



KOKORO

Brooks Jensen Arts ~ April 2020, Vol 6, No 2



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.'

#136

Whispers and Mysteries



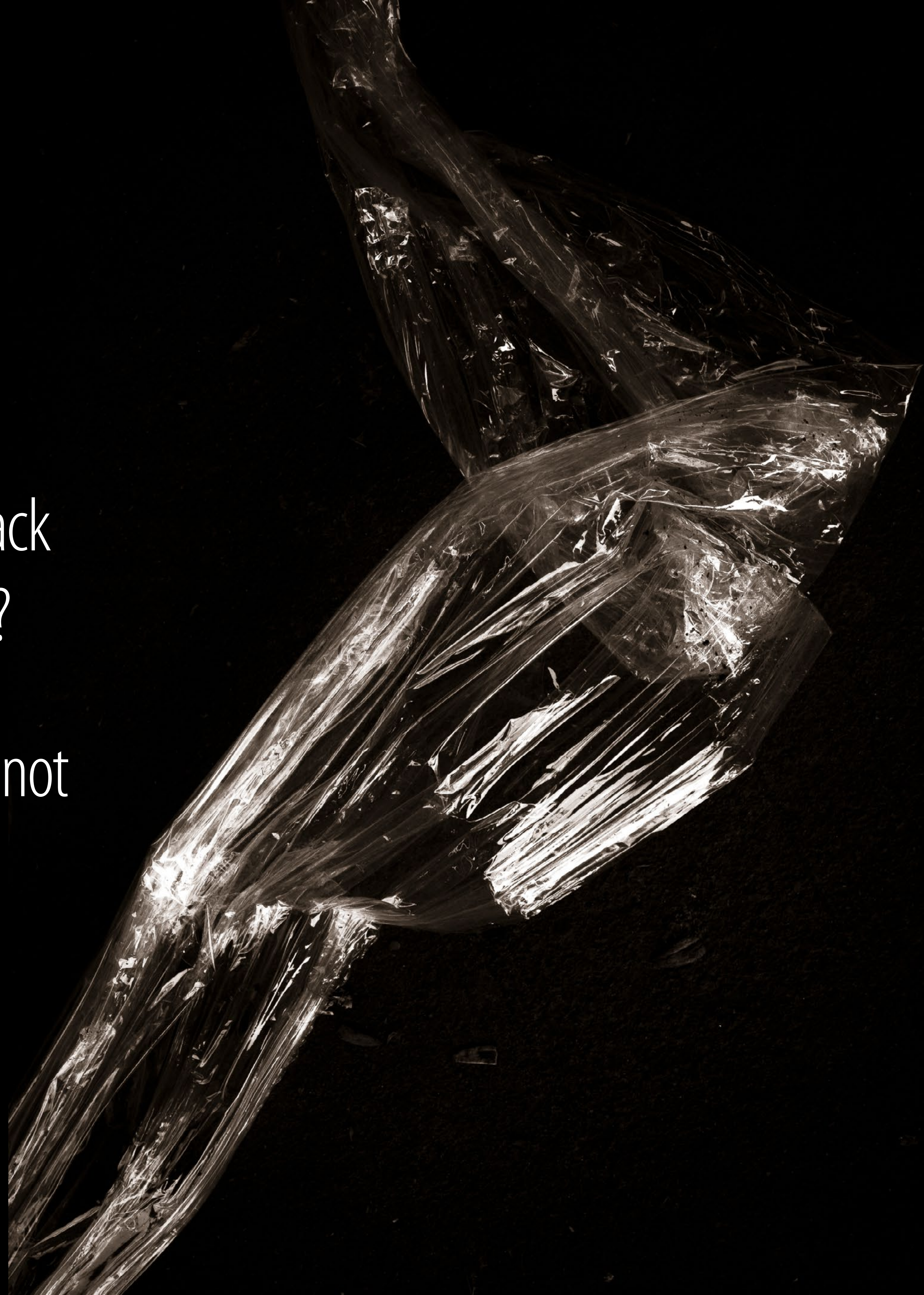
Whispers & Mysteries

Brooks Jensen

Some photographs just haunt me.

Some of *my* photographs just haunt me – which always seem strange. Shouldn't I know my own impulses and fears? Why do I keep coming back to some photographs over and over?

They whisper to me. I hear, but I do not understand.





































Porch Stories — The Coyote Caller

A One-Picture Story

I don't know if my Uncle Ray would have considered himself a master storyteller, but he certainly was. After dinner, we would all just naturally migrate to the porch for no other purpose than being together and hoping to hear the words, "I remember that time. . ."

