



KOKORO

Brooks Jensen Arts ~ March 2018, Vol 4, No 1



Contents

Perhaps Lafcadio Hearn will not protest too much if I paraphrase (almost word for word) from *Kokoro*, his 1895 book of Japanese life. He explains this important Japanese term far better than I ever could:

The entries comprising this volume treat of the inner rather than the outer life, — for which reason they have been grouped under the title *Kokoro* (heart). Written with the above character, this word signifies also *mind*, in the emotional sense; *spirit*; *courage*; *resolve*; *sentiment*; *affection*; and *inner meaning*, — just as we say in English, 'the heart of things.'

#093

Hawaiian Canopy



Hawaiian Canopy

Brooks Jensen

A lovely, lovely place, Hawaii.
Warm breezes, lush vegetation.
Not a bad place to be a tree.
Not a bad place to rest *under*
a tree, in the shade,
perhaps for eternity.













松中家之墓

MATSURAKA FAMILY

#094

Offworld



Offworld

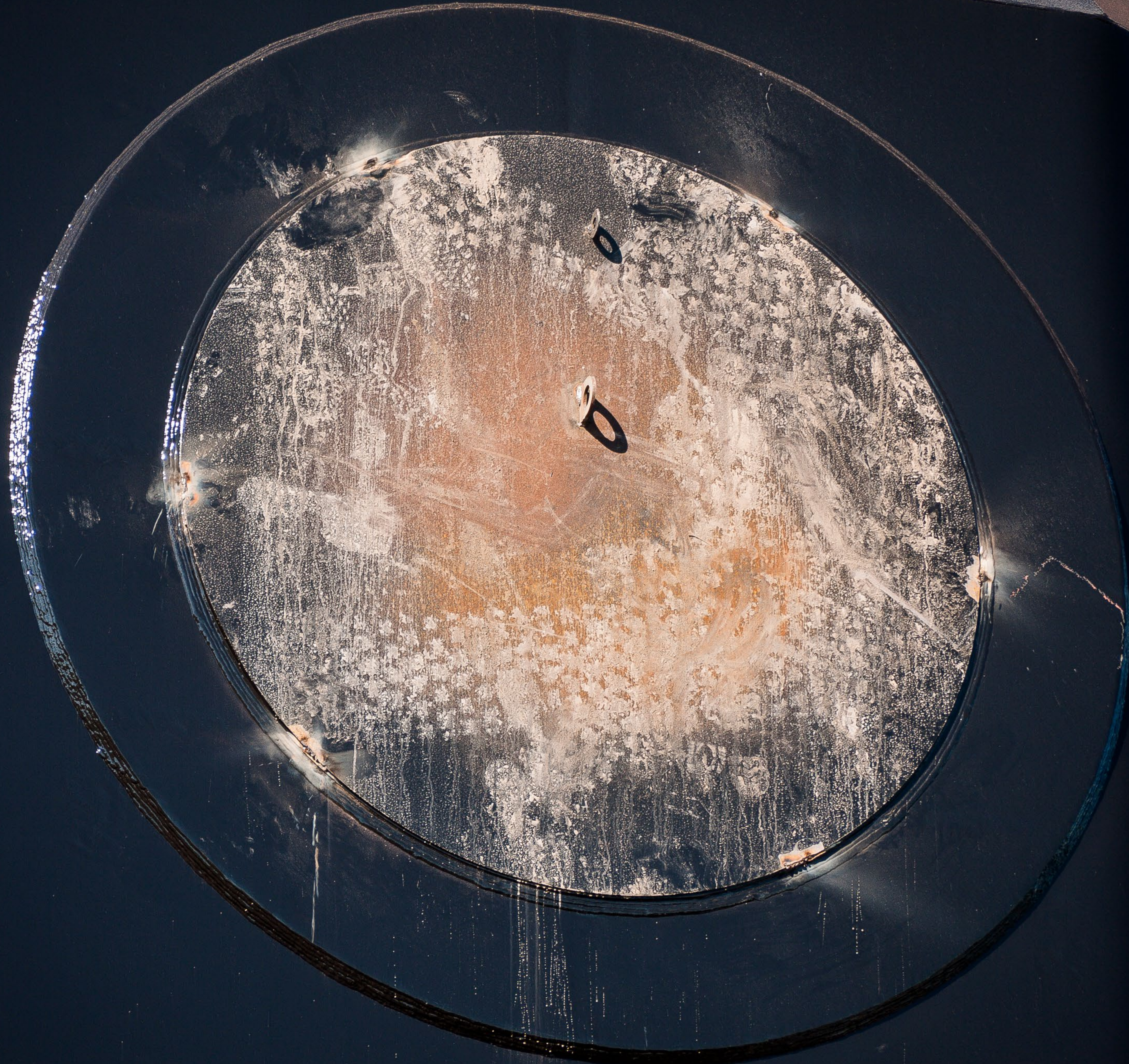
Brooks Jensen











You're in a desert,
walking along in the sand
when all of a sudden
you look down and see
a tortoise.
It's crawling toward you . . .







#095

The Staccato of Life

The Staccato of Life

Brooks Jensen





Life is pattern.

DNA is pattern.

Dot...dot...dot
the pattern repeats,
generations, siblings,
clones.

Like a biological
Morse Code,
tapping out
the never-ending,
never-exactly-the-same
patterns.



























#096

The Fisherman with One Eye

The Fisherman with One Eye

Brooks Jensen



They tell us there are almost 7 billion people sharing this little planet of ours – 7 billion stories of life and love and loss. The problem with photography is that it allows us to know there *is* a story but often denies us the details. I suppose, to be honest, it is not photography to blame, but our own lack of courage.

