



Since moving to the desert, I have learned to predict the best sunsets by the number of clouds in the sky – the fewer there are, the less sorbet streaks across the horizon. So when dusk settles in amid myriad white puff, I jump in the car with my camera to race the sun to the West.

Jagged peaks line the distance as I head up Old Woman Springs Road, winding around bends and turning down the static that blares from the radio. Somewhere between Yucca and Lucerne valleys, a pile of graffiti-covered boulders off the highway stands stoic in spite of its imperfections – I quickly pull over to capture the beams of light illuminating its crooked edges. And still the sun sets.

Here's the thing about this journey – there is no destination. When the golden moment comes, I pull into a ditch on the side of the road and venture out to find Joshua trees forming black silhouettes against the watercolors seeping upwards into the sky. My shutter flits like a hummingbird to preserve the instant before it's gone, but more often than not, I find myself kneeling down in the dirt to take in the sight without the lens. There's something wild about reveling in the nip of wayward winds as the sun melts into the horizon.

Poet Arthur Chapman once wrote, "Out where the world is in the making, where fewer hearts in despair are aching, that's where the West begins." Beauty can be found in the most ordinary of places, in the making we so often miss en route through the process. Wherever you are in the desert, you can watch dusk fade into dust – here's to simply showing up.

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