

Before I Sleep

A Film by Jan Eliasberg



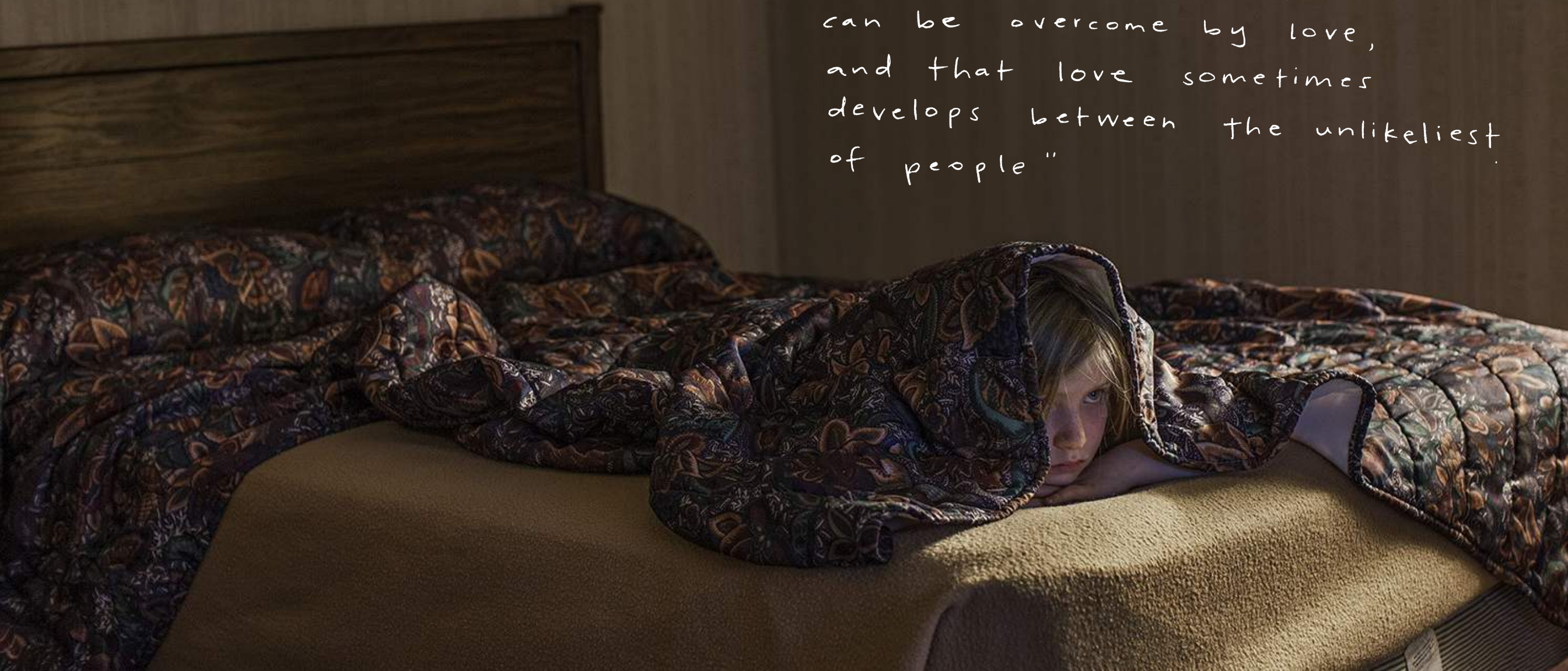


BEFORE I SLEEP is a film about love, loss, and hope, presented in the uniquely American form of a road movie.

It follows the complex and unlikely bonds that develop between two women, whose shared journey leads them to an unexpected catharsis and liberation.



" I want the audience to discover, as I did, that unbearable loss and grief can be overcome by love, and that love sometimes develops between the unlikeliest of people "



Synopsis

Ally (14) arrives at her father, Nick's, house in LA, having run away from her mother's home in Montana. Her disheveled appearance and provocative clothing indicate trouble on the road. Snooping, she finds evidence of her father's life with his architect girlfriend, Miranda (38), including plans for a house they're building, with a nursery.

Miranda arrives home, stunned to find Ally, demanding to know where her father is. Miranda has the uncomfortable task of informing her that he recently died in a car accident.

