

95 and Not Dead Yet: She's Not What She Was But I Still Love Her

by [Reg Green](#) (October 2024)



I've often tried to remember how young I was when I first knew I wanted to live in the US, but I know the clincher came when I was six. It was then that I first heard *Lullaby of Broadway* and its astounding piece of news:

When a Broadway baby says goodnight it's early in the morning.

And here I was in England in bed every night before eight.

It got better. "Manhattan babies don't sleep tight until the dawn." With, presumably, the rest of the day off school. The thought was mesmerizing.

Incredibly, America had more bounty to pour out.

*Hush-a-bye,
I'll buy you this and that,
You hear a daddy saying.*

Heaven on earth! If we go, can I have a tricycle, daddy? And could it have a bell please?

By the time I was in primary school, when the class was divided into teams to make picture books illustrating different continents, the teacher unhesitatingly made me leader for North America. (In the finished product, Canada made only a perfunctory appearance.)

At high school I was what J.D. Salinger would have called "a royal pain in the ass," ready to bore anyone with a quote from the Gettysburg address or pointing out that the capital of New York state was not the one they thought it was. Once, a history teacher who was asked a question about the Civil War by a boy who had seen a movie on it the night before, replied, "I don't know, ask him," jerking his thumb at me.

By then I'd learned that the Broadway babes who got the best presents were built like Mae West but, for a healthy male

teenager, that in no way reduced the allure.

For me, like many millions of others, the US continues to offer a bazaar of surprising new possibilities. Which is why, though I grumble time and again about the way it has fallen increasingly short of its ideals, I wouldn't change it for anywhere else.

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