

ROBERT PHILLIPS

How I Missed Seeing Judy Garland

One day I read in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that she was appearing
At The Palace Theater in New York.

I saved my allowance and sent
my Aunt Elinor in Manhattan
a twenty-five-dollar money order:

“Get me the Saturday matinee,”
I wrote. Then I bought a bus ticket.
On the Greyhound my head was full

of *Sewanee*, *You Made Me Love You*,
and especially *Over the Rainbow*,
with its happy little Bluebirds.

When I got to New York,
my aunt said proudly, “Oh,
that’s only a one-woman show

on a bare stage. I bought you
a ticket for a real Broadway
musical—chorus girls, scenery!”

It was something called
Texas 'Lil Darling with
someone named Kenny Delmar.
I hated it. Years later,
when Garland died, I lived in Manhattan.
I went up to Frank Campbell’s

Funeral Parlor for the viewing.
But the line went on for blocks.
Many held photographs of her,

others played her records on portable machines. It was the beginning of the multimedia funeral procession.

That's how I missed seeing Judy Garland.