are warm against the wind. It seems that live plants, especially if they are evergreen and growing, give off heat; the snow wall melts earliest from within and hollows to thinness before there is a hint of spring in the air. But you think of these things afterward. Up in the street it has the effect of being done consciously. . . .

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NARRATOR

For sheer exuberance of spirit, for romantic and linguistic bravado, for fierce love of California's landscape, no one could challenge John Muir. In his description of his first view of the Sierra, he gives them a memorable name, but not to be overlooked is the panorama of the rich, Central Valley spread before him as he comes to the summit of Pacheco Pass in 1868.

MUIR

Making your way through the mazes of the Coast Range to the summit of any of the inner peaks or passes opposite San Francisco, in the clear springtime, the grandest and most telling of all California landscapes is outspread before you. At your feet lies the great Central Valley glowing golden in the sunshine, extending north and south farther than the eye can reach, one smooth, flowery, lake-like bed of fertile soil. Along its eastern margin rises the mighty Sierra, miles in height, reposing like a smooth, cumulous cloud in the sunny sky, and so gloriously colored, and so luminous, it seems to be not clothed with light, but wholly composed of it, like the wall of some celestial city. Along the top, and extending a good way down, you see a pale, pearl-gray belt of snow; and below it a belt of blue and dark purple, marking the extension of the forests; and along the base of the range a broad belt of rose-purple and yellow, where lie the miner's gold-fields and the foot-hill gardens. All these colored belts blending smoothly make a wall of light ineffably fine, and as beautiful as a rainbow, yet firm as adamant.

When I first enjoyed this superb view, one glowing April day, from the summit of the Pacheco Pass, the Central Valley, but little trampled or plowed as yet, was one furred, rich sheet of golden compositæ, and the luminous wall of the mountains shone in all its glory. Then it seemed to me the Sierra should be called not the Nevada, or Snowy Range, but the Range of Light. And after ten years spent in the heart of it, rejoicing and wondering, bathing in its glorious floods of light, seeing the sunbursts of morning among the icy peaks, the noonday radiance on the trees and rocks and snow, the flush of the alpenglow, and a thousand dashing waterfalls with their marvelous abundance of irised spray, it still seems to me above all others the Range of Light, the most divinely beautiful of all the mountain-chains I have ever seen.

NARRATOR

Jack London may be best known as the author of "Call of the Wild" and "White Fang." But he was also deeply

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NARRATOR (cont'd)

connected to the California landscape and later in his life drawn to the pastoral potential of California's rural valleys. In his 1913 novel "The Valley of the Moon," he tells the story of Billy and Saxon Roberts, who leave the city in search of a more fulfilling life, close to the land.

LONDON

Ahead and toward the right, across sheer ridges of the mountains, separated by deep green canyons and broadening lower down into rolling orchards and vineyards, they caught their first sight of Sonoma Valley and the wild mountains that rimmed its eastern side. To the left they gazed across a golden land of small hills and valleys. Beyond, to the north, they glimpsed another portion of the valley, and, still beyond, the opposing wall of the valley--a range of mountains, the highest of which reared its red and battered ancient crater against a rosy and mellowing sky. From north to southeast, the mountain rim curved in the brightness of the sun, while Saxon and Billy were already in the shadow of evening. He looked at Saxon, noted the ravished ecstasy of her face, and stopped the horses. All the eastern sky was blushing to rose, which descended upon the mountains, touching them with wine and ruby. Sonoma Valley began to fill with a purple flood, laving the mountain bases, rising, inundating, drowning them in its purple. Saxon pointed in silence, indicating that the purple flood was the sunset shadow of Sonoma Mountain. Billy nodded, then chirruped to the mares, and the descent began through a warm and colorful twilight.

On the elevated sections of the road they felt the cool, delicious breeze from the Pacific forty miles away; while from each little dip and hollow came warm breaths of autumn earth, spicy with sunburnt grass and fallen leaves and passing flowers.

They came to the rim of a deep canyon that seemed to penetrate to the heart of Sonoma Mountain. Again, with no word spoken, merely from watching Saxon, Billy stopped the wagon. The canyon was wildly beautiful. Tall redwoods lined its entire length. On its farther rim stood three rugged knolls covered with dense woods of spruce and oak. From between the knolls, a feeder to the main canyon and likewise fringed with redwoods, emerged a smaller canyon. Billy pointed to a stubble field that lay at the feet of the knolls.