A friend of mine is fearless about such things. We joke that if she walks into a party and spies an unknown someone across the room who has a patch over their eye, within half an hour she'll know the entire story of how, why, and when – in some detail. Too bad she was not with me on that bitterly cold January day in China on the banks of the Yellow River.

I had asked our translator and driver if he knew of a fishing village nearby where we could make some photographs. I had visions

of cliché, but picturesque junks and straw hats in a setting sun. When he said he'd located a village, I was filled with anticipation. An hour later, in the middle of barren winter cornfields, we turned down a country lane.



The fishing village was announced by a carved wooden carp at the head of the road. As far as I could see, there was no river, no dock, no boats. The village itself appeared deserted, no doubt because the temperature was significantly below freezing. The fields of frozen ponds – presumably with the



fish sleeping below the ice – were covered with row after row of snow drifts in wind-blown patterns.

We stopped in the middle of the dirt road to make a photograph of one of the buildings. Suddenly the door opened and smiling villagers invited us inside where it was warm

and comfortable. The building was a store with one almost-empty counter containing a few boxes of cigarettes and a couple of bottles of Chinese whiskey. The shelves on the wall were barren except for a few odds and ends. The men huddled around a small stove burning corn-cobs to warm the room.



As I photographed the group, the one-eyed fisherman suddenly posed as though he knew this was a moment of importance. He stared directly into the lens and waited for me to finish making the photograph. We smiled and both nodded, the only language we shared. I wanted to know his story, but all I have is his portrait.



Notes

Hawaiian Canopy

I guess I was expecting a lot of *plants*. The *trees* took me by surprise. Giant canopies of finely intricate, lace-like branches and leaves. I was mesmerized – and isn't that a good thing when you are out photographing? The first examples are from a park on the eastern coast, just south of Hilo. The giant tree in the cemetery is west of Hilo. I can't say precisely where they are because I spent all of my time looking *up*.

Tech notes: Shot in 2012 using a Panasonic G2 and the 45-200mm zoom, then in 2015 using a Panasonic G6 and the marvelous 12-35mm f/2.8. All with tripod.

Offworld

Clearly, I've been watching too many Ridley Scott movies. I love that dark, moody look in all his movies and these images seemed to need a similar treatment. There is that sense that we are looking at something we should know, but is just out of reach of our consciousness. An air of mystery and deeply connected otherworldliness. At least that was what I was aiming for in this group.

These were photographed at the Dakota Creek Shipyard, but they just didn't look like a shipyard to me. Maybe inside a *ship* – perhaps a *space ship* – but a slightly intimidating and scary one.

Tech notes: All shot using a Panasonic G1 and G85 cameras with a variety of long lenses. For this kind of work, I like to use the compression that is created by long focal lengths. Even though I'm pretty close to the subjects, there is an immersion that takes place with a long lens when used at close range that I really like.

The Staccato of Life

One of the great advantages of digital asset management software like Adobe Lightroom or Capture One is the ability to view lots of images at once. This allows a very quick and intuitive series of unforeseen connections to take place that is simply not possible when I rummage around in Light Impressions boxes looking at negatives.

While doing some keywording in Lightroom, I noticed how many images seemed to be composed of a series of dot-like subjects. It's always possible that I just see this way, but I think it's more universal than that. Perhaps life

just grows that way – lots and lots of little bits that make up the whole of life. I gathered a couple hundred images that shared this compositional theme, then had all kinds of fun editing down to the selection you see here.

Tech notes: Photographed over 8 years, using 5 cameras and 6 different lenses. Perhaps a great example of how truly irrelevant equipment is in the creative process.

The Fisherman with One Eye

I've previously released this project as a chapbook and as a stand-alone PDF. Now that *Kokoro* has become my main vehicle for sharing work, I wanted to get this project embedded here for those who haven't seen the other two media.

This was photographed in the dead of winter in inner-Mongolia. Someday I'll have to tell the story of how I got there, but for now, the story of how I made this fisherman's portrait is enough – one of my favorite moments in China.

Tech notes: All shot within a few minutes of each other in 2011 using a Panasonic G1 and the 14-45mm kit lens.

Folios, Chapbooks, Prints

Support the artist!

For over 30 years, Brooks has shared his photographic lessons, failures, inspiration, creative path — and more than a few laughs. If you've enjoyed his free *Kokoro* PDFs publications, or been a long-time listener to his free audio commentaries (his weekly podcast *On Photography and the Creative Life*, or his daily *Here's a Thought* commentaries), here is your chance to tell him how much you appreciate his efforts. Support the artist!



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\$500 Friend of the Arts - You'll receive a thank you of a signed original print with wall hanger plus a Full Quarto chapbook

\$1000 Patron of the Arts - You'll receive a special thank you of, well, you'll see!

[You can donate to support Brooks' creative life using this link.](#) Thanks!



Brooks Jensen is a fine-art photographer, publisher, workshop teacher, and writer. In his personal work he specializes in small prints, handmade artist 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 worldwide. His long-running podcasts on art and photography are heard over the Internet by thousands every day. All 1,000+ podcasts are available at [LensWork Online](http://LensWorkOnline.com), 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.

Brooks is the author of twelve best-selling books about photography and creativity: *Photography, Art, & Media* (2016); *The Creative Life in Photography* (2013); *Letting Go of the Camera* (2004); *Single Exposures* (4 books in a series, random observations on art, photography and creativity); *Looking at Images* (2014); *Seeing in SIXES* (2016); *Seeing in SIXES* (2017); *The Best of the LensWork Interviews* (2016); as well as a photography monograph, *Made of Steel* (2012). His next books will be *Those Who Inspire Me (And Why)* and *Looking at Images 2018*. [Kokoro](http://Kokoro.com) is a free, monthly PDF e-magazine of his personal work and is available (both current and back issues) for download from his [website](http://brooks.com).

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