

KOKORO

Brooks Jensen Arts ~ October 2021, Vol 7, 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.'

#152

Anasazi Afternoon

Anasazi Afternoon

Brooks Jensen



For a few hundred years,
these dwellings protected
the Anasazi who built them.

For 800 years or so,
these dwellings have stood
empty in sun and snow.

For an afternoon with my
camera, these dwellings
became a symbol of time
itself, where a millenium and
a fraction of a second entwine.









Entropy tells us that all things are subject to the ravages of time — you, me, the very stones the Anasazi used to build their homes. That does not mean that their existence is less because it will not last.

Same for you and me.





Sometimes what is left is a reminder of what was.

Sometimes what is left is a reminder of what is.

Sometimes what is left is a reminder of what is to come.

Always, what is left is a treasure, a lesson.













The Buddhists say there is no time, there is only Now.

The ancient dwellings of the Anasazi remind us that
Now contains the seeds of the past.

I spent a lovely afternoon with the Anasazi trying to imagine
the Now that they experienced that is the same Now in which
you and I breathe and admire their handiwork. In the end,
all I could do was look and be amazed.

Only Karma Remains

A One-Picture Story



He said, “ You will leave evidence of your existence. Some will remember you, at least for a while. With time, the dust will blow away and all that will be left is the consequence of your *karma*.” Forty years have passed and there has been nothing to make me think he was wrong. Long gone, he is remembered, but the winds of time are blowing and the evidence is fading.

