

“Chasing After the Summer of Love”
by Corrine Ardoin

The family car pulled into the gas station, the father wondering where lodging could be found, only to learn that campgrounds and trailer parks were far from freeway overpasses and plastered billboards advertising Smirnoff.

Welcomed to stay the night parked beside the chain link fence and weedy, white paper vacant lot, the father thanked the owner, who gave his blessings before going home to his house not on the hill, but in disgrace, he told him.

Having seen the flying colors, eyes on LSD, young and old lined the coast highway on their way through the Big Sur. Who would have known that backpacks, braless women, and the hairiest man you'd ever see

could foretell the Summer of Love had begun in youthful dreams and congregations of swaying bodies and circles seated at the park? Eric Burdon, Grace Slick, nehru jackets, and blue-lensed glasses revealed a lighter shade of real.

Strolling down the red light district, with children peering through tall red curtains, the mother finally asked what are we doing here? And turned back to their trailer parked below the broken-windowed ruin.

Sightseeing at the beach and embarcadero, spotting the grand Pink Lady lounging 'neath the highway, she appeared as large and nude as Mount Rushmore, every bit as stark and blatant. Her eyes, they smiled, and the family stared.

Trollies and steep hills, Chinatown, and all-you-can-eat, where pickpockets made their living in ones and fives, sometimes tens and twentys. The father drove down the Haight where a man in a fur coat wore a bra outside his clothes, and they laughed.

Yet, why was the father so quiet and the mother so animated she had come alive for the first time? The children sang and the fish, they reeked, touring splintered boardwalks and dancing 'midst a world changed and love somehow gone awry.