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Reflection of Wings of Desire by Wim Wenders

Wings of Desire feels more like a visual essay than a conventional story driven film. While a plot does unfold, the film cares more about its themes over a conventional plot/pace. The viewer is placed into the perspective of the camera, forced into the role of a witness, just what Damiel longs for. He wants to be seen, loved, and human. The film also seems to comment on how people move through life without truly witnessing or experiencing it. This idea extends to a larger, almost political level, like how nations make decisions that affect people's lives as if they are invisible, much like Russia and Germany with the Berlin Wall.

The idea of leaving behind eternity might seem great to some, boredom to others. But perhaps it reminds of the urgency of feeling, how emotions, love, and experiences become more meaningful when they are temporary. The film shows the fragility of existence, making every moment more profound. I remember feeling like this when I read Big Two Hearted River in “In Our Time” by Ernest Hemingway.

At first, I found the film disorienting, as I wasn’t expecting such an avant-garde approach. Especially coming from Apocalypse Now and Winter’s Bone. It took me about 20 minutes to adjust, but once I embraced its trance-like pace and slow narrative, I began to appreciate its molasses-like energy. Then when Peter Falk appeared and the shift to color happened, which took me out of the trance and gave me my regular viewing feeling. Wondering if this shift in pace reflects East Berlin and how stagnant everything was until someone took a sledgehammer to the wall.