**Lady Bird,**

**forever Lady Bird.**

Watching Lady Bird takes guts. Well, only if you have ever lived in a town that has been stationary for as long as you have been alive, living in it. The appeal of such cities seems to only surface the way we learn lessons; in difficult times, where choices become narrowed down and you seem to be running out of time. Lady Bird is a coming of age movie as much as it is an in-depth insight on the process of being a certain age, the repercussions of being simultaneously naive and consciously trying to escape naivety. The city is where Christine “Lady Bird” McPherson is trapped, but traps extend far beyond our understanding of their limitations.

Christine is 17, and she insists on being called Lady Bird. This is a subject that comes back time and time again in this film, her childish attempt at passing for someone more exotic than she actually is. Her best friend, with whom she gorges on unconsecrated communion wafers somewhere in the backroom of the church, is an adorable theatre nerd who has a crush on their Calculus teacher. They are young, they go to Catholic school. There are boys, struggling with their sexuality, there are girls in short skirts and short dreams, there are nuns and priests who represent more than their habits, there is desire, coveting, lies, a difficult mother, a depressed father. There are also trips to the mall, a small crowd, getting high, watching a stack of pre-processed food containers rotating in the microwave. In short there is that intangible element of being young, oblivious, but still in the thick of it. Christine is someone who is easily dismissed, and she knows it. Perhaps that is why she makes such a compelling lead.

Christine wants to go study in the East Coast, ‘[she wants] to go to where culture is, like New York,…. or at least Connecticut or New Hampshire where writers live in the woods’. This sets up the basic premise. She is not the most competitive, she is not the brightest, nor is she the most talented. At no point during this narrative do we ever receive an indication that she is more than she has let on. She is exactly who the frame tells us she is. She wants what a great majority of authority figures tell her she does not deserve, nor will she ever get. But this does not seem to detract her, flaming pink hair billowing as she steals her Calculus grade book, as she runs to the post office behind her mother’s back, looking to get accepted somewhere far away from Sacramento. This semi-autobiographical script is written and directed by Greta Gerwig, an artist, writer and director who makes her first directorial debut with Lady Bird. She is now, one of the five women to have ever been nominated for an Academy Award for directing. Gerwig writes with dumbfounding honesty about the pushing and pulling within a family, the practical considerations, the small concessions, the pure, violent, harsh love.

This movie is beautiful. The early 2000s were a gift, the sense of fashion sort of stuck in this indecisive era; my personal favorites are the teenagers, clad in clothes that they still have to grow into. Stripy jumpers, white tees layered under plaid pinafores, magenta hues and platelet sequins, puka shell necklaces. The millennium was young, and we had not yet understood what it meant to be in it. The story does not skirt around this. 9/11 is a reality instead of a ever-increasingly distant memory as it is for the rest of the world today. The stock market crash of 2001 had devastating consequences, as witnessed by Christine’s quiet but adoring father, unemployed, depressed, the ‘nice guy’ against whom her mother begrudgingly thrusts an accusatory finger. There is the reality of their home, a hull that often resembles the dwelling of an incubus, shut off, sunlight barely penetrating cramped spaces, walls covered in plates of dark wood, more of a motel than a home.

What I will always remember about this movie is a particular montage, rolling towards the end. Christine is driving for the first time through the streets of Sacramento, the shot constantly shifting in perspective from her looking outside the window, at the bridge, the half-set sun hugging the outline of the trees, to her mother, driving through the same routes. They bear the exact same smile. Their relationship weaves in and out of discord, affection and words left unsaid. This city is theirs, in ways we could not hope to understand, passed down from one to the other, authentic and undeniable. They will never know, how this particular city-trap connects them, regenerates them. How they are the same.

If you are sometimes struggling to remember what you were like when you were younger, or worse, swallowing down those painfully embarrassing memories, this movie is a good one for you. I think we are all one, or the other. We are either sad we forgot, or sad to remember. Either way, you will find something in this film. Watch it. Love it. Hate it. Whatever you do, spare some time to think it over. Try to remember, when was the last time that you missed home, the same home you maybe loved, hated, or loved to hate. Lady Bird grants us the freedom to exist in such a space, if only for a couple of hours, even if you feel as though you live on the wrong side of the train tracks.

Stay golden,

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