The tension climaxes when they visit the building site. Ally beelines to the "nursery," grabs a hammer, destroying the room. This is the last straw for Miranda, who announces she's driving Ally home -- to get this demonic reminder of Nick out of her life, and escape the future that was ripped away in a collision of steel, trees, and rock.

Through a fractured structure – simpler than, but akin to, 21 GRAMS – Ally and Miranda's journey is interwoven with Ally's bus trip from Montana to L.A. Ally is targeted at the bus station in Reno by a young prostitute, EMERALD, who lures Ally into the den of her charming, manipulative pimp, Dylan.

As Dylan is grooming her, she comes to her senses and escapes, stealing his diamond-encrusted Piaget watch.

Ally and Miranda begin to bond. They are poised for an enduring relationship until Miranda finds the stolen watch. All trust evaporates. Ally tries, unsuccessfully, to pry the watch from Miranda's hands, lashing out with vicious words, hurling bottles from the mini-bar.

Ally throws herself at Dylan's mercy, begging to be taken back. Luckily, Miranda tracks Ally through phone calls Ally made. They escape together, but not before assaulting Dylan, destroying his watch, and calling the police.

With Reno in the rear view mirror, Ally and Miranda arrive in Montana. Miranda has come to love Ally and, perhaps more importantly, to need her. Ally clings to Miranda, begging her to stay.

In the final scene, Miranda and Ally are ice-skating in Yosemite, hand in hand. The healing from their deep grief that seemed improbable, if not impossible, has begun. By learning to love each other, they have pulled each other back from the precipice. Life – joy and pain, love and inexplicable loss -- will continue.







Characters

Great drama is about characters we understand and care about struggling and making mistakes.

Ally, Miranda and Nick are all loving, decent, flawed people who must deal with the obstacles life has put in their paths, as well as the conflicts within themselves. Casting every role brilliantly is one of the greatest opportunities of this film.

Ever since I trained as a director at the Yale School of Drama, working with actors has been my passion. The roles in *BEFORE I SLEEP* are, I believe, so richly layered and complex that they will attract sublime actors to create performances at the highest level.

Miranda

“Pale, serious -- stands against the counter, white knuckling its edge. Her angular face is haggard; her shock of hair is pulled severely back in a careless pony tail. Her eyes are electric blue -- even more startling because they're rimmed with dark circles in the stark white of her face.”