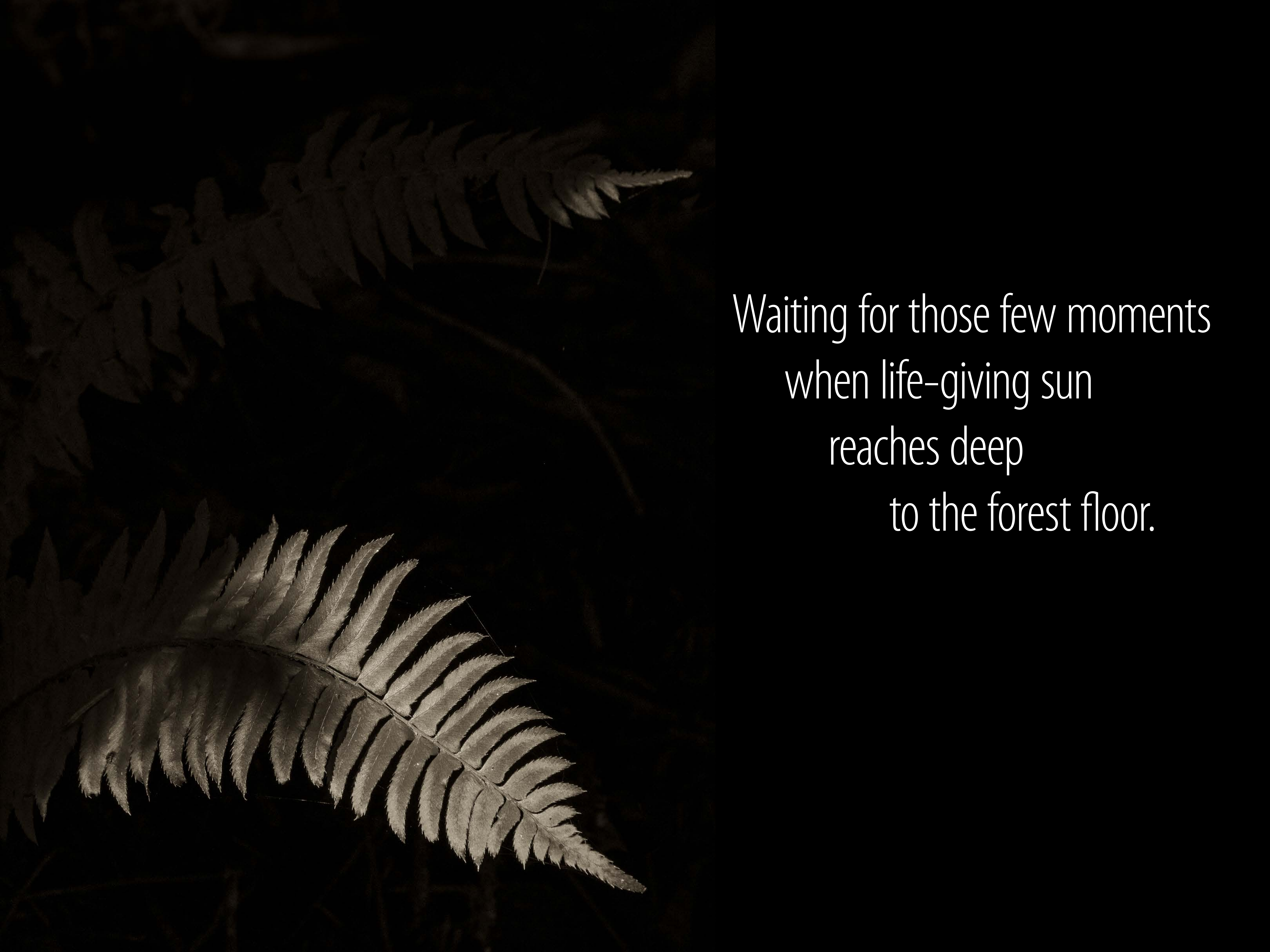
#153

The Kiss of Life

The Kiss of Life

Brooks Jensen





Waiting for those few moments
when life-giving sun
reaches deep
to the forest floor.





















Dreams of Ryoanji

A One-Picture Story

For forty years I had dreamt of the rock garden at Ryoanji — envisioning an afternoon of quiet Zen contemplation and tea.

At last, I was there with those stones and that raked gravel . . . and all the *other* tourists. That's why they are called *dreams*.



#154

Speak Friend and Enter



*Speak
Friend
and Enter*

Brooks Jensen

In *Lord of the Rings*, the wizard Gandalf leads the Fellowship to the Doors of Durin, the western entrance to the great Dwarf city of Khazad-dûm. They are blocked by an Elven Door built into the cliffs of the Silvertine. Who knew the cliffs of the Silvertine and the Elven Door were in Monument Valley?