There was the time he told us about his new "coyoto caller," a device he would blow into that made a sound like a wounded rabbit. Fully primed, he pulled the caller out of his pocket and blew a sorrowful, bleating call. I can still feel it in my bones. It wasn't long until all the dogs in the neighborhood were howling in a chorus with him.

He gave me that caller. I think of him every time I see a coyote.



#137

Silent Waves



Silent Waves

Brooks Jensen

To calm the mind in a tranquil sea;

To see the calm with the mind of tranquility.





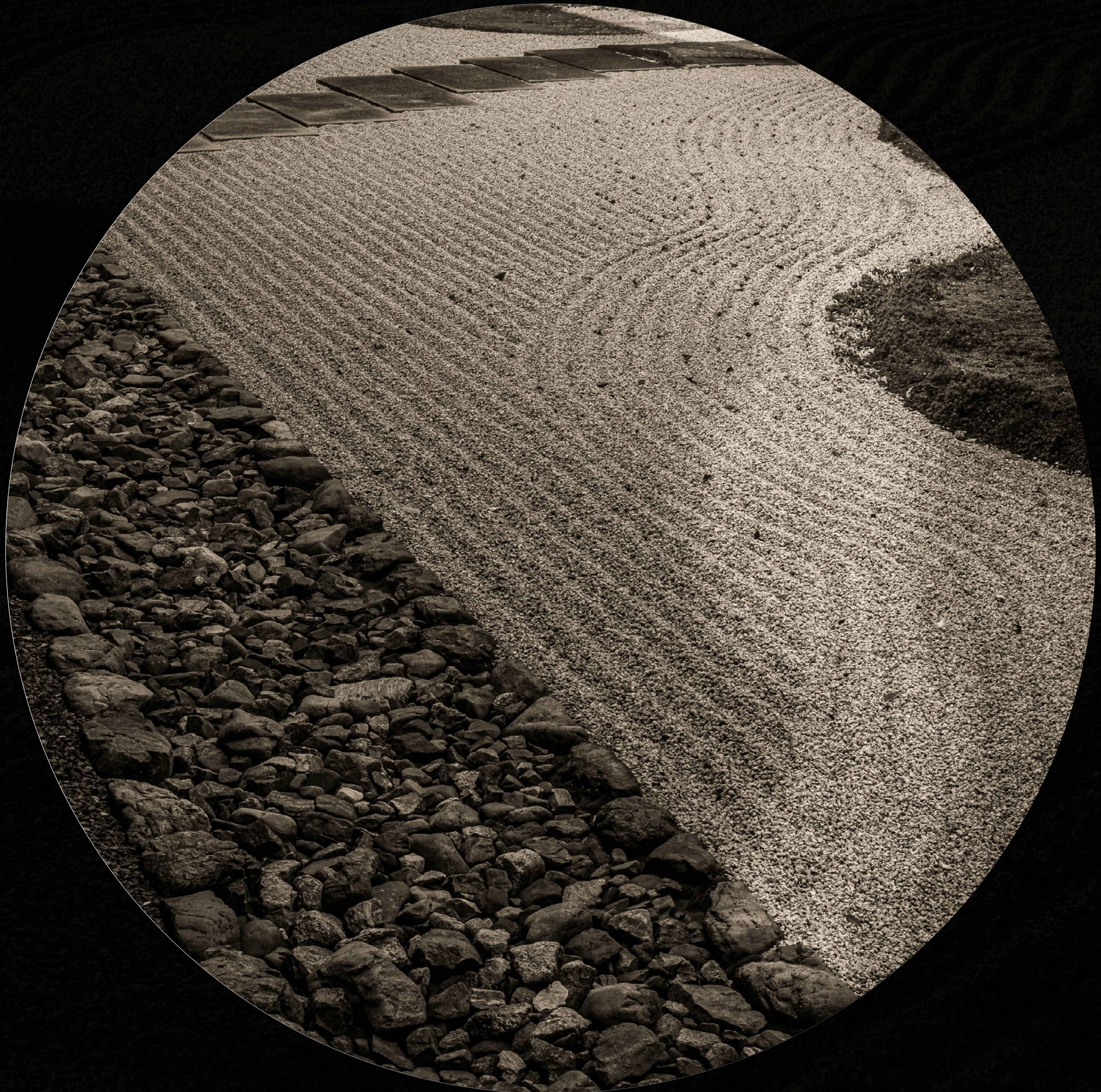






























From the following temples in Kyoto

Enkou-ji

Kennin-ji

Komyo-in

Nanzen-ji

Ryogen-ji

The E-ticket

A One-Picture Story



When Maureen and I got married, we promised each other an E-ticket for life. Nine months later, our baby, *LensWork* magazine, was born.