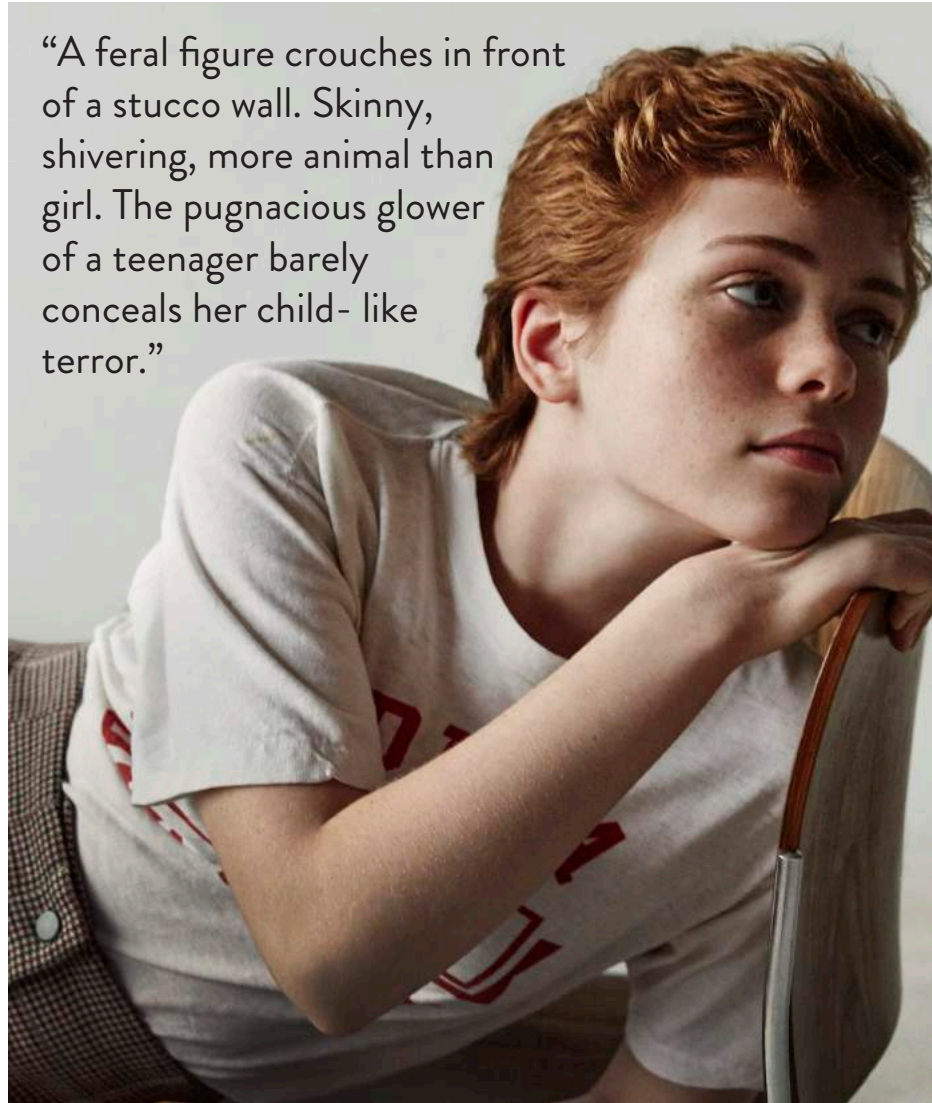
Ally

SOPHIA LILLIS is attached to play Ally.

SOPHIA LILLIS burst onto screens as BEVERLY MARSH, the young female lead of Warner's Brothers' summer box-office smash, IT. IT currently stands at \$654 million gross worldwide.

Lillis recently completed the HBO/Blumhouse Pictures television series, SHARP OBJECTS, directed by Jean-Marc Vallee, and adapted by Marti Noxon from the novel by Gillian Flynn. She is young Camille Preaker, played as an adult by AMY ADAMS.

Sophia and her team have chosen BEFORE I SLEEP to be her next film. Also on her slate, is IT, Chapter 2, the sequel to this summer's break out hit, for a 2019 release. Sophia will repeat her role as young BEVERLY MARSH; Jessica Chastain will play Beverly as an adult.



“A feral figure crouches in front of a stucco wall. Skinny, shivering, more animal than girl. The pugnacious glower of a teenager barely conceals her child-like terror.”



Nick

“Confident, at ease in his own skin, he has humility and quiet strength. Work boots, form-fitted worn jeans, a white collar shirt, slightly crooked teeth in a relaxed, sensuous mouth.”



Dylan

“DYLAN’s eyes are blue, nearly translucent — somewhere between mysterious and radioactive. His age is indeterminate; his stare has a hint of menace, a man who knows things, has done things. Everything recedes behind the intense spotlight of his gaze.





Narrative,
Relationships,
and Memories



The fragmented narrative employed in the script mirrors the way time works when one is grieving. After the death of my fiancé, I was suspended in a kind of limbo, suspended in time. Sometimes fully connected to the present moment, senses on fire, colors too bright and sounds too loud. Simultaneously, I was fully immersed in memories so palpably real that they were richer and more alive than the present. That fracturing of time, memory, and emotion is what I've captured in the script.



A dark, atmospheric night scene with palm trees and cars, serving as a background for the text. The scene is dimly lit, with a strong light source in the center creating a bright, hazy glow. The overall mood is mysterious and cinematic.

Look
&
Locations

In terms of a visual style, one of the great challenges and opportunities of directing this film is the creation of three distinct worlds: Los Angeles, Reno, and Montana.