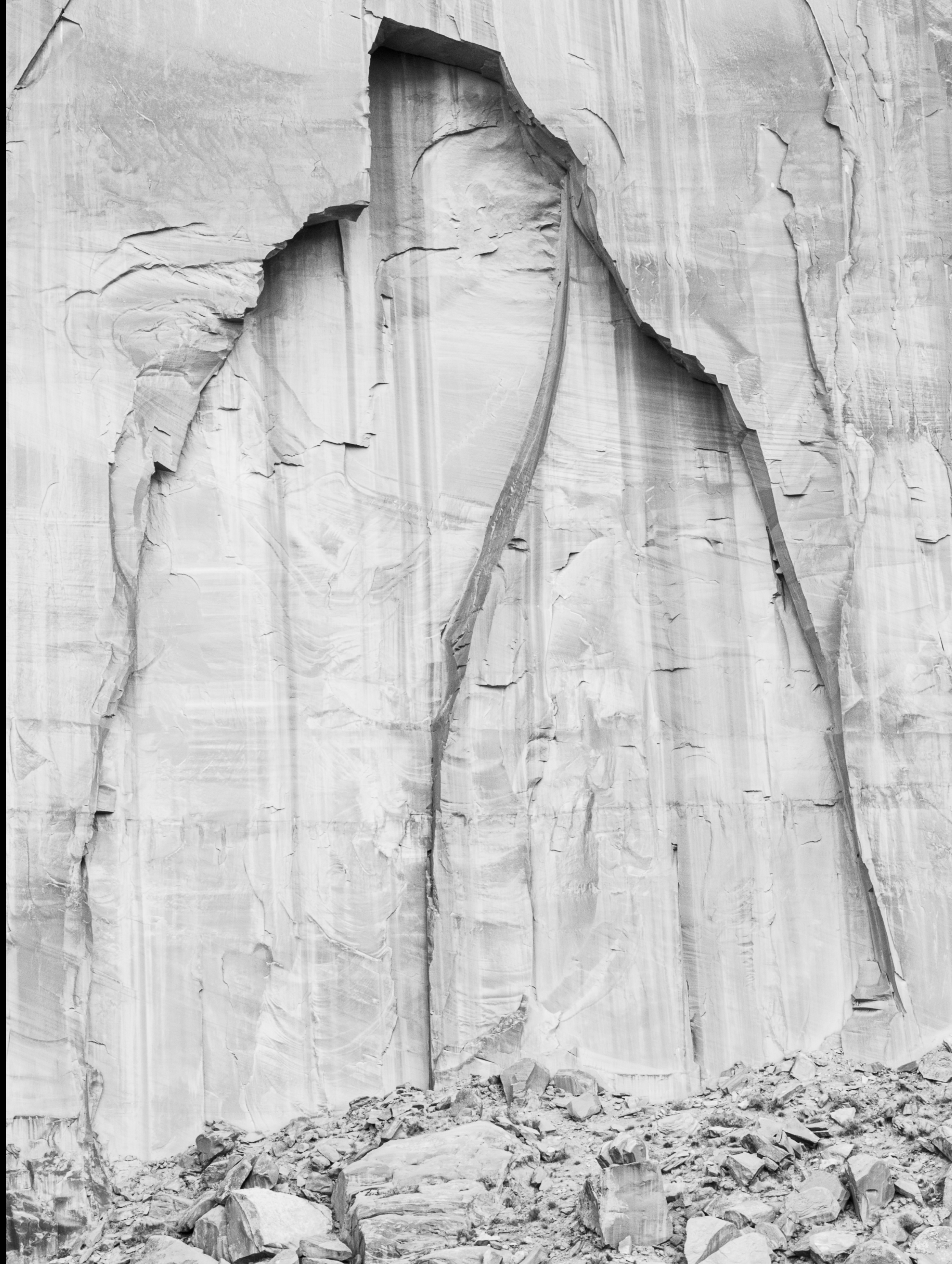












I never did get in.

But then again, I didn't have
Gandalf with me.

If only I could speak Elvish.

Ghosts in Broad Daylight

A One-Picture Story

In 1600, Chinese sage Huanchu Daoren wrote, "If the mind is illumined, there is clear blue sky in a dark room. If the thoughts are muddled, there are malevolent ghosts in broad daylight." Master Daoren has no advice for spiders in the crawl space under the house . . . nor does he address the evils of leaficide.



#155

Facing the Grand Canyon

Facing the Grand Canyon

A Suite of Questions and Reactions

Brooks Jensen



The Canyon is bigger than life.

It is a question.

It is a reality beyond the real.

It is humbling.

It is magical.

It is absurd.

It is primal.

It is a moment of wonderment joy and altitude terror
— at the same time.



Stand

Stare

React

Stare

Think

Stare

Wonder

The Canyon changes you.

Facing the Grand Canyon

1

We Are Tiny, Tiny Beings



From time to time, it's useful to be reminded of our place in the cosmic scale. Here on Earth, we are top species, important beings, the centers of human experience. See those trees down in the Grand Canyon that look like black dots? Each of those trees are twice as tall as you are.







Facing the Grand Canyon

2

Verticality



The Canyon is a vertical world. It's not *one* canyon. It is a canyon inside a bigger canyon, inside even deeper canyons. It is a world of edges, a world of plateaus and cliffs.

It is not a place for those afraid of heights. You have no idea how disciplined I needed to be to make these images. In fact, I'm not thoroughly comfortable processing the photographs. Yikes.









Facing the Grand Canyon

3

This Moment

Time is an odd sensation in the Canyon — millions of years crash against the momentary soaring of a raven, or the fleeting shadow of a cloud passing overhead. Your heart beats in seconds while the Canyon breathes in millenia. Moments, the years of a human life, the eons of erosion all blend into one. It is an odd sensation in the Canyon, but one that connects us — human, rock, wind, water, sunlight, raven — time for us all.









Facing the Grand Canyon

4

Spirits

I had simply asked for directions. She was helpful and showed me on the map. I thanked her and she calmly said, "There are Spirits in the Canyon, you know," and then smiled.