We just celebrated our 10,000th day of marriage. It has, indeed, been an E-ticket.

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Finding Kyoto

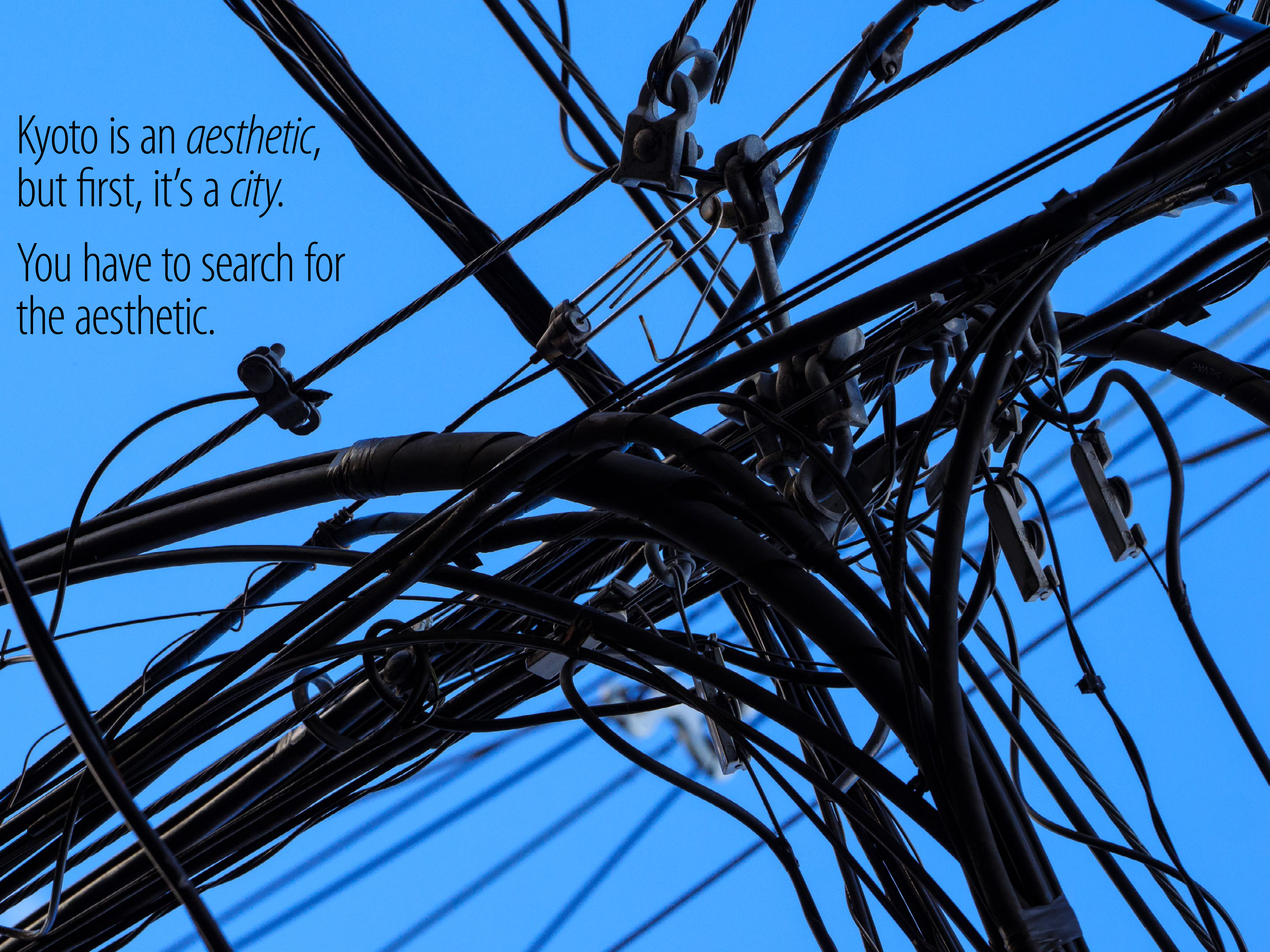


Finding Kyoto

Brooks Jensen

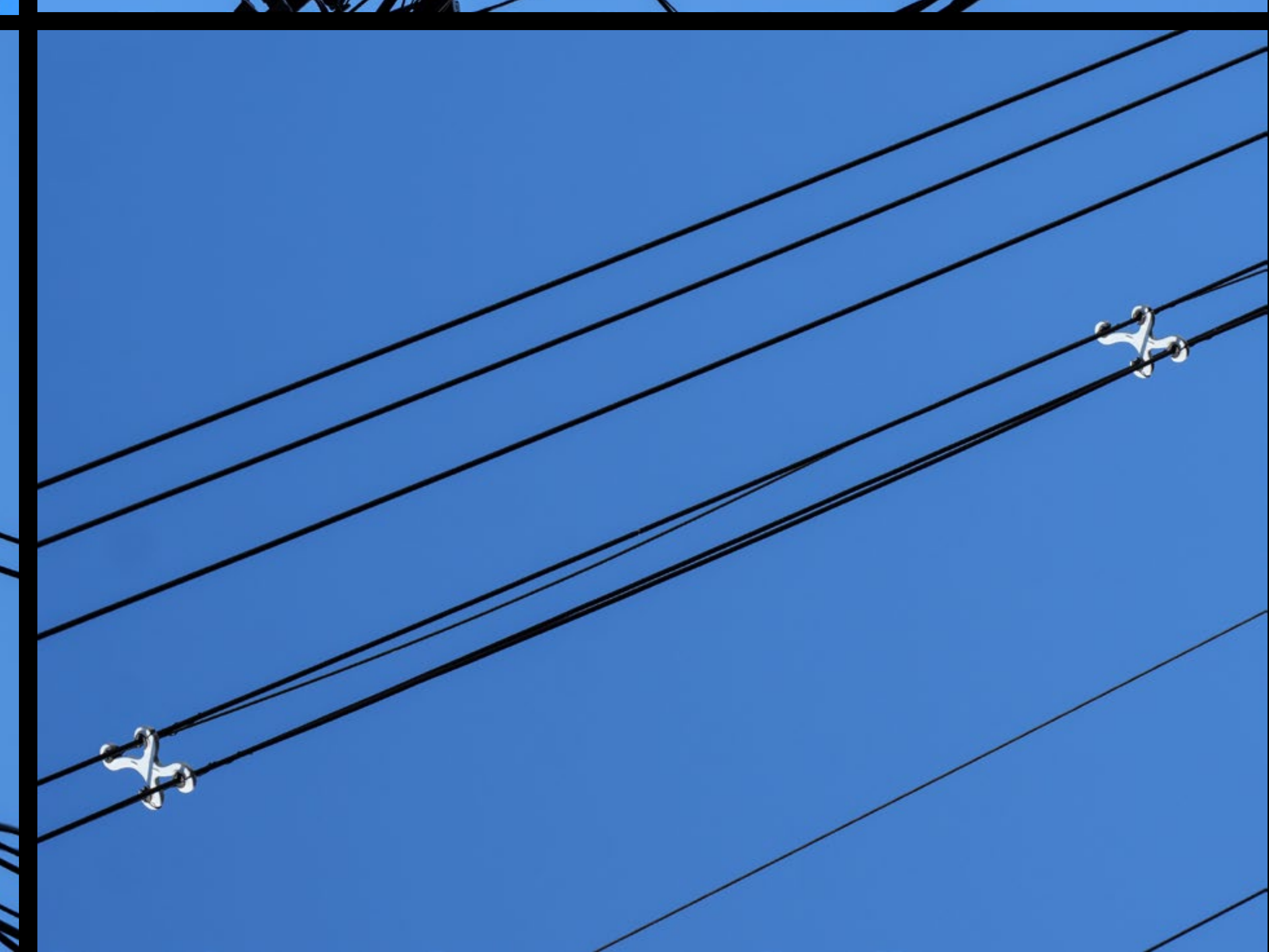
I went to Kyoto to see Kyoto.

I never thought I'd first have to *find* it.