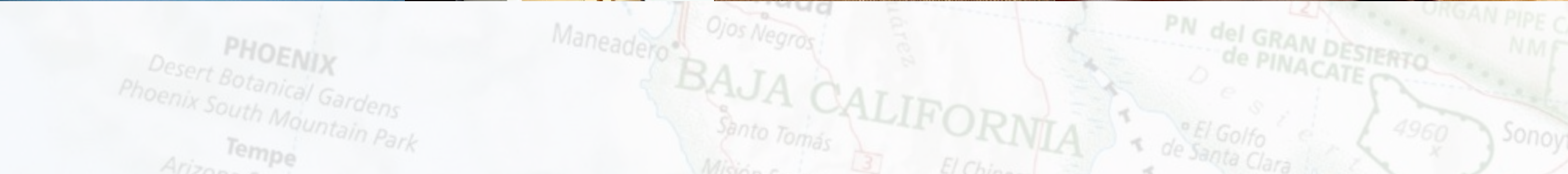
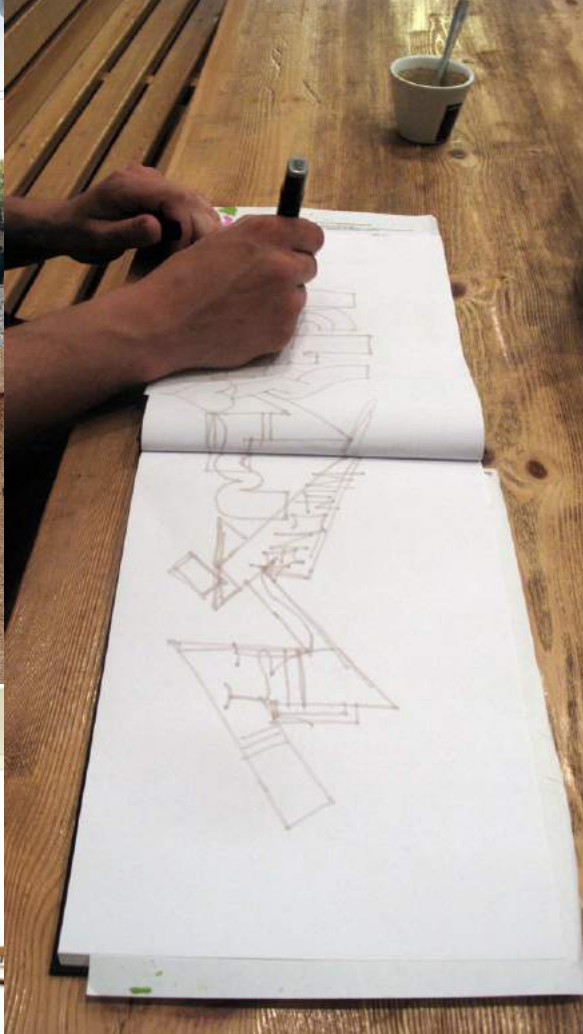
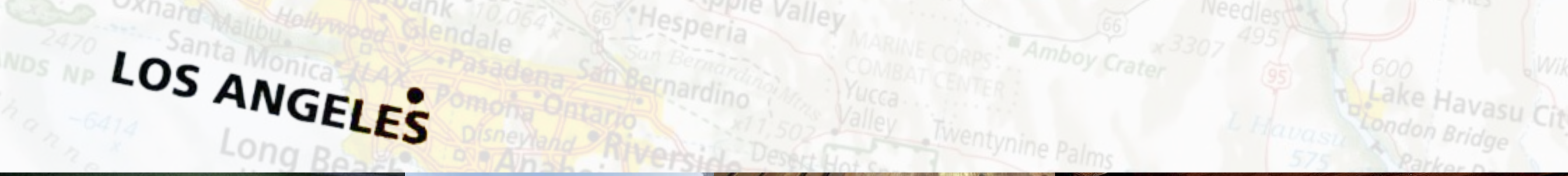