"It's in fields like that I've seen my mares a pasturing,"

They dropped down into the canyon, the road following a stream that sang under maples and alders. The sunset fires, refracted from the cloud driftage of the autumn

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LONDON (cont'd)

sky, bathed the canyon with crimson, in which ruddy limbed madroños and wine wooded manzanitas burnt and smoldered. The air was aromatic with laurel. Wild grapevines bridged the stream from tree to tree. Oaks of many sorts were veiled in lacy Spanish moss. Ferns and brakes grew lush beside the stream. From somewhere came the plaint of a mourning dove. Fifty feet above the ground, almost over their heads, a Douglas squirrel crossed the road--a flash of gray between two trees; and they marked the continuance of its aerial passage by the bending of the boughs.

NARRATOR

Mary Austin, John Muir, Jack London, Robinson Jeffers all celebrated the California landscape and its promise for sustaining a simple, timeless, balanced life lived close to the natural world. The rewards, at least according to Clarence King, a scientist with the California Geographic Survey of the 1860s, were manifest if you just took the time to look. Here is a passage from his 1871 book of sketches, "Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada."

KING

Mountain oaks, less wonderful than great, straight pines, but altogether domestic in their generous way of reaching out low, long boughs, roofing in spots of shade, are the only trees on the Pacific slope which seem to me at all allied to men; and these quiet foot-hill summits, these islands of modest, lovely verdure floating in an ocean of sunlight, lifted enough above San Joaquin plains to reach pure, high air and thrill your blood and brain with mountain oxygen, are yet far enough below the rugged wildness of pine and ice and rock to leave you in peace, and not forever challenge you to combat. They are almost the only places in the Sierras impressing me as rightly fitted for human company.

NARRATOR

Philosopher Josiah Royce saw potential not just in the California landscape, but also in the ingenuity of the people who came here. Again, Gary Noy.

NOY

A lot of the literature, particularly in the early days of the Sierra Nevada, is a lot about building a community. You take Josiah Royce, for instance. In his philosophical consideration, he was born in Grass Valley, born in the Sierra Foothills. A lot of what he writes about is the fact that the communities that were developed in the Gold Rush period, and right after,

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NOY (cont'd)

were brand new. And that's - part of the development was, "How should these new communities be viewed?" "How should they develop?" And his philosophy was that out of this rough and tumble, often wild community, people realize that you had to work together. That there had to be a sense of community involvement for a society to function, and to be just, and fair, and to be moral; and so, I think there's a communal element to the writing too.

J. ROYCE

The great cause of the growth of order in California is usually said to be the undoubtably marvelous political talent of our race and nation. And yet, important as that cause was, we must not exaggerate it. The very ease with which the state on paper could be made lulled to sleep the political conscience of the ordinary man, and from the outset gave too much self-confidence to the community. The truly significant social order, which requires not only natural political instinct, but also voluntary and loyal devotion to society, was often rather retarded than hastened in its coming by the political facility of the people. What helped still more than instinct was the courage, the moral elasticity, the teachableness, of the people. Their greatest calamities they learned to laugh at, their greatest blunders they soon recovered from; and even while they boasted of their prowess and denied their sins, they would quietly go on to correct their past grievous errors, good-humored and self-confident as ever.

NARRATOR

Even Mark Twain, who never missed a chance to poke fun at the pretensions of human beings, found in the "splendid population" of California pioneers something to admire, partly because the people who came here were so tough--at least according to his description in his 1872 travel narrative, "Roughing It."

TWIN

It was a driving, vigorous, restless population in those days. It was a curious population. It was the only population of the kind that the world has ever seen gathered together, and it is not likely that the world will ever see its like again. For observe, it was an assemblage of two hundred thousand young men--not simpering, dainty, kid-gloved weaklings, but stalwart, muscular, dauntless young braves, brimful of push and energy, and royally endowed with every attribute that goes to make up a peerless and magnificent manhood--the very pick and choice of the world's glorious ones. No

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TWAIN (cont'd)

women, no children, no gray and stooping veterans,--none but erect, bright-eyed, quick-moving, strong-handed young giants--the strangest population, the finest population, the most gallant host that ever trooped down the startled solitudes of an unpeopled land.

