

JOAN DIDION GOT IT WRONG •

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Joan Didion got it wrong.

There's no pretending.

No illusions.

After cancelling the credit cards,

closing the bank accounts,

signing that final tax return,

the last one with your name.

And the closet, with shoes and ties and plaid shirts that

anyone can buy from The Territory Ahead,

it's just a closet.

There's no magic in it,

Nothing at all.

Funny though, I can't give up your garment bag.

Not after those trips to Zion, and Yellowstone

and the Olympics.

And the Cascades where the main road in was closed

so we took the long way around.

We were alone at the inn.

We ate peanut butter and blackberry pie in our cabin.

It rained when we hiked Pyramid Lake,

and soft mist enveloped us.

We scrambled over slippery rocks and

we talked of paintings by Thomas Moran.

It wouldn't have been half as nice in sunshine, you said.

We were lucky to catch the mist.

At King's Canyon, we sat for hours

holding hands in silence.

We watched the great river, so wild, so desolate.

And if I return alone, I know what everyone else knows.
None of us meets the same river twice,
No river meets the same self.
The alternative is impossible.

But if I returned, I wonder if King's River
would seem tame and diminished,
if I'd be afraid to face my reflection
Or if the timeless current
would pull me along.