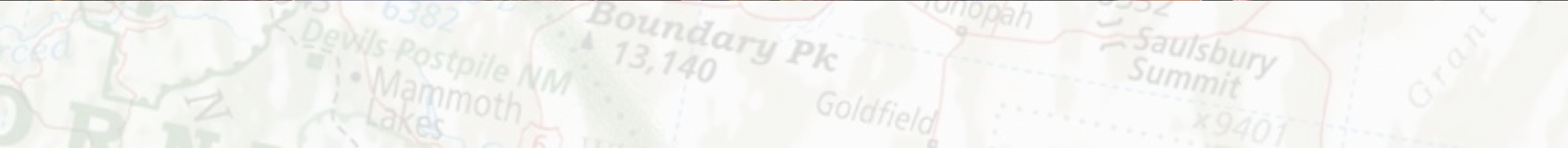
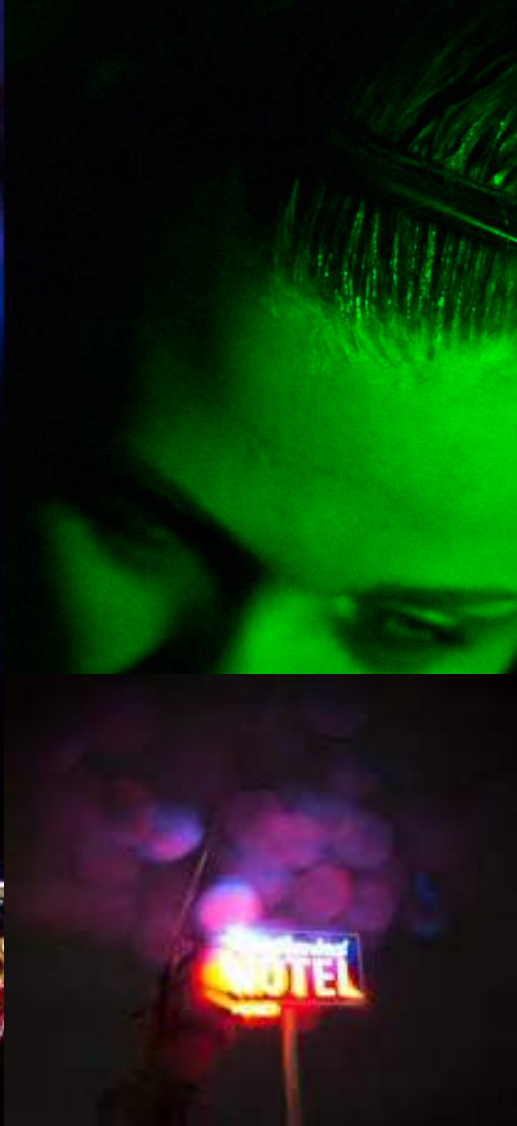
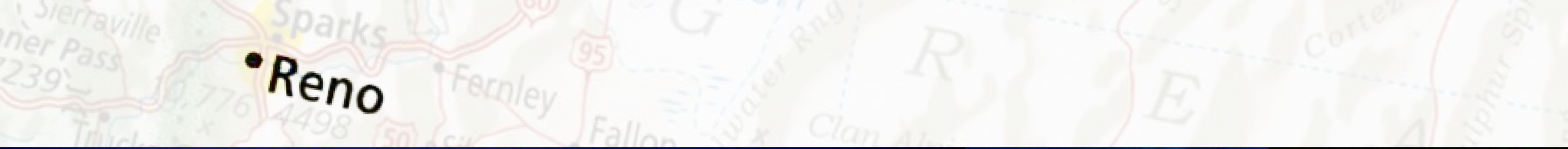
With my collaborators, I intend to use limited color palettes, directional lighting, hard versus soft light, framing, camera movement, lens choice, and film stock as ways to distinguish the three worlds. I want the viewer to know immediately which world we are in – past or present – through the look, color, tone, and feel of the image, without the help of a title card.