It was a splendid population--for all the slow, sleepy, sluggish-brained sloths staid at home--you never find that sort of people among pioneers--you cannot build pioneers out of that sort of material.

But they were rough in those times! They fairly reveled in gold, whisky, fights, and fandangoes, and were unspeakably happy. The honest miner raked from a hundred to a thousand dollars out of his claim a day, and what with the gambling dens and the other entertainments, he hadn't a cent the next morning, if he had any sort of luck. They cooked their own bacon and beans, sewed on their own buttons, washed their own shirts--blue woollen ones; and if a man wanted a fight on his hands without any annoying delay, all he had to do was to appear in public in a white shirt or a stove-pipe hat, and he would be accommodated. For those people hated aristocrats. They had a particular and malignant animosity toward what they called a "biled shirt."

It was a wild, free, disorderly, grotesque society! Men --only swarming hosts of stalwart men --nothing juvenile, nothing feminine, visible anywhere!

NARRATOR

And of course, "dash and daring and a recklessness of cost or consequences" has a dark side.

MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENE

Splintered Dream

NOY

In the body of literature, I think there's a troubling undercurrent, a kind of pull between people's desire to utilize or appreciate this landscape that they find themselves in, and also, a realization that by influencing it, by touching it, they're going to change what drew them to it in the first place.

NARRATOR

Gary Noy

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NOY

That there's this kind of amenity factor that brought them there in the first place, but then there's kind of a troubling viewpoint about, "What am I doing to what brought me there in the first place?" And I think that's a powerful sense too, in a lot of the writing. There's a beauty and majesty about this, but am I influencing it positively or negatively, in their interaction with it.

NARRATOR

Still a controvesial issue, the Hetch Hetchy Valley was dammed to create a reservoir in order to supply the San Francisco Bay Area with water. John Muir was a fierce opponent of the plan, seeing in it not only the ruination of a pristine mountain valley, fully the equal of Yosemite Valley for its beauty, but also the expression of the worst sort of human mischief, the sacrifice of the natural world in service the growth of the metropolis. From his 1912 book, "The Yosemite."

MUIR

One of my later visits to the Valley was made in the autumn of 1907 with the late William Keith, the artist. The leaf-colors were then ripe, and the great godlike rocks in repose seemed to glow with life. The artist, under their spell, wandered day after day along the river and through the groves and gardens, studying the wonderful scenery; and, after making about forty sketches, declared with enthusiasm that although its walls were less sublime in height, in picturesque beauty and charm Hetch Hetchy surpassed even Yosemite.

That any one would try to destroy such a place seems incredible; but sad experience shows that there are people good enough and bad enough for anything. The proponents of the dam scheme bring forward a lot of bad arguments to prove that the only righteous thing to do with the people's parks is to destroy them bit by bit as they are able. Their arguments are curiously like those of the devil, devised for the destruction of the first garden--so much of the very best Eden fruit going to waste; so much of the best Tuolumne water and Tuolumne scenery going to waste. Few of their statements are even partly true, and all are misleading.

Thus, Hetch Hetchy, they say, is a "low-lying meadow." On the contrary, it is a high-lying natural landscape garden, as the photographic illustrations show.

"It is a common minor feature, like thousands of others." On the contrary it is a very uncommon feature;

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MUIR (cont'd)

after Yosemite, the rarest and in many ways the most important in the National Park.

"Damming and submerging it 175 feet deep would enhance its beauty by forming a crystal-clear lake." Landscape gardens, places of recreation and worship, are never made beautiful by destroying and burying them. The beautiful sham lake, forsooth, should be only an eyesore, a dismal blot on the landscape, like many others to be seen in the Sierra. For, instead of keeping it at the same level all the year, allowing Nature centuries of time to make new shores, it would, of course, be full only a month or two in the spring, when the snow is melting fast; then it would be gradually drained, exposing the slimy sides of the basin and shallower parts of the bottom, with the gathered drift and waste, death and decay of the upper basins, caught here instead of being swept on to decent natural burial along the banks of the river or in the sea. Thus the Hetch Hetchy dam-lake would be only a rough imitation of a natural lake for a few of the spring months, an open sepulcher for the others.

