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## Tired Moonlight

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# Tired Moonlight

## **Abstract**

This is a film review of *Tired Moonlight* (2015) directed by Britni West.

## **Author Notes**

Kristian Petersen is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Nebraska Omaha. His research and teaching interests include Islamic Studies, East Asian traditions, Media Studies, and Theory and Methodology in the Study of Religion. He hosts several academic podcasts at Marginalia Review of Books, Religious Studies News, New Books in Religion, and New Books in Islamic Studies.

*Tired Moonlight*  
(2014)  
Directed by Britni West



Britni West's "love letter to rural America" is like a moving postcard of a local town and the people who endure its rustic simplicity. The main character is not a particular person but the visual imagery of Montana's hidden settings, which are beautifully captured through a grainy stain of times forgotten. Fireworks, roadkill, ice cream, pay phones, and beer reveal the magic of mundane life as it presses on.

The narrative arc of the film observes three generations of this small town's natives: Dawn, a cleaning lady at a roadside motel; Dawn's daughter Sarah, a young adult who got pregnant and married too young; and Rainy, Sarah's sweet four year old. We see them dream and hope for a brighter future despite their current disillusionment as they mingle with a plethora of eclectic neighbors. The local people come together during the small celebrations of life; talent shows, Saturday night car races, Fourth of July celebrations. Surprisingly, institutional religion plays no part in the construction of this environment. Meaning is molded through their desire for love, attachment, fulfillment, and a brighter tomorrow. Overall, due to its weak narrative thrust and fleeting dialogue, the cinematic canvas is what draws you in to the picture. Through this

medium, *Tired Moonlight* may be useful for “making the familiar strange and the strange familiar” in a comparative demonstration of cultural context. While in one respect the America presented here is recognizable, it certainly is not typical for most viewers. In this regard, the film succeeds in revealing the “otherness” of our own selves, which may compel the viewer to reconsider their evaluation of the foreign “other.”