

# New Poetry by Scott Hughes: “Still”



THE FAULT LINES / *image by Amalie Flynn*

## STILL

I never thought of you  
as a hopeless romantic; this was news to me.  
Are you still meditating? Meditate  
on this:  
You can take the Mulholland Highway across  
the ridges of two counties  
and stay high a long time.

We parked there once in your subcompact  
in love and unconfined.

From the afternoon shade of a scrub oak  
I remember the ridge route home,  
the silhouettes of Point Dume and your profile  
in the afterglow.

Since then I have been a jack of all trades  
and a master of nothing:  
unremarkable, unsubstantial, undignified;  
unresolved, unremembered, unconceivable;  
unqualified, unpublished, unreadable.

I looked for you in the county beach campgrounds  
where you went with surfers from your high school.  
I looked for you in all the places I heard you were in love.  
I looked for you where rumors sent me.  
I looked for you in the hills of Northridge  
where we walked around the fault lines.  
I looked for you among the barstools  
from Venice to Ventura.  
I looked for you in old Beach Boys songs.  
I looked for you in stacks of photographs.  
I looked for you in the bottom of a glass.  
I looked for you stranded after a concert.  
I looked for you at the Spahn Ranch.  
I looked for you in the bittersweet words in books.  
I looked for you in unsold manuscripts.  
I looked for you in the margins of old college notes.  
I looked for you in every woman who looked at me.  
I looked for you in dharma talks.  
I looked for you in shrines.  
I looked for you in my next life.

I don't think my karma is right.

Forty years on the hard roads of two counties  
and I am

still.