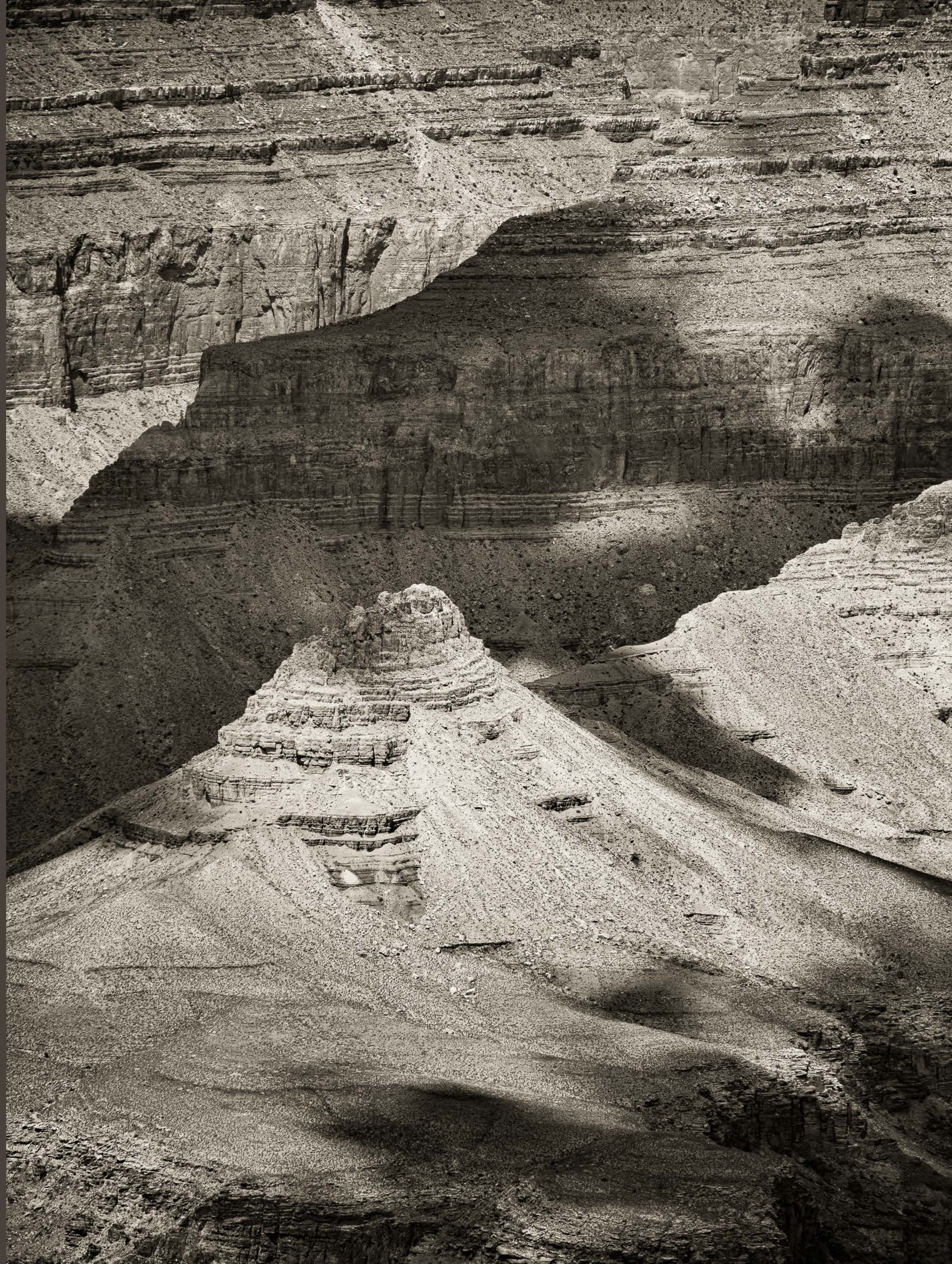
"Really?" I replied.

"Oh, yes. They are there." Then she went about her business and left me wondering.











Facing the Grand Canyon

5

Echoes



The Canyon is defined by its rocks and surfaces,
but it *is* this immense *volume*.
It is space, air, light, shadow.

And in that space are the echoes of untold stories
known only by the Canyon, and, I suppose, the Spirits.











Facing the Grand Canyon

6

Light from the Rocks

Light must come *into* the Canyon. It must. But when you stand and watch, it seems to glow *out* from the rock, as though the Canyon is illuminating the world. Clearly it doesn't, but just when I am sure I've reasoned that the rock can't glow, it does. It isn't logical, but there it is.













Facing the Grand Canyon

7

Even the Clouds are Small





Shadows from the clouds
overhead. Drifting, revealing.

