



*Seventy-five at  
Seventy-five*

*A photographic journal*

*Lee Backer*



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## *Seventy-five at Seventy-five*

This year I turn seventy-five, and to commemorate the occasion, I decided to create a journal of seventy-five of my favorite images. Needing to stay home more than usual in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I used the time to review my archive of images, and this journal is one result of that exercise.

I have been photographing for just over fifty years — another milestone — so this selection of images spans two-thirds of my life.

Normally, when I work on a project, it has a defined theme and I select the best photographs for that theme to create a portfolio. This time, however, I am showing my photos as stand-alone, individual images. Limiting myself to a specific number of images

challenged me to evaluate my photos in a different way. I often had to decide which of two unrelated images — taken at different times, in different locations, and of different subjects — I like better. Once all the images were selected, I organized them into groups to facilitate viewing.

I look upon this collection as a survey of my photographic journey up to this point. In ten years, I will be eager to see how many of these photos are chosen for my collection “Eighty-five at Eighty-five.”

January 2021

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Tech notes:

Film cameras – Nikon and Olympus 35mm and Wista 4x5. Digital cameras and lenses – Nikon, Sony, and Panasonic. One photo was taken with an iPhone.

# Origin Story

After college, I started my first full-time job; eventually, I got time off for vacation. While planning my first trip, it occurred to me that most people take a camera along to bring back pictures to show friends and family, and that I should do the same. Before that, I had never paid much attention to cameras or photography. When I returned from the vacation, I became friends with someone who had been photographing for a while. He showed me his photographs,

which I thought were beautiful. So, when I showed him my vacation photos, I was quite surprised when he said I had a good eye for photography and urged me to pursue it. Soon after, I bought a good camera and started to explore my immediate surroundings. The image of the man and the squirrel on the next page was taken with just my second roll of film — beginner's luck. And that is how my creative life began.





# The Natural World

I feel most at peace and in touch with the world when I surround myself with Nature and try to experience all that is before me. Perhaps this is what Joseph Campbell meant when he said, “The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with Nature.”









