

# A Voyage into a Complete Unknown Known. Edward Curtin

An Absurdist Review

By [Edward Curtin](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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*“Every time I ask what time it is, I get a different answer” – Henny Youngman*

*I don't know about you, but I find some movies useful and even entertaining because, like dreams, they exercise my imagination. They project onto my mind horizon-framed memories, my soul into a visual brigantine seeking its Ithaca where I will finally open my eyes and grasp the reality of so many reflections.*

As the French novelist Louis-Ferdinand Celine once said about travel being useful because it exercises the imagination,

*“All the rest is disappointment and fatigue. Our journey is entirely imaginary. That is its strength. It goes from life to death.”*

Dr. Celine, M.D. was leading us into a “journey to the end of the night,” which was the title he gave his 1932 first novel. Like much ground-breaking art, it received mixed reviews. This was because of its dark perspective and unique use of slang and working-class language. Traditionalists were outraged. Eventually, however, it was considered one of the greatest novels of the 20th century. As someone once said, and repeated numerous times, so it goes.

But first we had to go through all the good old days of mass slaughter and mayhem. Celine learned about these shenanigans while riding a wooden horse for the French Cavalry during World War I and watching the bodies flop and twitch and bleed ketchup on the barbed wire and in no man's land. He noticed it was the first war to go high-tech with machine guns, flamethrowers, air warfare, and other modern improvements. You know, the inevitability of progress.

Rather than giving up, the traditionalists still sang “Our life is a journey / Through Winter and Night; / We look for our way / In a sky without light,” the alleged old Swiss Guard song passed down through the folk tradition. They were angry and languishing but could still sing the old way and their lyrics inspired Celine's title. The times changed but sort of didn't. People were still lighting candles as they switched on the lights.

It's very cold here in the north country. My wife's beautiful long hair tantalizes me, and I use a manual typewriter, but she almost fell down in the icy driveway and died. It wasn't the way I wanted to remember her, so I ran out to help her and the howling wind almost blew my wig off. Don't ask me why. The wind has its ways.

This isn't a coverup, all I do is tell the truth while trying to cover my ass, but the wig at least

covered my addlepatented head from which I try to spring the thoughts that really tie my brain in knots and disturb me, but that you won't hear in this life movie, this dream.

My work has always been about death, he said, ever since I was young. He said that in an interview I read.

Last night I dreamed I was walking in town with my wife after taking a shower. I only had a towel to clothe me, which I wrapped around my waist. I felt exposed and wished to hide, to flee in the dark night. To stand naked in front of strangers on Main St. would have really bothered me. Some kind soul pointed me in the direction of a guy with a camera who gave me a long gold coat that extended to the ground. I put it on and went into a men's room to dry my wet hair, which I did, and when I looked in the mirror, my hair had turned to golden curls.

Only a dream you say, but I was appalled. It was not a flattering picture. Although I looked as though I had metamorphized into Euphorbus, the golden curly-headed hero of Greek myth, I felt like a packaged commodity in the mirror. Too many images. Too many people rearranging their faces in triple mirrors. Somewhere in my unknowing mind the inner mirror flashed people, places, streets I once set my feet upon, going or coming in the old days when I first set foot in the village in the city.

I was after something, something deep drove me from place to place, I was very restless and felt I was always rushing. I felt guilty too.

Kippus was the name of my high school English teacher. What he did to me rankles still. I had spent hours writing a paper for his course on the connection between two famous murders in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. I was very proud of it and felt that all the reading I had imbibed over the years served me well in its composition. But when he was handing out the corrected papers, he waved mine in the air with a supercilious look on his face and took me out into the hall where he accused me of plagiarism, which was completely false. He said I couldn't have written something so good and ripped my paper up in my face. I probably shouldn't confess, but immature as I was, and despite his pleas for mercy, I choked him to death on the spot and quickly fled. I am still running.

François Truffaut said once "film lovers are sick people." They love magic and the beautiful fraud that movies create. One flick of a switch and they are gone.

Yet nothing moves and unsettles me more than great songs, especially when their winged words rise and fly out on tunes that stick in the mind. Why do they unsettle me and why does one write them?

I agree with Jean-Luc Godard's statement, although slightly altered: "All you need for a movie is a gun and a girl."

Maybe all you need is a guy, a guitar, and a bunch of girls.

It makes for quite a voyage into the unknown known from which you return not giving a damn or knowing anything new about some "me" named Dylan. He's not there.

Yeah, so it goes.

Farewell.

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*This article was originally published on the author's blog site, [Behind the Curtain](#).*

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