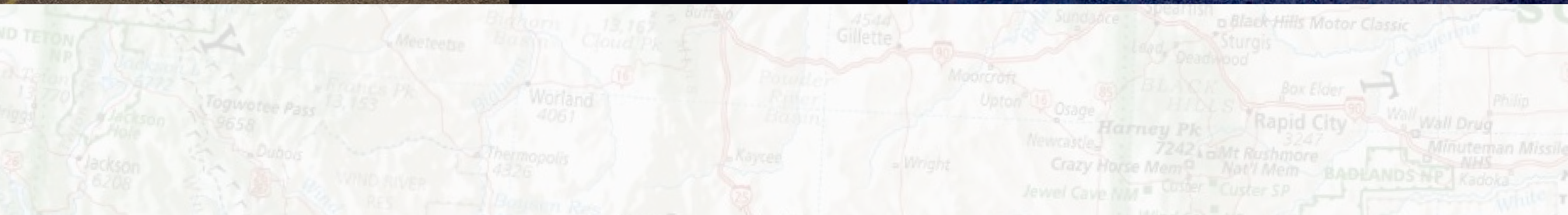
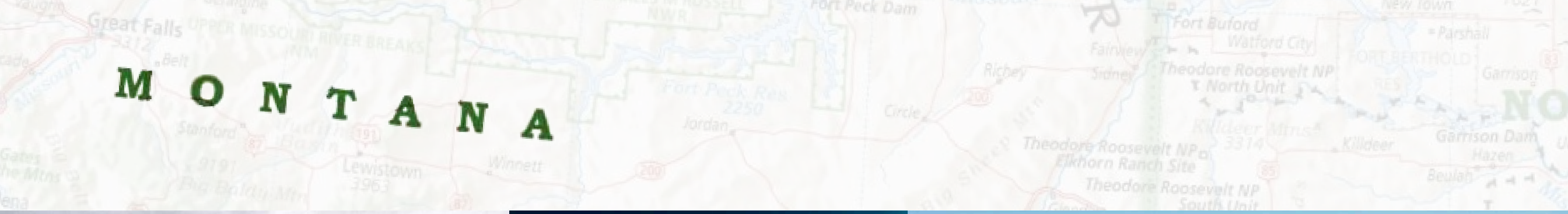


I'm keenly attuned to the importance of designed transitions to move us fluidly and seamlessly from scene to scene. I believe these can't just be created in editing; they must be planned and story-boarded.