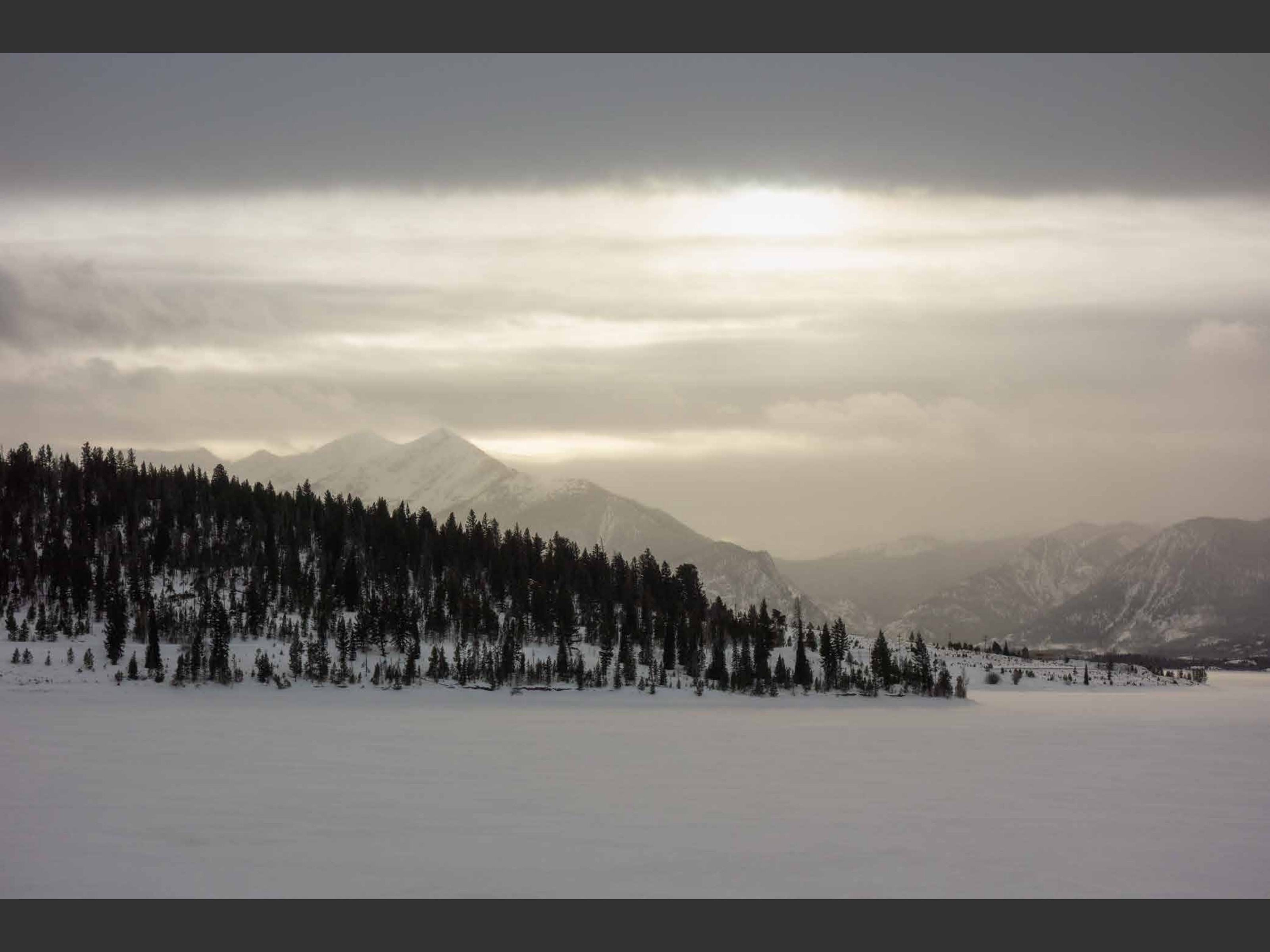




















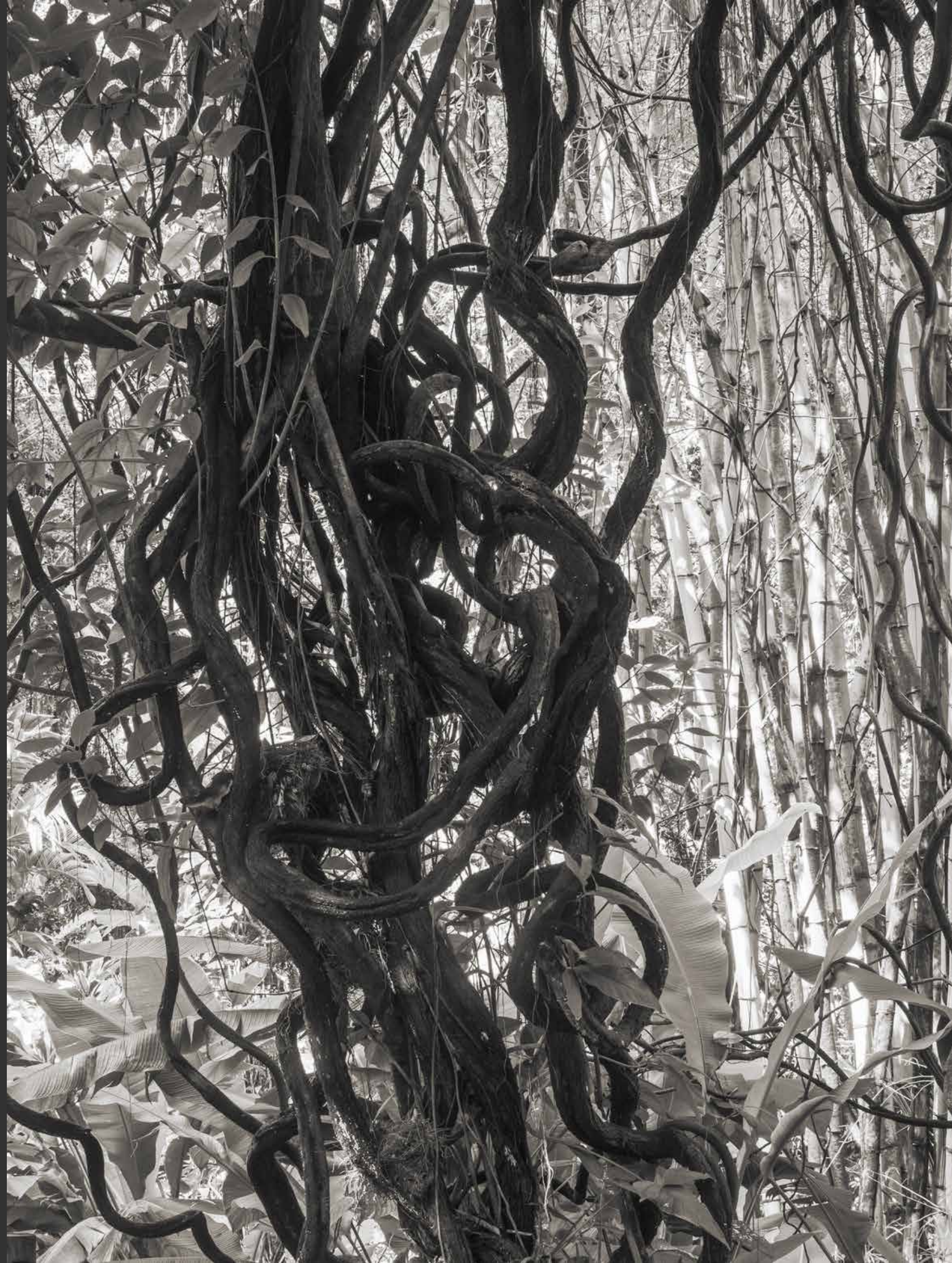






















# Rural and Urban

I find it fascinating to wander around villages and cities, whether foreign or familiar. Sometimes, when I turn a corner and see something interesting to photograph, I feel like it found me rather than the other way around.

















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2009  
Large, colorful graffiti letters in purple, yellow, and orange.



VEXOR • MERES  
SHIRO  
REPO • BREAK  
2009



FUEGO  
KND







HARLEM HEIGHTS  
MONDAYS 10P  
Premieres March 2

BET

COTTON CLUB

Cotton Club

OFFICE OF ANCHORED  
COTTON CLUB  
COTTON CLUB  
COTTON CLUB





*Every  
part  
of  
me  
loves  
it*

*Every  
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**MICHELOB**

BEER





# Shapes and Lines

I enjoy finding interesting geometric arrangements and patterns in the angles, shadows, and textures of buildings.