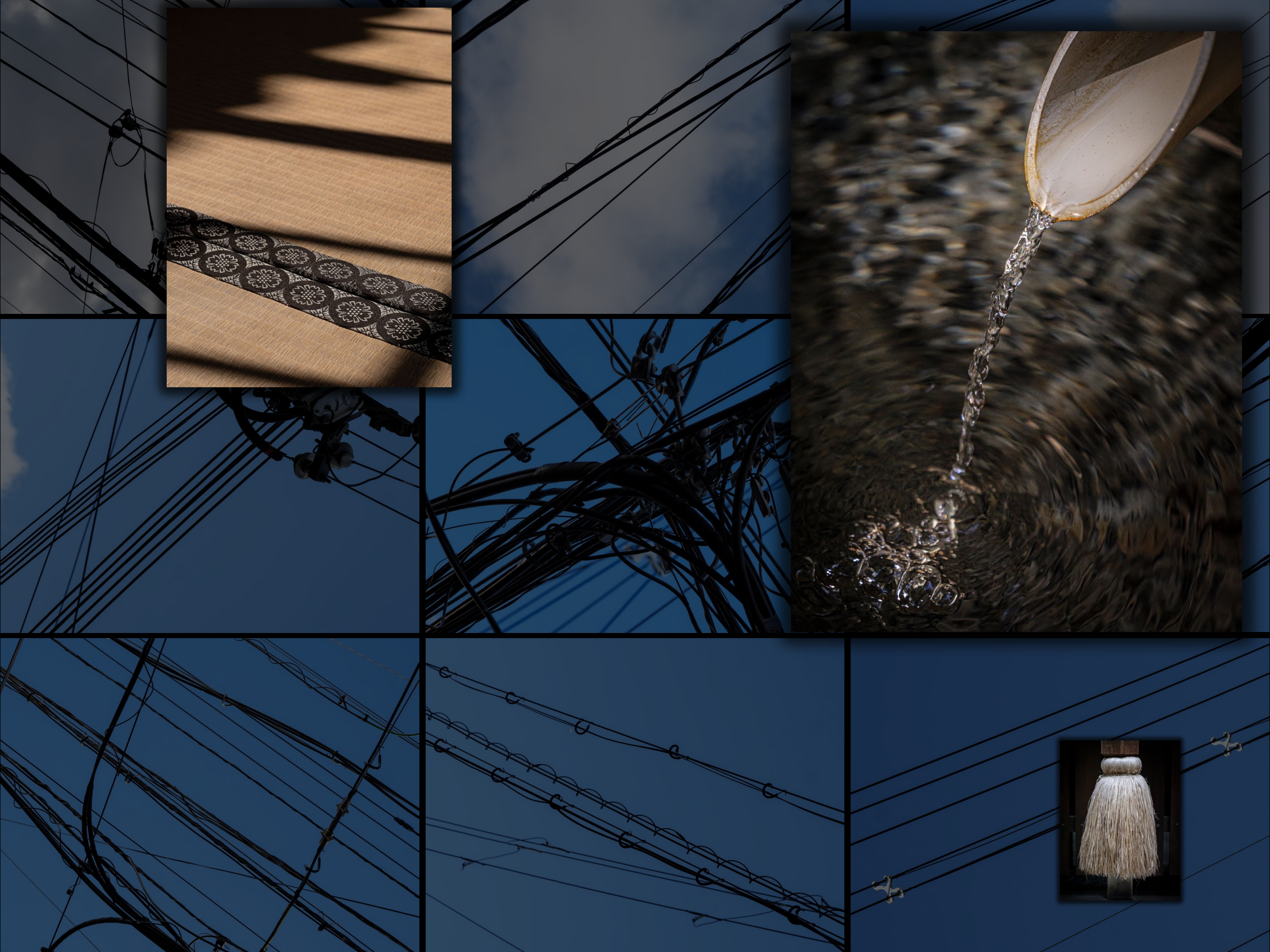
Kyoto is an *aesthetic*,
but first, it's a *city*.

You have to search for
the aesthetic.