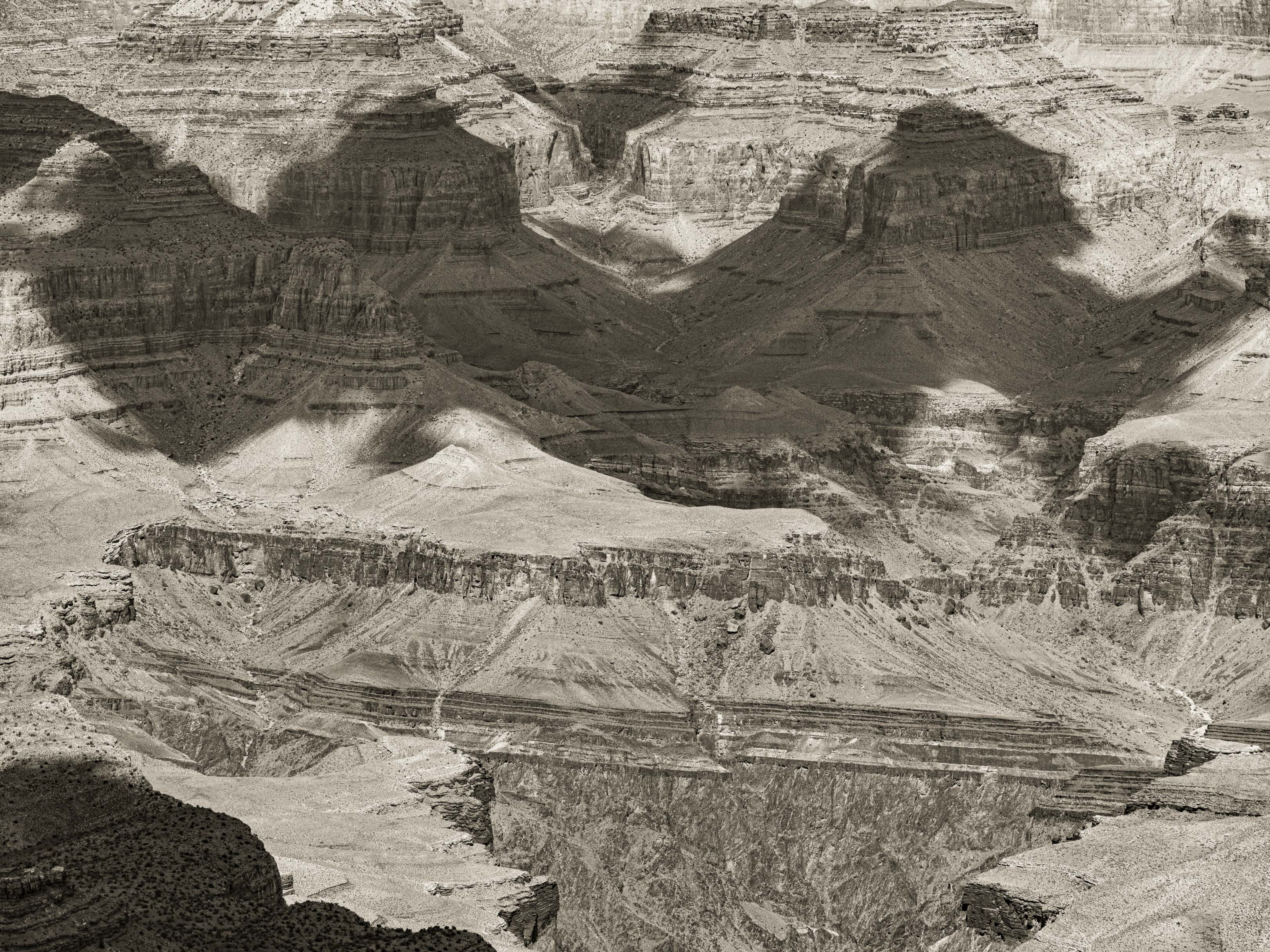
And then I realize . . . even the
clouds are small compared to the
Canyon. Their shadows are like
foam on the ocean waves, slowly
dancing on the surface, carried
by contours they ride.











Facing the Grand Canyon

8

The Hand That Shapes



The Canyon is the result.

But the result of what? What hand has shaped this world that dwarfs all that is found within?