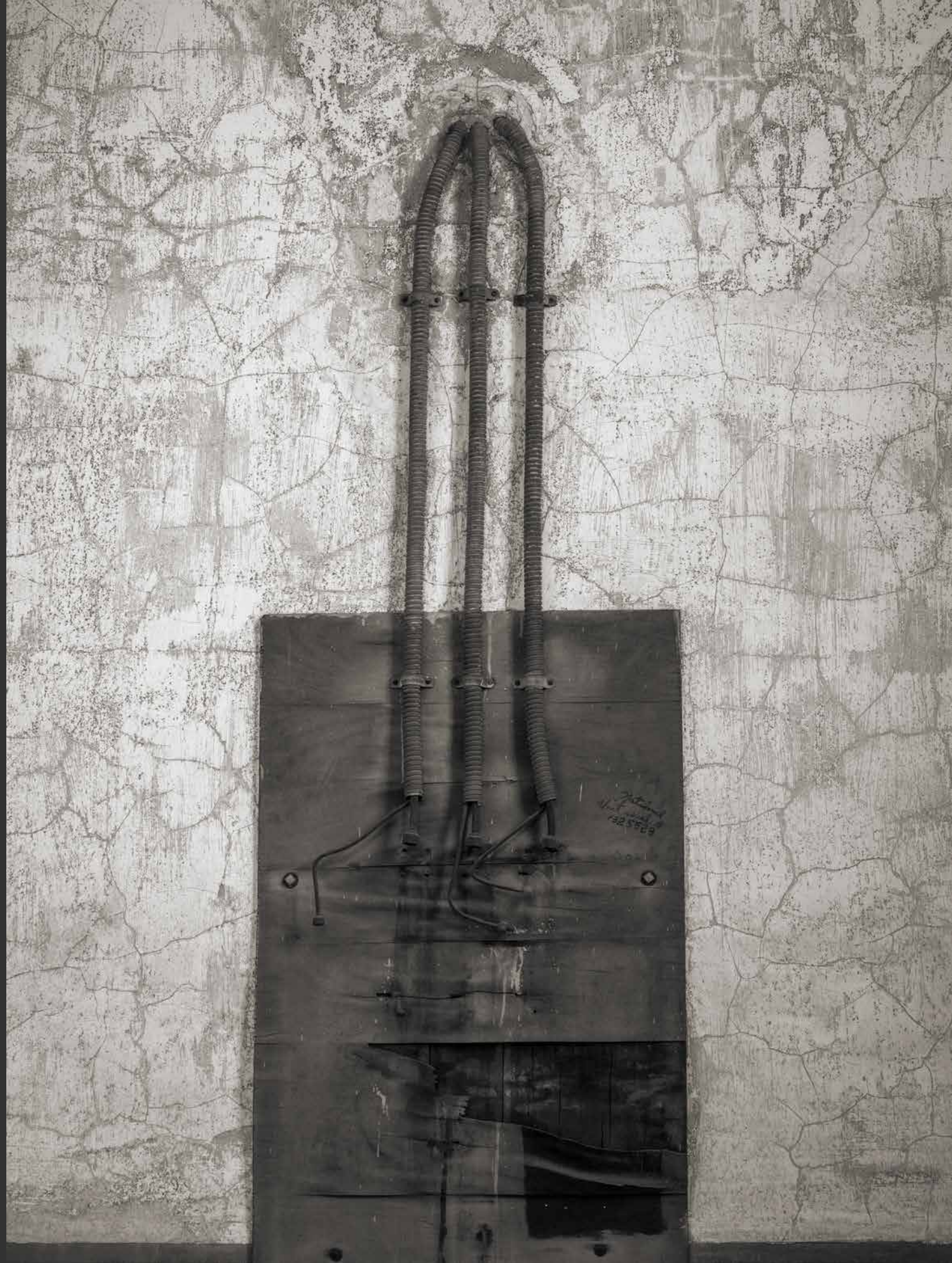














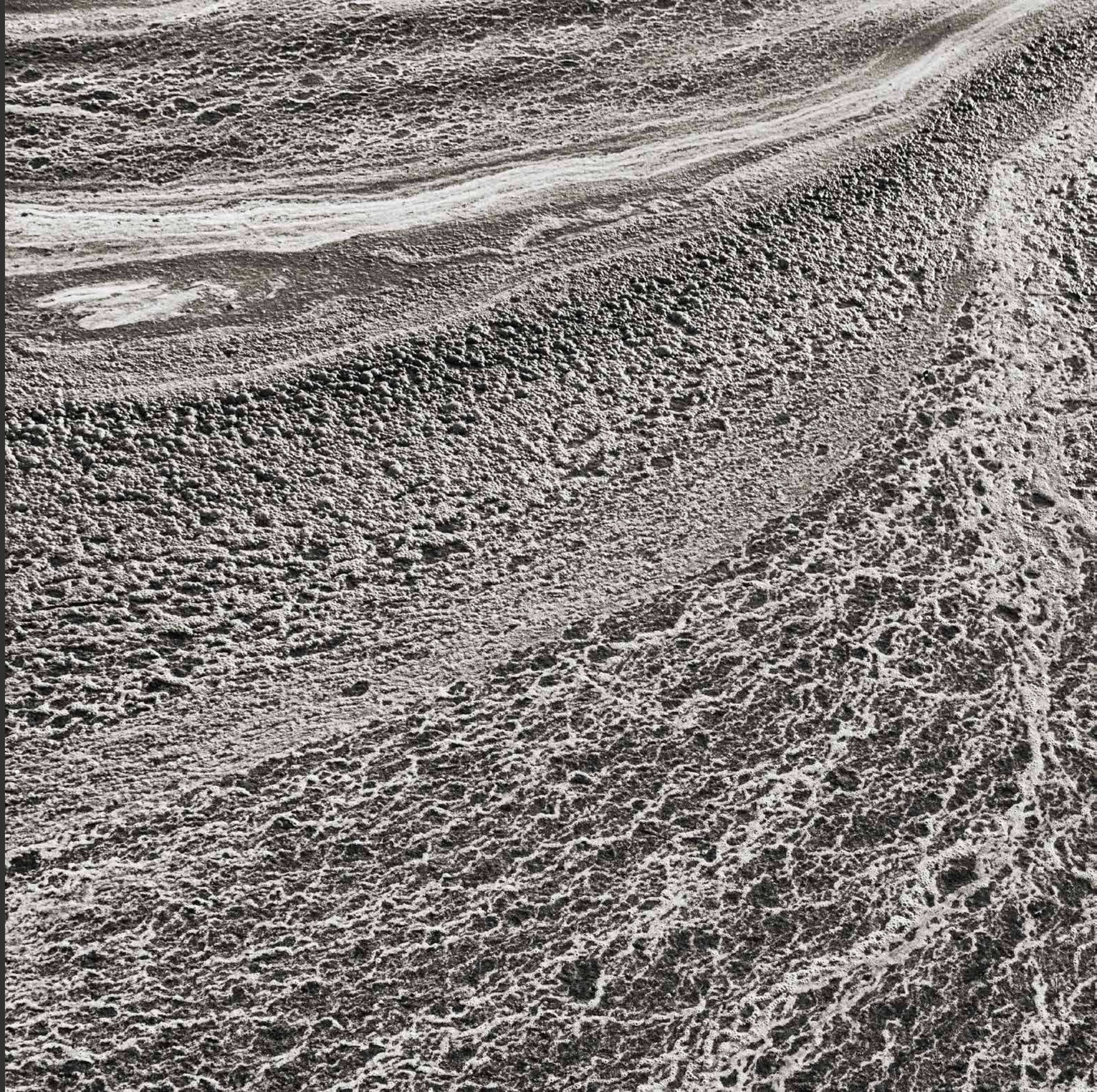
# Patterns in Nature

Sand, stone, wood, water. These elements present me with patterns — some abstract, some representational — that delight my eye and spark my imagination into thinking beyond what the image is to what else it is.