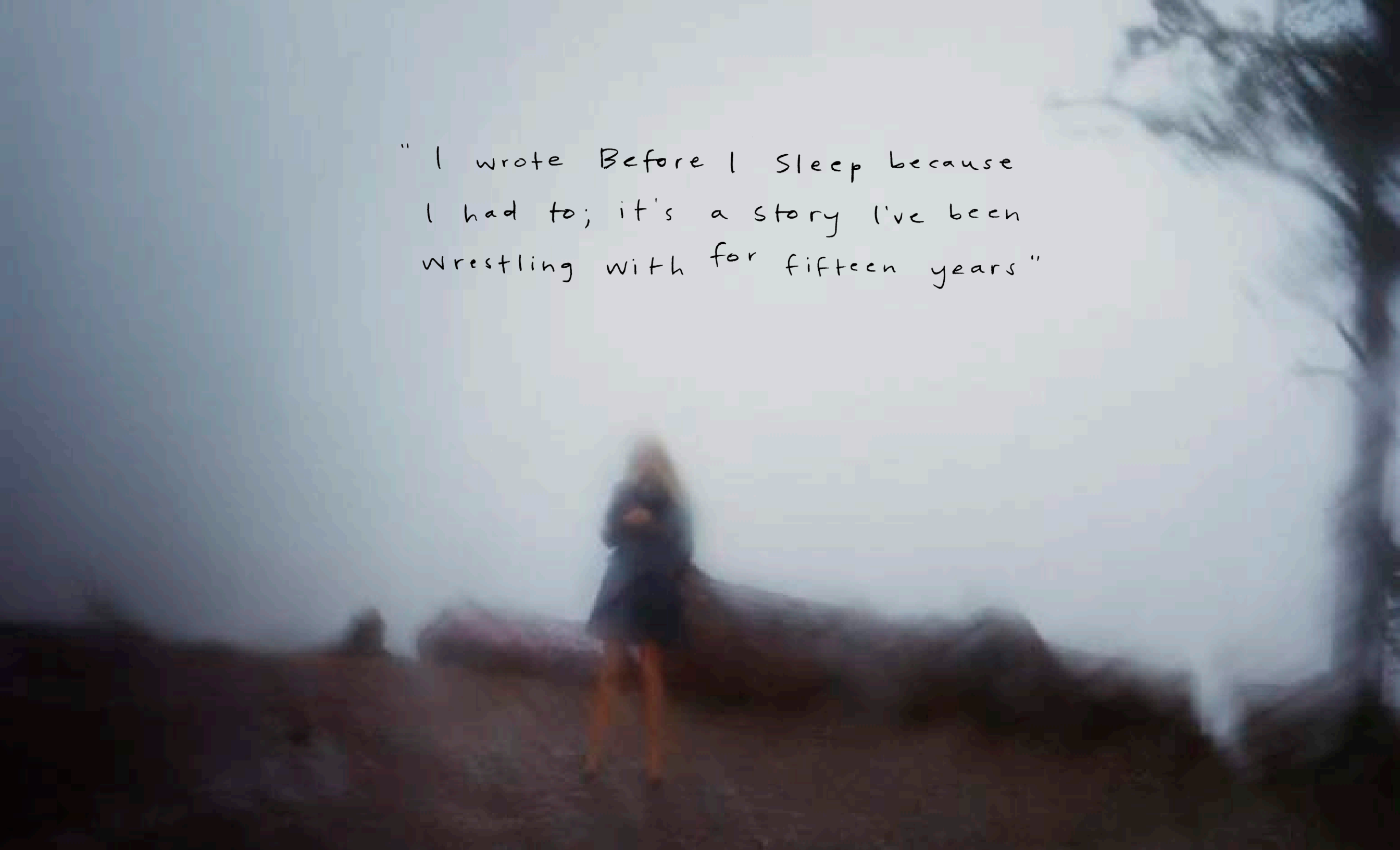
Music


Every road trip has its soundtrack; there's something about a long drive on endless roads that makes you want to turn up the radio and let the music rip. Road movies, too, produce iconic tracks, whether it's Dylan & McGuinn's "Ballad of Easy Rider," Hans Zimmer and Pete Haycock's plaintive and haunting guitar licks at the end of "Thelma and Louise," or the quintessential moment in "Almost Famous" when "Tiny Dancer," the Elton John classic, comes on the radio. One by one the members of the band and their entourage join in, and the mood shifts from tense to joyful in the twist of a chord change.

As score in *BEFORE I SLEEP*, I want to use classic road songs -- Jackson Browne's *RUNNING ON EMPTY*; Canned Heat's *ON THE ROAD AGAIN*; Death Cab for Cutie's *PASSENGER SEAT*; Harry Nilsson's *EVERYBODY'S TALKIN'*; and The Eagles *TAKE IT EASY*, for example -- then remix and re-orchestrate them for female voices.



" I wrote Before I Sleep because
I had to; it's a story I've been
wrestling with for fifteen years "





The kernel of the film is autobiographical. I was engaged, in graduate school, to a man I loved completely; my “soul mate.” Our lives were intertwined both personally and professionally; we were both directors and had started a theater company together. After we had been together for less than a year, he was killed in a random and inexplicable car accident. In one moment, the perfect future I had envisioned was snatched away from me. Because we hadn’t known each other long, he had a past I knew very little about so that mystery, too, became part of the story.

Jan Eliasberg

JAN ELIASBERG's prolific directing career includes the feature film, PAST MIDNIGHT, starring Paul Giamatti. She is known for nurturing performances from some of the finest actors of our generation: Stanley Tucci; Michelle Williams; Frances McDormand; John Turturro; George Clooney; Angela Bassett; Connie Britton; Damian Lewis and Cillian Murphy.

She has directed dramatic pilots for CBS, NBC and ABC, as well as multiple episodes of television series, including, most recently: NASHVILLE; THE MAGICIANS; BLUE BLOODS; PARENTHOOD; NCIS: LOS ANGELES; CRIMINAL MINDS, SUPERNATURAL and countless others.

As writer/director/executive producer, Jan sold the pilot, SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS, to CBS, as well as the pilots, THE BLUE WALL, with Angela Bassett attached, and FEARLESS to Fox Television Studios. Most recently, she wrote the pilot, SALEM, (with co-writer, Misha Rasovich) for FX, Fox Studios, and FilmEngine.

Her original screenplay, HEART OF THE ATOM, earned her a place in the prestigious Fox Writer's Intensive, topped the BBC Short List, and was selected for Film Independent's Producer's Lab.

Jan wrote W.A.S.P., about the Women Air Service Pilots in World War II, for Cameron Diaz and Nicole Kidman at Fox 2000; W.A.S.P. has just been selected by The Black List/Athena Film Festival as one of the ten best screenplays about women as leaders.

She's just completed BEFORE I SLEEP, an indie feature which she will direct in 2016.