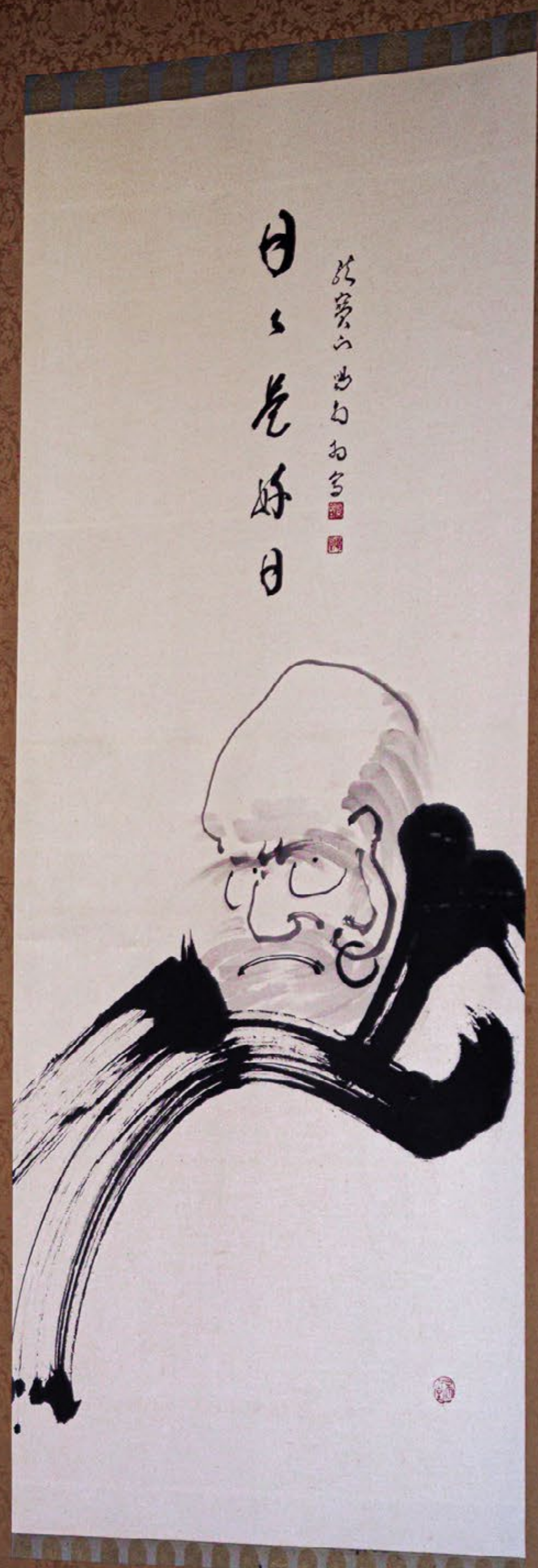












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成發の如くお名











燈籠
中村修二

燈籠
安藤不助産務

燈籠
貴秀螺鈿

燈籠
京都
シヨホテ

燈籠
進藤リョウ

燈籠
後藤隆

燈籠
かみとむ

燈籠
藤本

燈籠
畑ノ子

燈籠
株堀内商店

燈籠
田丸弥

燈籠
木堂玉壽軒

燈籠
有明

燈籠
上嶋啓史

燈籠
松野醬油



Inseam

A One-Picture Story



My father was 100% Swedish, so I always considered myself at least half-Swedish. It wasn't until I was in my fifties that I realized my 26" inseam comes from my maternal Armenian grandfather.

I was reading about the Armenian genocide of 1906 when it occurred to me that my grandfather had not "come to America" but had *escaped* to America, without his family, without any marketable skills, without any money. He was nine — or perhaps six, he could never remember. Looking at the photos of those starving, suffering Armenians, I realize they were my people — my short, stocky people.