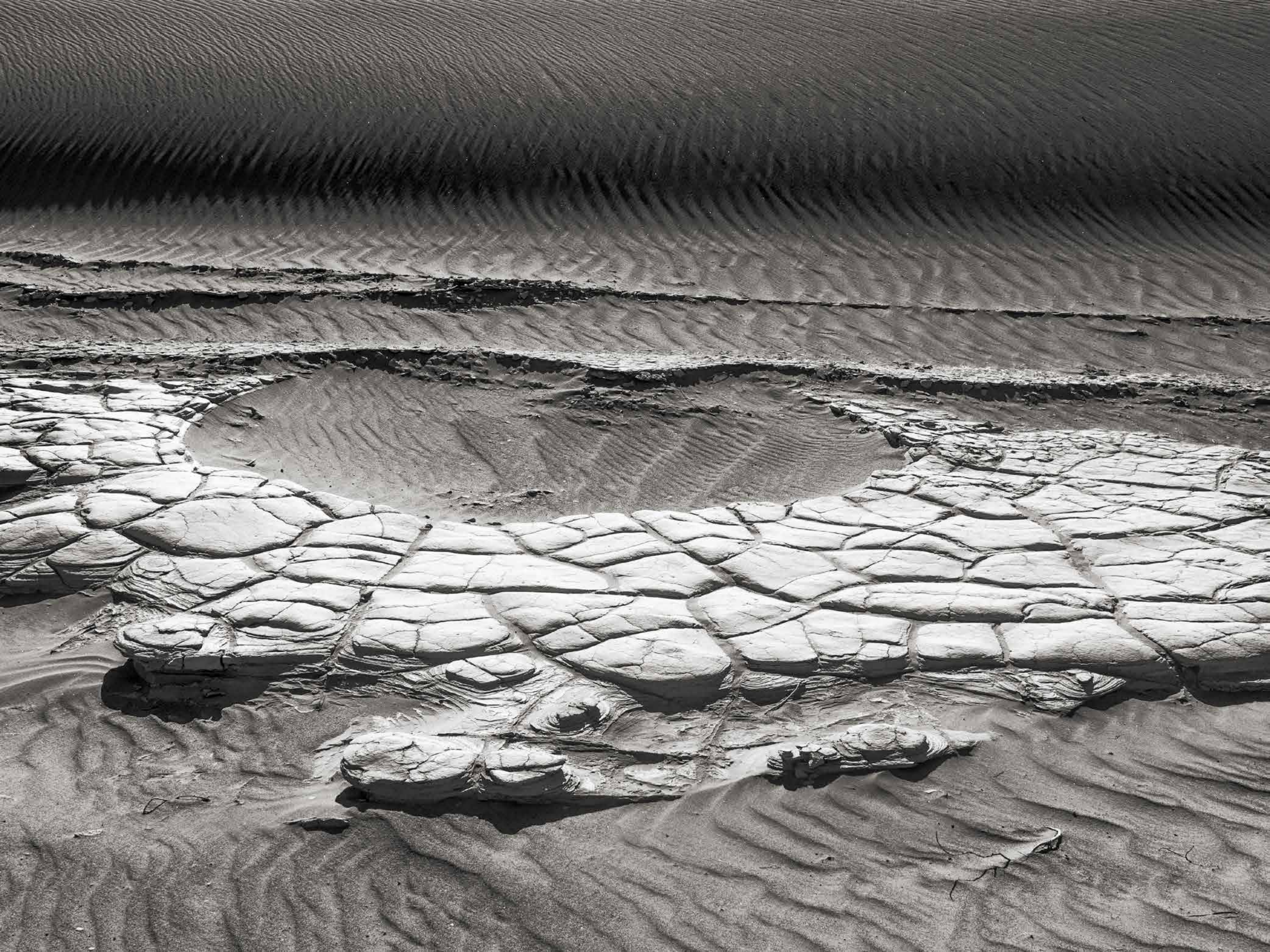








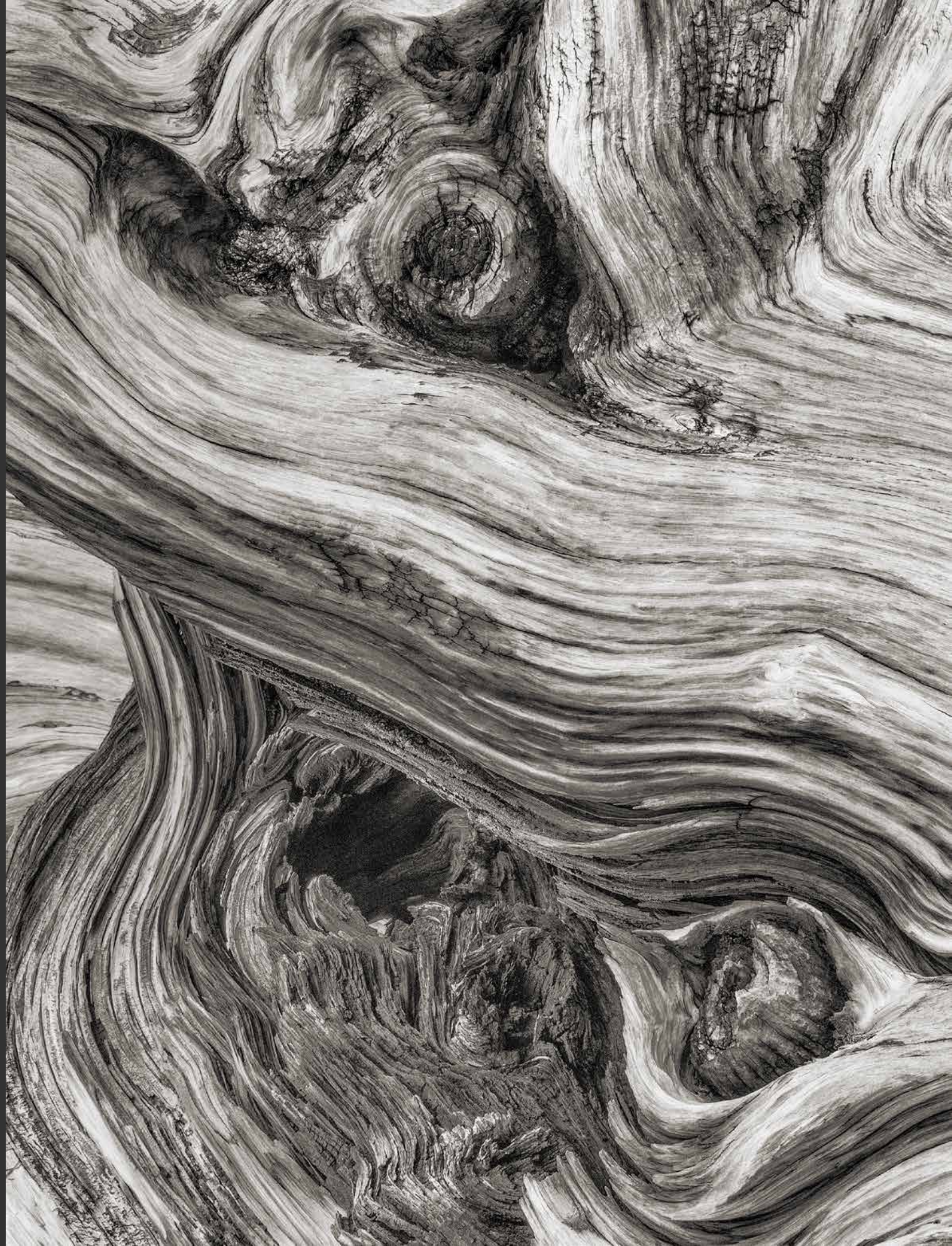


























# Twilight

During sunset I have explored neighborhoods in large cities and small towns. Many places appear unremarkable in the daylight, but as the light shifts and the streets become deserted, they take on a fascination that is surreal, but also transient. These photos are from my project *The Edge of Night*.