Dam Hetch Hetchy! As well dam for water-tanks the people's cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man.

NARRATOR

Perhaps one reason for the indifference to the natural world that so infuriated John Muir, was the pedigree of the people who lived here. Kevin Hearle is a poet and independent scholar who specializes in California literature and history.

HEARLE

(HEARLE INTERVIEW 7:13-8:51)

If you think about it, before the first Europeans arrived in California, there were almost as many languages. Well, roughly as many languages spoken in California, Indian languages, as there were in the rest of what's now the United States, tremendous cultural diversity.

It took over a hundred years into the American ownership of California before we had similar linguistic diversity in this state and even then, it's probably smaller and less diverse in many ways now than it was then. And so, then, you get this process in which by successive maneuvers, or successive social processes, people become less and less focused on land as being their land, or being the center of

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HEARLE (cont'd)

culture. Of being about who they are, being attached to this spot of land. To some extent, that's a process of California's demographics.

I mean, since the Gold Rush, until early in this millennia, the average Californian was born someplace else. So, you've got this tremendous churn of people coming in who don't know this place, and in many cases tend not to value it as a place very highly.

NARRATOR

Frank Norris's novel "The Octopus: A Story of California" appeared in 1901. At once the story of conflict between the railroads and small, family farmers in the Central Valley, it also contained portraits of the speculators who cared nothing for the land except for what it would yield. One of these was Magnus Derrick, owner of the vast "Los Muertos" ranch.

NORRIS

But Magnus was in every sense the "prominent man." In whatever circle he moved he was the chief figure. Instinctively other men looked to him as the leader. He himself was proud of this distinction; he assumed the grand manner very easily and carried it well. As a public speaker he was one of the last of the followers of the old school of orators. He even carried the diction and manner of the rostrum into private life. It was said of him that his most colloquial conversation could be taken down in shorthand and read off as an admirable specimen of pure, well-chosen English. He loved to do things upon a grand scale, to preside, to dominate. In his good humour there was something Jovian. When angry, everybody around him trembled. But he had not the genius for detail, was not patient. The certain grandiose lavishness of his disposition occupied itself more with results than with means. He was always ready to take chances, to hazard everything on the hopes of colossal returns. In the mining days at Placerville there was no more redoubtable poker player in the county. He had been as lucky in his mines as in his gambling, sinking shafts and tunnelling in violation of expert theory and finding "pay" in every case. Without knowing it, he allowed himself to work his ranch much as if he was still working his mine. The old-time spirit of '49, hap-hazard, unscientific, persisted in his mind. Everything was a gamble--who took the greatest chances was most apt to be the greatest winner.

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NARRATOR

Caught up in the pursuit and wealth and power and comfort, these writers seem to say we become indifferent to our California landscapes, the majesty of our mountains, the bounty of our farmland. Ironically, perhaps, finding beauty in our most forbidding landscapes may show us a better way.

Ruth Nolan is Professor of English at College of the Desert in Palm Desert, California.

NOLAN

There's still quite a bit that's unknown about the desert in terms of flora and fauna. It has not been as visited and chronicled, and studied, and investigated as the greener and lusher more parts of our state. And that again, could be part of the tragedy of this rush to install vast tracks of solar and wind because the scientists do know that the California desert is second in biodiversity, only to the Amazon. And there are many, many species; many, many types of animals, plants, different variations that have not been yet discovered. And the desert is also home to endangered species that have become very popular, such as the desert tortoise and so, if one is just to sit and spend a little time listening to the desert and looking around, there's just as much density and richness of life in a different way.

NARRATOR

Changes came to California, one of the most significant rooted in the realities of American rule.

Juan Velasco is a novelist, poet, and scholar who teaches in the English Department at Santa Clara University.

VELASCO

(VELASCO INTERVIEW 10:26-11:44)

So, losing the land is tremendously traumatic for those Hispanics that in the 19th century have already been in this area for at least 100 years in California. And immediately, what you start to see is this transformation from feeling that you are the owner of the land, to feeling, of course, that there is all these migrants coming to California. Especially from Mexico.

