



Image from Dreams Are What Le Cinema Is For...

Jonah Raskin

A Night in L.A.

Gloria Swanson in a Pontiac convertible with a V-8 engine
cruising Venice Boulevard Sunday July 8, her chauffeur right

on time to pick up William Holden on the corner of Lincoln, where I hear Miss Swanson
say, “I’m big. It’s the pictures that got small.”

On foot I make for a tawdry motel after *chile relleños* at Casablanca with Ronee Blakley
in cowgirl hat who looked as ripe and ready as

she looked in ’75 in Altman’s *Nashville*. After Margaritas—hers without, mine with
salt—Ronee went South, I went North, marveled at

the carefree kids and kissing couples who ambled under night sky while I replayed tapes
of my Hollywood days when I sold a

screenplay at studio prices. Tonight, Gloria is too far gone to notice me on the boulevard
of brokered dreams where anyone can wake up

homeless in a city engulfed in flames, the ashes falling on
the bones of coyotes scattered in the Mojave Desert.

9 July 2018 and 22 January 2025

Jonah Raskin is a co-editor of *Caveat Lector*, a retired professor of communication, and author of eight poetry chapbooks, including *The Thief of Yellow Roses* (Regent Press, 2023); *American Scream*, a study of Allen Ginsberg's poem *Howl* and the birth of the Beat Generation; and other books. He grew up reading the poetry of Oscar Wilde, Walt Whitman, and Allen Ginsberg; these days, he's likely to be reading Emily Dickinson, Anna Akhmatova, and Rainer Maria Rilke.