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204







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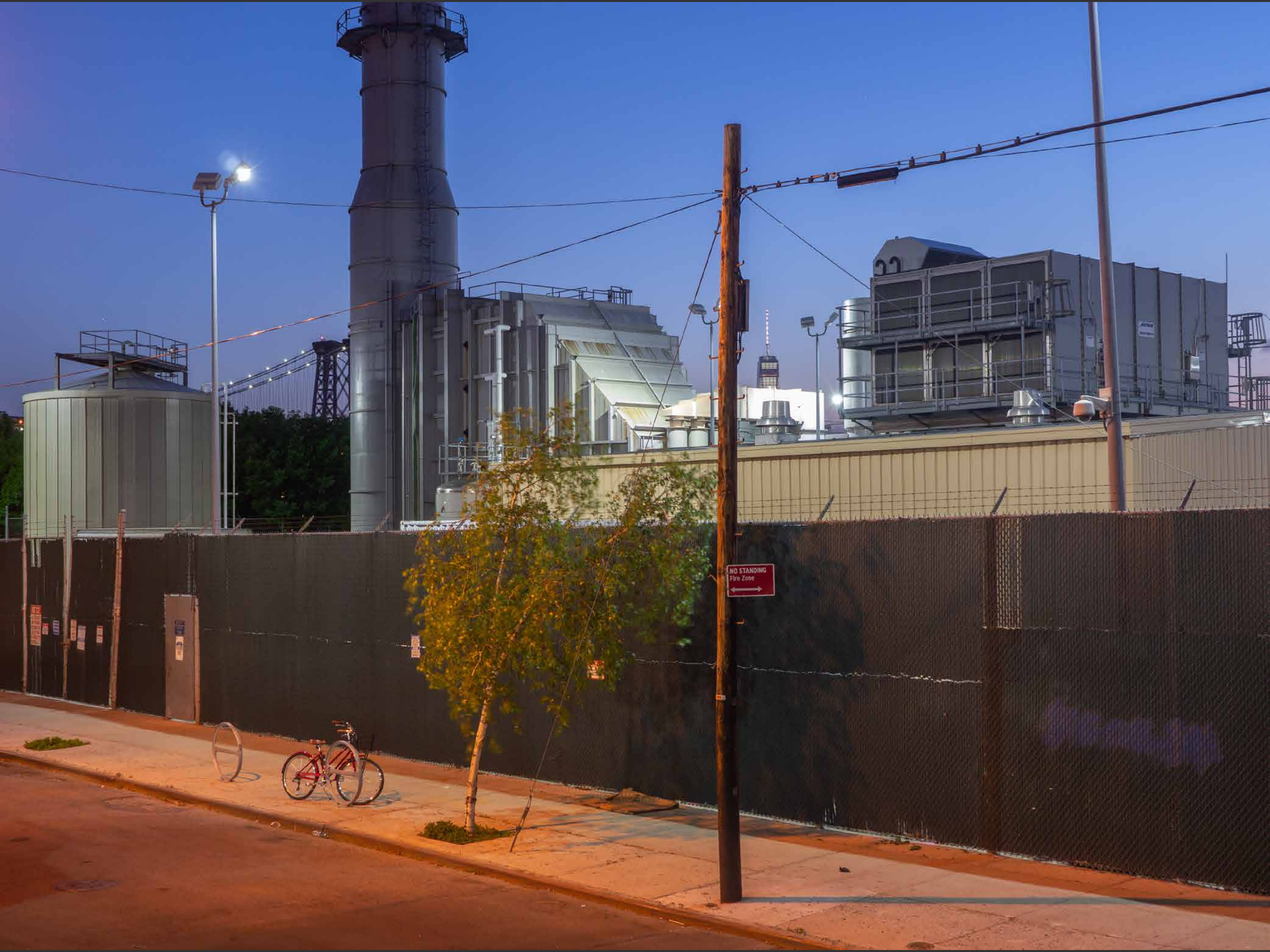
**COLIN**  
Construction Co. Inc.  
80 WEST 27th STREET  
NEW YORK, NY 10001  
212-947-9540