A graduate of Wesleyan University (magna cum laude), the directing program of Yale School of Drama, and the American Film Institute's DIRECTING WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN, Jan has directed plays at The Public Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Rep, and the Royal Court Theatre in London.

www.janeliasberg.com





For More Information

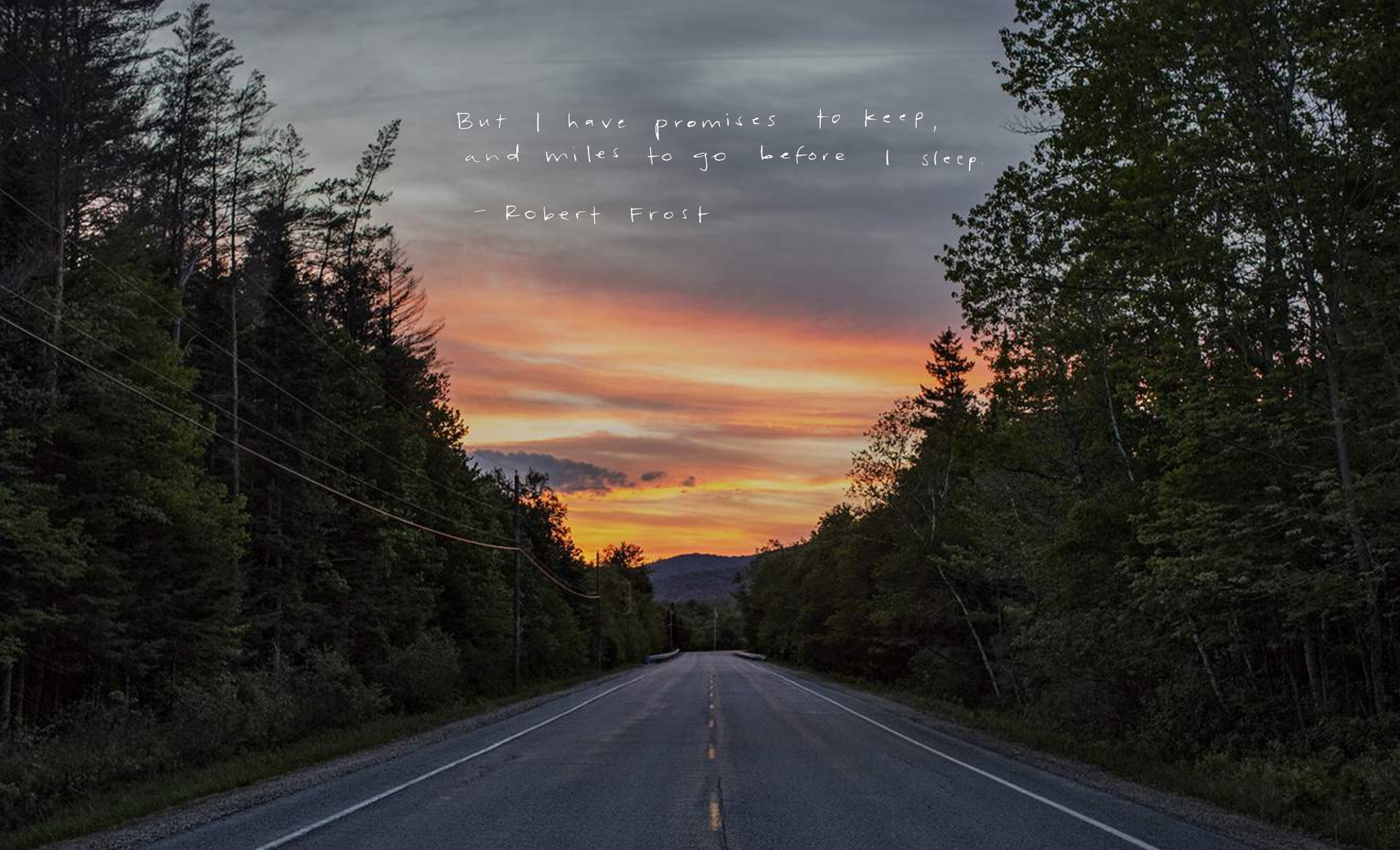
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But I have promises to keep,
and miles to go before I sleep.

- Robert Frost