There is this displacement; the image of owning your own land, to the idea that now you are just another immigrant. And the gold rush didn't make things better. There was a sort of a competition for enrichment and the betterment of your situation -- your

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VELASCO (cont'd)

economic situation. And in general, what you see is not so much references to the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, but what you see is a transformation.

NARRATOR

This is the transformation that more than a century later is captured in "California Vaquero," a 1953 book by Arnold R. Rojas describing a vanishing way of life.

ROJAS

The advent of the barbed wire fence brought to an end the era of free grass and open range. Cattle formerly worth only the price of the hide which covered them became more valuable, and consequently better bred. But no amount of breeding could produce a better stock horse than the Spanish mustang.

A special providence placed the hardy, tireless little animal ready to hand for the vaquero to ride through the period when the great herds and cattle empires flourished. Horses, then let us say, were not better bred, the the signs of their having Thoroughbred, Standardbred, and Morgan blood in their veins had become evident in the bands of mares and colts. The rough and ready "break him or break his neck" methods employed by the oldtimer in handling livestock began to be frowned upon and were discarded as much as possible.

Though this change in conditions benefitted the stockman, it deprived the young vaquero of the practice which makes for perfection in a highly skilled trade. The youngster was forced to sneak out on moonlit night to rope cattle and to find some dry canal or spot out of the boss' sight to get his experience in riding bucking horses if he was to approach anywhere near the skill of the old-time open range vaquero who preceded him. The new buckaroo got his practice whenever he could. Consequently, there were many little rodeos and contests pulled off when the boss was away and which he never knew about.

There was always some colt humping his back and trying to buck. As long as the boss was around his rider would patiently hold his head up and double him to keep him from breaking in two. But when the *majordomo* was absent the vaquero showed no such forbearance. He would take the first opportunity to spur the colt a little to see if it could really buck. Young buckaroos are a curious lot and are always trying to find out if they can stay on a bucking horse, since all aspire to be *ginetes* (bucking horse riders).

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NARRATOR

And yet there were compensations. Despite the changes ushered in by the railroad, by barbed wire fences, by the appetites of a growing urban population, there was something still tremendously powerful, elemental alive in the land, an idea captured by Frank Norris in "The Octopus."

NORRIS

Beyond the fine line of the horizon, over the curve of the globe, the shoulder of the earth, were other ranches, equally vast, and beyond these, others, and beyond these, still others, the immensities multiplying, lengthening out vaster and vaster. The whole gigantic sweep of the San Joaquin expanded, titanic, before the eye of the mind, flagellated with heat, quivering and shimmering under the sun's red eye. At long intervals, a faint breath of wind out of the south passed slowly over the levels of the baked and empty earth, accentuating the silence, marking off the stillness. It seemed to exhale from the land itself, a prolonged sigh as of deep fatigue. It was the season after the harvest, and the great earth, the mother, after its period of reproduction, its pains of labor, delivered of the fruit of its loins, slept the sleep of exhaustion, the infinite repose of the colossus, benignant, eternal, strong, the nourisher of nations, the feeder of an entire world.

NARRATOR

Frank Norris' memorable depiction of the Central Valley was romantic and evocative of our pastoral dream. To see it more realistically, however, turn to John Steinbeck.

Again, David Mas Masumoto.

MASUMOTO

Ah. Well, the writer that I probably connect the most with was Steinbeck, and especially his *Grapes of Wrath*. We forget, *Grapes of Wrath* is pretty close to being a nonfiction novel. He did his research here in the valley, and he didn't make up these stories. He interviewed people based -- you could trace some of his scenes in *Grapes of Wrath* to physical places outside of Bakersfield, I think it's Weedpatch, I think is the area that he wrote about.

I mean, this wasn't made up, which I think gave even more strength and validity to the story that he was writing. Again, he was after the truth, not the facts of how big was this Okie migrant labor camp outside of Bakersfield. He was after the truth, which was what did that Okie migrant labor camp mean for these

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MASUMOTO (cont'd)

wandering journeyers through life?

And in Grapes of Wrath it meant stability, it meant home, it meant community. And when they had to leave that in search for work, what did that mean?