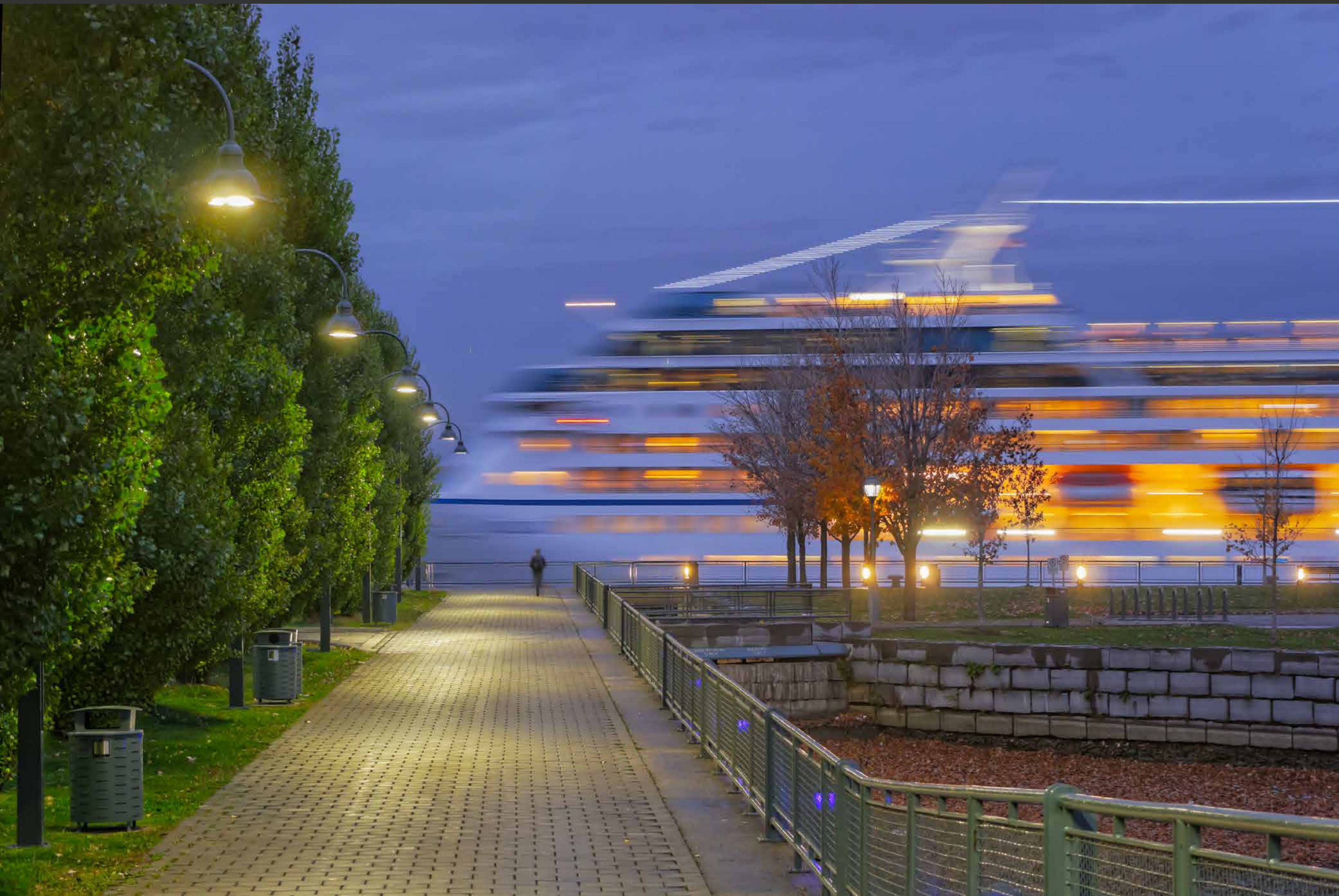






NO STANDING  
Fire Zone  
← →















# Stone

These images speak to me of the passage of time. When I see stones that have been extracted from the earth, then shaped and set into the ground, I think of the people who placed them there. To me, the stones are reminders of our mortality.























# Trees, Rocks, and Water

Exploring the woods, fields, and streams near my home as a young boy, I found that certain places — a pine forest, a rock cliff, a rushing brook — beckoned me back. My landscape photographs often include one or more of these elements.

















