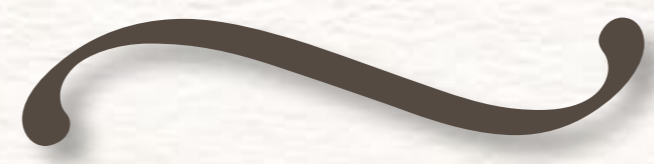


LESSER FLEAS



J Brooks Jensen

A Brooks Jensen Arts Publication

Standing on rocks is a favorite pastime of mine. Their solidity is reassuring. We are connected, the rocks of the Earth and all of us. We are pulled — quite literally by gravity — until we touch rock beneath us. Safe and secure.



Nothing brings home the enormity of time and our microscopic place in it, than watching the rocks for while and trying to feel important while making a photograph. We are specks. No, we are specks on the specks. Okay, we are *dust motes* on the specks on the specks — on this sphere of rocks orbiting the sun.



Reminds me of that age-old nursery rhyme known as *The Siphonaptera* ...

*Big fleas have little fleas
Upon their back to bite 'em.
And little fleas have lesser fleas,
And so, ad infinitum.*

We are way down the list of *ad infinitum*. Not at the bottom, but pretty close to it. Somewhere between the protozoa and the elephant. All safe and secure on the rocks.

Strangely, I find all this comforting. It's nice to be put in place on a cosmic scale. It's relaxing to be immersed in a humility encouraged by the rocks. A lesser flea indeed, but how nice to be carried along on the Bigger Flea's back.




In the parlance of the day, “we are all one” — except that I am 61 and the Earth is 4.5 *billion* years old. I cannot comprehend that number.

Like every living thing, I experience life by the yardstick of *my time* on the planet. It simply does not compute that I am 0.000000013 as old as the rocks I photograph.*

No, we are not *one*, but we *are* bound together — fleas upon fleas upon fleas on the rocks.

** If the rocks were my age,
I'd be 25-seconds old.*



A photograph of a large, layered rock formation, likely sandstone, under a blue sky with white clouds. The rock face is rugged and shows distinct horizontal layers. The sky is filled with large, fluffy white clouds. The overall scene is bright and clear.

I was taught to respect my elders — which includes, I suppose, these mineral entities that are so much older than I am. Makes me feel somewhat *whippersnapperish* — which is a good thing as one enters the sixth decade of life. Makes time in the red rocks a sort of worship, too, I suppose — a time to be thankful, and I am.



Brooks Jensen is a fine-art photographer, publisher, workshop teacher, and writer. In his personal work he specializes in small prints, hand-made artist's books, and digital media publications.

He and his wife (Maureen Gallagher) are the owners, co-founders, editors, and publishers of the award winning *LensWork*, one of today's most respected and important periodicals in fine art photography. With subscribers in 73 countries, Brooks' impact on fine art photography is truly world-wide. His long-running podcasts on art and photography are heard over the Internet by thousands every day. All 900+ podcasts are available at [LensWork Online](#), the LensWork membership website. LensWork Publishing is also at the leading edge in multimedia and digital media publishing with *LensWork Extended* — a PDF based, media-rich expanded version of the magazine.

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