So, I think Steinbeck really got it. He understood some of that dynamics of powers of nature to displace, because don't forget, Grapes of Wrath began not -- it began in a sense of the economic displacement. But that economic displacement was based on the depression and the dustbowl that occurred in that area of the United States, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas. It was a natural occurrence, this drought that they had drove all these sharecroppers off the land, in addition to the economic forces that were driving them there. When they get to California, the first view of the central valley was going over the Tehachapies and looking down and seeing these fields of green. And going down closer, these were these oranges growing, they were like gold on the tree. This is all this natural relationship that was being formed with the land. And of course, the bittersweet truth was these were oranges that these workers couldn't eat, because they belonged to a larger agribusiness entity. So, those are the dynamics. But the notion of this physical relationship, and understanding how the power of that physical relationship manifests itself in the work that we do and the stories that writers write about.

MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENE

Withdrawal and Renwal

NARRATOR

Our landscapes, as we've seen, nourish our dreams, but some of these have become dark dreams, indeed. As populations, especially in the coast cities, grew, so did corporate and political pressures for development. Some California writers, worried about the consequences. Here's Robinson Jeffers' 1923 lyric, "Shine Perishing Republic."

JEFFERS

While this America settles in the mould of its
vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire,

And protest, only a bubble in the molton mass, pops and
sighs out, and the mass hardens,

I sadly smiling remember that the flower fades to make
fruit, the fruit rots to make earth.

(MORE)

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JEFFERS (cont'd)

Out of the mother; and through the spring exultances,
ripeness and decadence; and home to the mother.

You making haste haste on decay: not blameworthy; life
is good, be it stubbornly long or suddenly

A mortal splendor: meteors are not needed less than
mountains: shine, perishing republic.

But for my children, I would have them keep their
distance from the thickening center; corruption

Never has been compulsory, when the cities lie at the
monster's feet there are left the mountains.

And boys, be in nothing so moderate as in love of man,
a clever servant, insufferable master.

There is the trap that catches noblest spirits, that
caught--they say--God, when he walked on earth.

NARRATOR

While Robinson Jeffers had advised "distance," Mary
Austin had a different idea, working against big
development in favor of engineering sustainable, small
scale communities of ranches and farms, an update of
Jefferson's agrarian vision. In her 1917 novel "The
Ford," two characters discuss the idea.

AUSTIN

"I'm thinkin' the rain can't hold off much longer,"
Burke proposed as a likely topic.

Brent turned his hands outward with a gesture that said
that any time now would be too long for him. He was a
slighter man than his neighbor, but with a sort of
personal sureness before which Cornelius, with all
Brent's informality, felt often at a disadvantage.

"And yet," -- Brent returned to a subject that was
always in his mind, -- "there's water . . . there's
thousands of cubic inches of water . . ." His gaze
wandering down the glittering hieroglyphic of the river
completed the suggestion. "There's people, too, if they
could only get together -- why can't they get
together?"

"And if they could, the whole bilin' of them would n't
be the match of the Old Man."

"Ah, but why can't we get together with him, -- why
should n't all of our interests be identical? They are

(MORE)

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AUSTIN (cont'd)

as a matter of fact; what I can't understand is why a man of Rickart's intelligence don't see it."

"Now, Brent, what for running mate would the lot of them" -- Burke thrust out his hand toward the cluster of small ranches around Arroyo Verde -- "be for the Old Man? There's that to think of."

"We're not so dull as that comes to." A glow began to come into Brent's pale face. "We have ideas, -- I have ideas . . . There's no sense in our having times like this. There's water there . . . water goin' to waste . . . and stock dying for want of what the water would grow. Ah, look at it, Burke." Far down they could see the pale gleam of the mud flats in the tulares. "Thousands of cubic feet going to waste every year."

NARRATOR

Kevin Hearle.