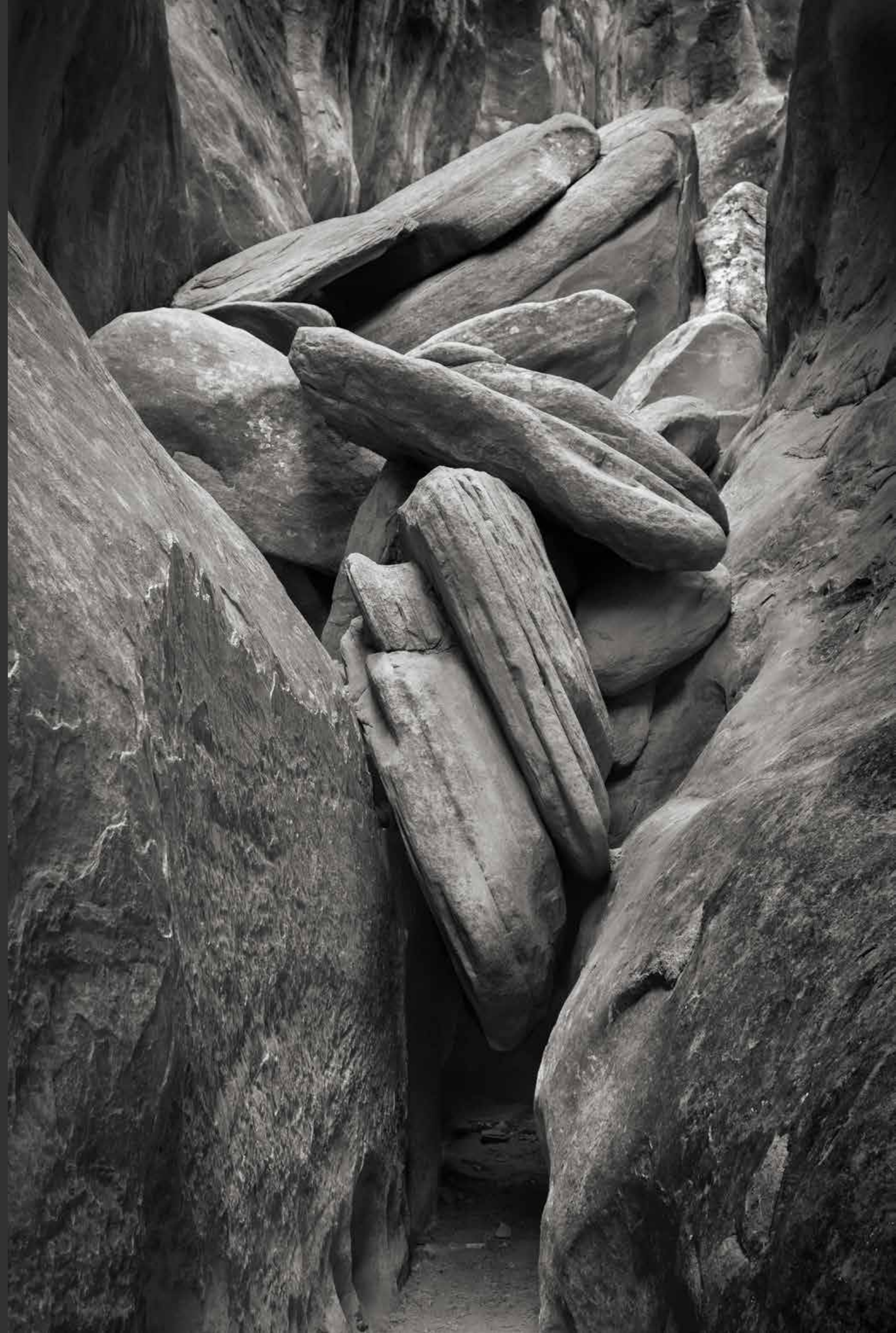




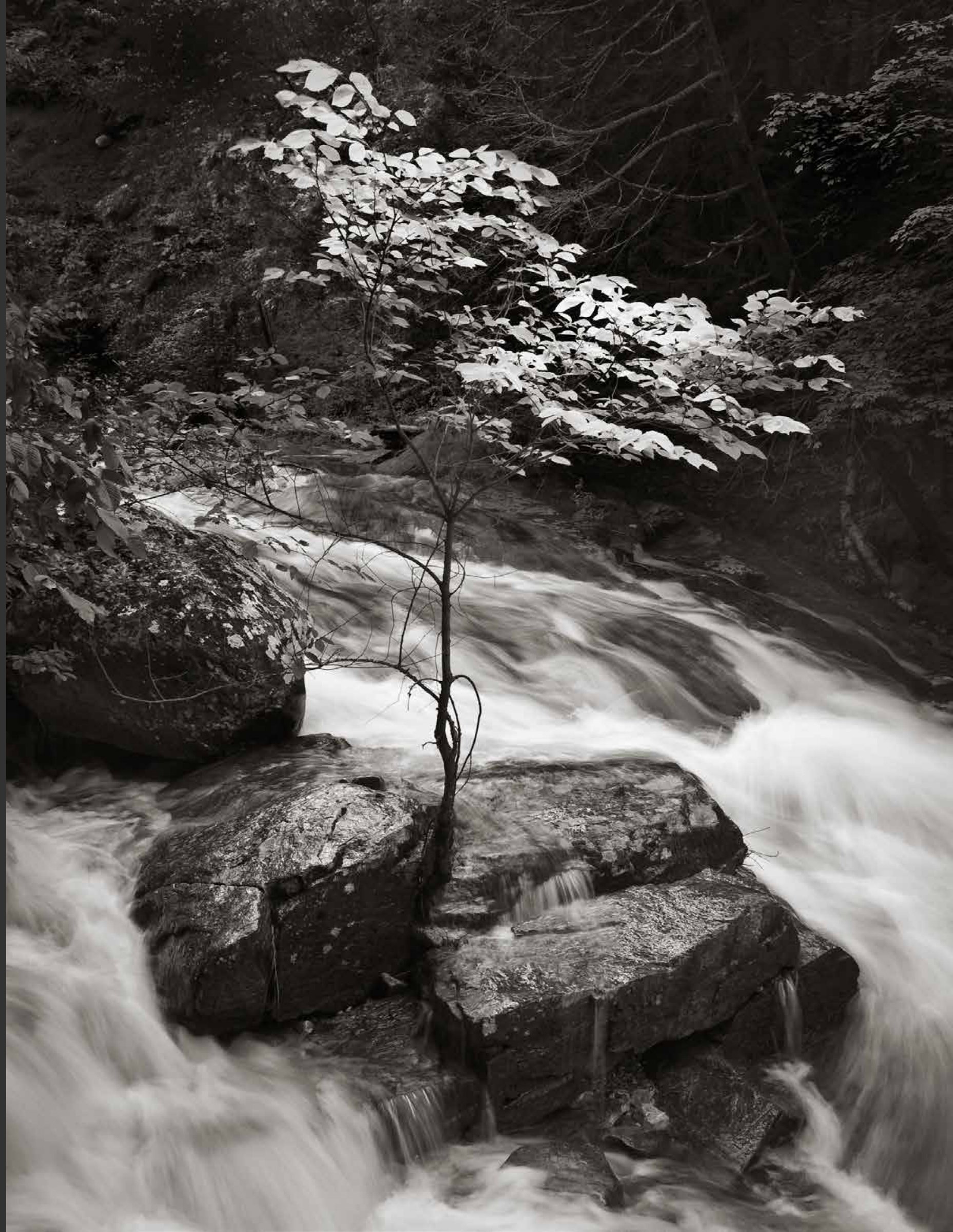
































































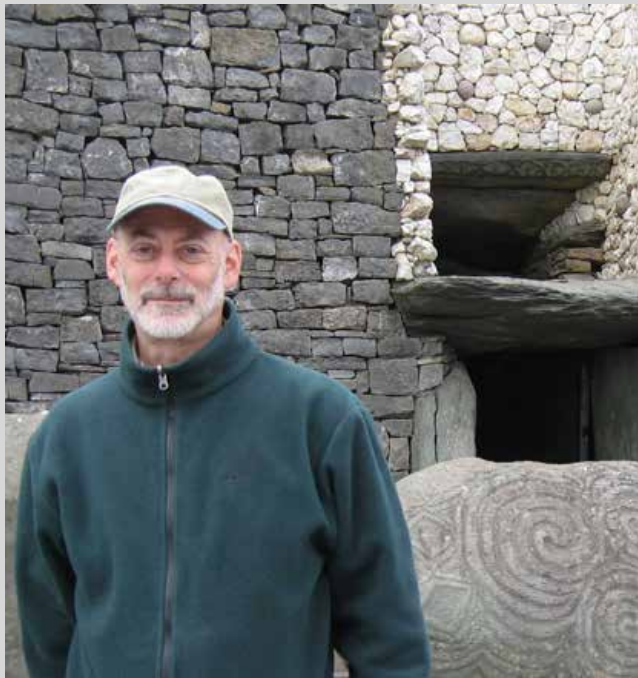












I have been photographing since 1969. My main interest has been landscapes, both natural and man-made.

My passion for natural landscapes began as a boy in rural northwest New Jersey. After college, I moved to New York City and soon began exploring its diverse neighborhoods. I find the urban land-

scape just as seductive as the pastoral landscapes of my youth.

Since my retirement from a career in technology, I have dedicated myself to photography. My wife, Joan, and I now divide our time between New York City and the Berkshires in western Massachusetts.

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## COLOPHON

Seventy-five at Seventy-Five

Lee Backer

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