#139

Faces in the Rock

Faces in the Rock

Brooks Jensen

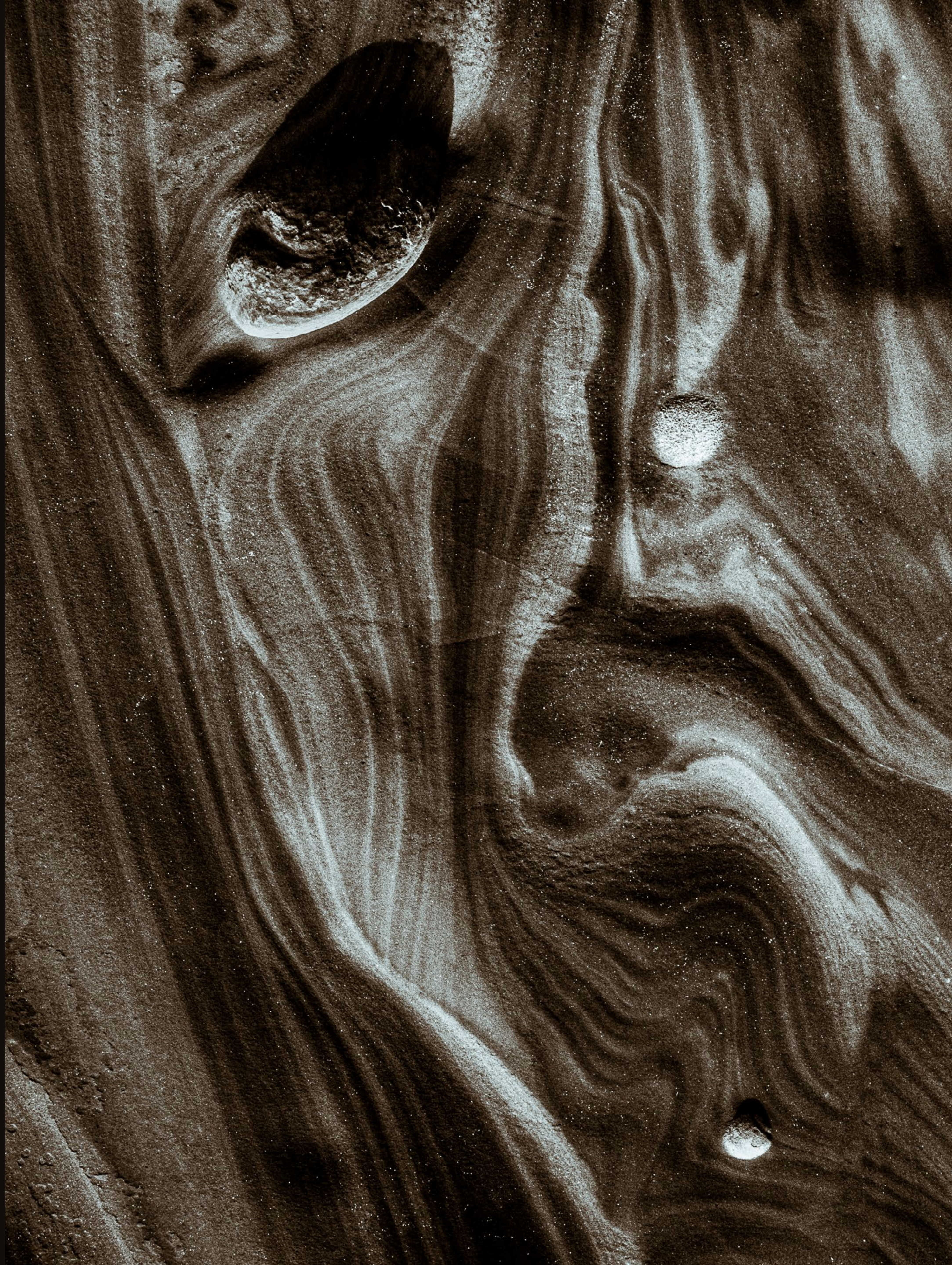


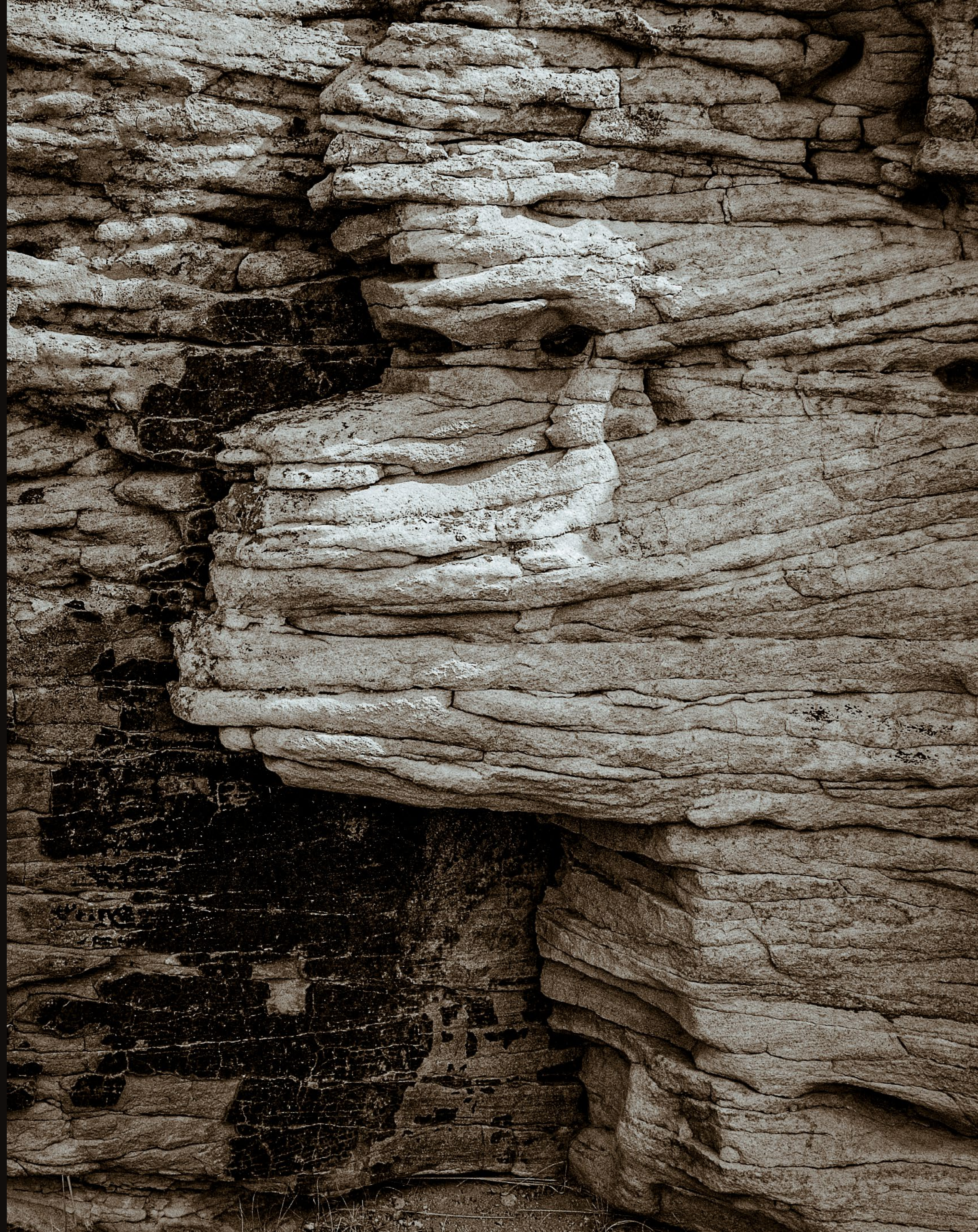
We photographers look at the landscape.