HEARLE

I think in "The Ford" Mary Austin is doing a lot of different things with the California landscape. I mean there's the family that tries to survive on their land and they just don't have the - they don't have the money, the flat out capital, to develop it in the way that it needs to be developed. I mean they don't - they can't build the dam, they can't do those things alone and you know, they know what the land requires. They know what, you know, what they - you know, but they can't and so then they move to an oil town just down - which is of course, Bakersfield. And there they see - they and the rest of their townspeople see an opportunity in oil to change their lives, to become - but at the same point, you know, Austin makes clear that we need to understand that this is also polluting the landscape. I mean this is no longer going to be their land. It's an industrial space now and also it's you know, it's flooded with oil at one point. So that - and you know, what could have been agricultural land, what could have been useful land is no longer valued for the land itself. It's valued for what's under the land, and that does something to the people. They become mistrustful of each other.

MUSIC: MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENE

Apocalyptic Nightmares, PastoralNostalgia

NARRATOR

Mary Austin in "The Ford" and Frank Norris in "The Octopus" warned how over development--growing food on an industrial scale, stripping natural resources from the land without regard for local consequences, for example--eventually would displace California's pastoral dream. What happens if we continue on that path?

ShaunAnne Tangney is a California literature scholar and a poet who teaches at Minot State Univeristy in North Dakata.

TANGNEY

(TANGNEY INTERVIEW 16:33-17:37)

If California is the last best place, it's always already tinged with apocalypticism. As is any Eden.

I mean, the point of getting through the apocalypse is that you get the new earthly paradise. Everybody forgets that, right? It's just all the blood and dragons and sun burning up. But after that, the rest of us who are left here, we get it all; we get the whole new earthly paradise. So I think a lot of California culture and literature is tinged with that. Somewhere in my brain is a book that goes from Jeffers to Didion, to the Big Lebowski. And it is this what do you do at continent's end? At the end of the stories, is apocalypse the end of the story too? This is Derrida's idea.

We can't blow it all up, because if we don't have stories, we don't have anything. We can't wipe the face of the planet clean, because we don't have the stories, we don't have the language.

MUSIC: BRIDGE TO NEXT SCENEEden Renewed

NARRATOR

Perhaps the decay of our inner cities isn't permanent, perhaps we can see through that to something better, older, more sustainable. That's an old idea, but a persistent one.

Georgiana Sanchez teaches American Indian Studies at California State University, Long Beach. A poet, scholar, and writer, she is also a Chumash descendant.

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SANCHEZ

(SANCHEZ INTERVIEW 6:33-10:03)

So, land as exceptional, it absolutely is. California is one of the most exceptional places, and as I grow as a teacher, I've been teaching 24 years, as I grow, as I learn, every time I teach California Indian History, I learn something else. And what I have learned, and what I knew, from the stories that my father told me, was the devastation that happened to the people here.

As a native person, you know, this kind of awareness is always with me. I don't know how to explain it. I would go - Dad and I would go up the council meetings, up to Santa Barbara and you see all of these towns, as we're going through heading up to Santa Barbara, or from Long Beach Carson area, from the South Bay area, and there's a couple of things I remember very distinctly. Number one, Dad saw beyond the buildings. He remembered the land as it was. He was born in 1897. So, he remembered the land the way it was before there were so much concrete, and tall buildings, and glass windows that were, you know, reflecting and refracting the light.

He came from a time when people lived with the rhythms of the earth, and I'm very, very grateful that I was raised with a mother and a father who lived that way, and a large part of my growing up years were also lived in that way where we were - we lived with the rhythms of the earth. When it got dark, you knew it was time. Sometimes we'd hang around and tell stories and then you went to sleep. When the sun began to rise, though my father always rose before sunrise, then it was time to get up and start your day.

NARRATOR

David Mas Masumoto.

MASUMOTO

From Letters to the Valley. Spring plowing, March.
Dr. Mr. Mura

Spring awakens in our valley with the sun's warmth on our cheeks, and a stirring of life within. We forget that other places still have threats of late spring frosts that hunt like a stalking wolf. Howling reminders to both farmers and gardeners that winter isn't quite through.

You're an old farmer who can't retire from growing things, and now have moved your itch to a city home and backyard. Farmers and gardeners share a spring calling. A longing to get outside, touch the earth with our hands. We want to feel the damp soil under

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MASUMOTO (cont'd)

our fingernails, and turn the soil as if we free a spirit in the land.

With the first signs of spring, we plow the earth, and it plows something into us.

CREDITS

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Thanks for listening.