How can one imagine what is beyond imagination?
Are we meant to know? Or perhaps we are meant
to just wonder and then remember how tiny
we humans really are.

Notes

Anasazi Afternoon

I've always maintained that luck is one of the photographer's most valuable tools. I was looking for a camping spot half way between Torrey, Utah and Flagstaff, Arizona. Cortez, Colorado looked good, so I booked a site for a week. I had no idea that a short 9 miles out of town was the Mesa Verde National Park. On a whim, I popped over just to see what it was. I mentioned to the Ranger at the gate that I am a photographer. He said I had come at the perfect time of day at the perfect time of year. A few hours later, I had all the images included in this project. Not bad for a guy who didn't even know it was there.

Tech notes: Literally about three hours with my Panasonic G9 and the Panasonic Leica 50-200mm lens. The 200mm on this lens are the equivalent of 400mm on a full-frame camera. And I needed all of it reach across the canyons where these dwellings are located.

The Kiss of Life

In *Kokoro #103 - Deep Forest Fern*, I began exploring this subject — small shafts of sunlight that manage to traverse a

narrow and direct path to the forest floor. Most of the images in this project came from an afternoon in the Jedediah Smith Redwood Forest in northern California. A beautiful, sunny day, but not on the floor of the forest. It was a search for light about 1 mile into the forest on a dirt road. After turning around and retracing the mile back to the highway, the sun had moved, the light was different and I had an entirely new batch of images. I probably could have driven back and forth, back and forth on that same mile and been able to add new images with every pass.

Tech notes: Again with my Panasonic G9 and the Panasonic Leica 50-200mm lens using dual image stabilization. All handheld. Are you detecting a pattern?

Speak Friend and Enter

If you can't occasionally have a little fun with photography, you aren't trying hard enough. Most photographers go to Monument Valley to photograph the towers. They are spectacular and I did photograph them. But this project was another subject I found in the valley — the vertical rock walls that rise a cou-

ple hundred feet above the valley floor. I had no idea what I might do with these images, but while I was processing them I kept thinking of Gandalf and the Gates of Moria. Photography doesn't always have to be a serious artmaking process. Does it? I sure hope not.

Tech notes: Again with my Panasonic G9 and the Panasonic Leica 50-200mm lens using dual image stabilization. All handheld. My back was giving me problems this day, so most of these were photographed from the driver's seat of my truck. Honest.

Facing the Grand Canyon

Something as overwhelming as the Grand Canyon prompts all kinds of responses. Rather than limit myself, I'm using a sort of "chapter" or "suite" structure in this project. Consider it an experiment.

All the images in this lengthy project are from two days of photography from the South Rim. I have 163 images I really like. I'm pretty sure I'm just scratching the surface.

Tech notes: Again with my Panasonic G9 and the Panasonic Leica 50-200mm lens using dual image stabilization. All handheld.

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 is the owner, co-founder (in 1993, with his late wife, Maureen), editor, and publisher of the award winning *LensWork*, one of today's most respected and important periodicals in fine art photography. With subscribers in more than 70 countries, Brooks' impact on fine art photography is truly worldwide. His long-running weekly podcasts on art and photography are heard over the Internet by thousands every day. All 1,200+ podcasts are available at [LensWork Online](#), the LensWork membership website. He also publishes a daily *Here's a Thought...* video with short inspiration for creative photographers.

LensWork Publishing is also at the leading edge in multimedia and digital media publishing with the *LensWork Tablet Edition*, and *LensWork Extended* — a PDF-based, media-rich expanded version of the magazine.

Brooks is the author of thirteen books about photography and creativity: *Photography, Art, & Media* (2016); *The Creative Life in Photography* (2013); *Letting Go of the Camera* (2004); *Single Exposures* (3 books in a series, random observations on art, photography and creativity); *Looking at Images* (2014); *The Best of the LensWork Interviews* (2016); *Seeing in SIXES* (2016); *Seeing in SIXES* (2017); *Seeing in SIXES* (2018); *Seeing in SIXES* (2019); and *Our Magnificent Planet* (2020).

[Kokoro](#) is a free, bi-monthly PDF e-publication of his personal work and is available (both current and back issues) for download from his [website](#). He has published two printed monographs of his photography, [Made of Steel](#) (2012), and [Dreams of Japan](#) (2021).

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