

ROAD TO RUIN

When she left New York a part of me went with her. That was around '83 and Reagan had become part of our reality. Former radicals were now selling junk bonds, greed was good, the market almighty and fuck any poor bastard who got in your way.

She was different. She could hear the pig slouching towards Gotham and wanted out. She needed 5000 bucks. So she put away her paint brushes and her poetry, bought some sensible clothes and began tempting. She worked long days and forsook after-hours for graveyard shifts. I watched uneasily as her bank balance rose.

The band was gettin' a name but, as usual, I hadn't a brass farthing. I didn't need the fame or any of that bullshit; I just had to know that the years hadn't been wasted. I didn't even particularly care about the music anymore. I was on a familiar treadmill without the balls or the smarts to get off.

I was somewhere in Ohio when she hit the big 5 grand. We had both assumed that I would go with her. We'd even talked about starting again in Berlin or Amsterdam and, god knows, she would gladly have shared the money. But I was an ace away from "making it" and she knew how important that was to me - moron that I was! We dropped the subject.

But words left unsaid cause a tension and it soon became unbearable. We still made love in the odd moments that our paths crossed. But, the air around us was charged and, where once we had shared everything, now there was hers and mine.

The parting itself wasn't that big a deal. She was just going to Europe for six weeks to "check it out." I called her from some club to say good-bye. I can't even remember what state I was in.

Needless to say, she never came back. And even if she had, I wouldn't have been there. I was too busy traipsing up and down Route 80, following a dream that was daily becoming more irrelevant. We kept in touch for years and then the letters and calls got more infrequent until finally - silence.

It's been a long time since I heard of, or from, her. But I know she still thinks of me. I think of her too and not just when some old nugget comes on the radio and rips my heart out. There are times when I smell her perfume or catch the echo of her voice at an airport or a terminal; then I know that I've just missed her by seconds. I don't freak out. I just buy a six pack, turn up "Heroes" full blast, get quietly drunk and head off one more time to find her.