Sometimes the landscape looks back.























Notes

Whispers & Mysteries

Sometimes, I'll glance at a photograph a dozen times or more, dismissing it with each instance. Then, for reasons I cannot explain, it will breach my consciousness and grab my attention. It's as though I've finally heard it whispering to me. This happens not just with my images, but with other photographers' images, too. When the time is right, the door will open.

Tech notes: Photographs are made *with* cameras, but *because* of something that happens to the photographer on a deeper level. In terms of the "technology of photography," is it too much to suggest that an understanding of ourselves – our *deeper* selves – might be one of the most important of our many artistic tools?

Silent Waves

In late 2019, I visited Kyoto for three weeks to photograph. My back was giving me all kinds of problems and mobility was an issue. I needed lots of time to just sit and relax my back muscles. What better place to do so than in a Japanese rock garden! I'm still not sure I understand them, but I do find these gardens irresistible.

Tech notes: All photographed with a Panasonic G9 and one of the three lenses I took on this trip: the Leica 12-60mm, the Leica 50-200mm, and the Panasonic 7-14mm. Of note (at least for me) is that all of these images were photographed without the use of either a tripod nor a monopod. All handheld, all using IBIS, all sharp. I didn't lose a single image on the trip due to camera shake. Sold.

Finding Kyoto

I was convinced that there would be something interesting to photograph in the neighborhoods and back streets of Kyoto. I rented a bicycle; on day two I crash on the bicycle. Kyoto is a city and I am definitely not a city-boy.

In those 48 hours of peddling the streets of Kyoto, I discovered what a metropolis it is. My only previous experiences of Japan had been in the northern, rural prefectures of Tohoku. Old Kyoto exists, but one has to look for it, search for it. I found it, but only after completely changing my expectations. Live and learn.

Tech notes: During my ill-fated bicycle experiment, I carried my Panasonic G9 in the basket attached to the handlebars. I wanted it handy in case I saw something interesting. When I crashed the bike, the camera went flying, landing hard on the cement sidewalk. I was sore for

three weeks; the camera didn't even get a scratch and functioned perfectly – a testament to great engineering and materials.

Faces in the Rock

With this project, I know that I am just projecting my own feelings onto inanimate objects. I know there are not really any faces in the rocks. But how is that unreality any different from the fact that we often interpret a relatively small and flat paper rendition of our vision as looking at the world? There is fiction when we look at a photograph. These "faces" are just another form of that fiction, aren't they?

Tech notes: These images seem somewhat creepy to me, so I've used an odd split-tone to enhance that creepiness. The highlights are blue and the shadows are a reddish brown. To me, they feel ghostly, other-worldly, in a word, *creepy*. And that's exactly how I feel when I'm out in the desert photographing them.

One-Picture Stories

Memory, like storytelling, is all anecdotes and snippets – the story of our lives.

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!



Choose whichever level of support fits your appreciation and pocketbook. We thank you, he thanks you, and here's looking forward to the exciting content that is yet to come in all our *LensWork* publications and media as Brooks continues exploring this creative life.

\$15 Applause - Thanks!

\$25 Standing Ovation - You'll receive a signed copy of *Dreams of Japan*

\$50 Basic Support - You'll receive a thank you of a signed 6R (8-page, 6x8") chapbook, handmade and signed by the artist

\$100 Essential Support - You'll receive a signed Full Quarto (16-page, 8x11") chapbook handmade and signed by the artist

\$250 Sustaining Support - You'll receive a thank you of an original, signed print + wall hanger

\$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 1,200+ podcasts are available at [LensWork Online](https://lenswork.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 fourteen 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); *Seeing in SIXES* (2018); *Seeing in SIXES* (2019); *The Best of the LensWork Interviews* (2016); as well as a photography monograph, *Made of Steel* (2012). [Kokoro](https://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](https://www.brooks-jensen.com).

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