

KOKORO

Brooks Jensen Arts ~ October 2019, Vol 5, No 5





About This Issue

Seeing in Sevens

In 2016, we proposed the idea of six-image projects and published a book of fifty such projects from *LensWork* readers titled *Seeing in SIXES*. I love this idea of using photography to present a question, a thought, a comment on life, a moment of insight — with just six images and a paragraph or two.

Essentially, that's what *Kokoro* has been since its inception — but often with more than six images in a project. In this issue of *Kokoro*, I am picking up the theme of *Seeing in SIXES*, but have added a title page to each project — hence the seventh image.

Photography — if it is worthy of the term *art* — is more than just a pretty picture. Like all other arts, it is capable of evoking thought *and* engaging our most profound sense of aesthetics. Hopefully, a successful project combines these two, leaving us both contemplative and amazed. Lofty goals indeed, and ones that all artists strive for even if their shortcomings limit their success. At its best, the medium becomes transparent and leaves the viewer with a greater sense of being alive.

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.'

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Thirst

Thirst

Brooks Jensen



The Sun said, "Here is a last bit of warmth for this day."



The Fish said, "I prefer the wet things."



The Raven said, "I prefer the shiny things."



The Man said, "I prefer the beautiful things."



Satan said, "You shall have them all."





Bodhidharma said nothing,
and walked away.

The Japanese *Kappa*

A One-Picture Story

Japanese water monsters known as *kappa* have been blamed for drownings, and are often said to try to lure children into water and pull them in with their great skill at wrestling. They are sometimes said to take their victims for the purpose of drinking their blood, eating their livers, or gaining power by taking their *shirikodama*, a mythical ball said to contain the soul.

Some people say they are just a myth from an ancient superstition. I've seen them. I've *photographed* them. Do not let your children near the water. Trust me.



#126

Grace and Beauty

Grace and Beauty

Brooks Jensen





A press event for a photography company in China.

Traditional wedding dresses.
What grace and beauty!















Flying, Eventually

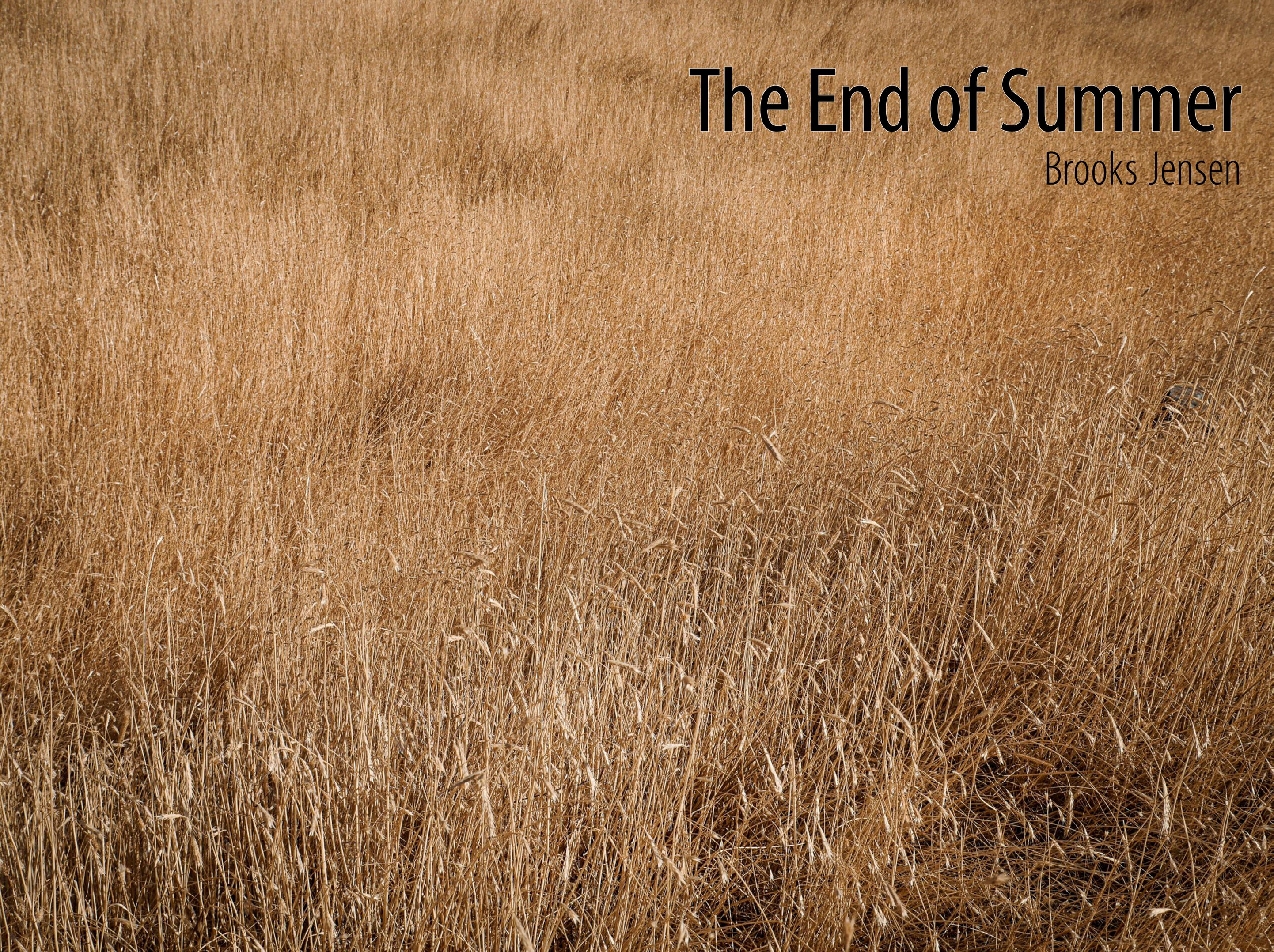
A One-Picture Story

When I was a boy, no doubt influenced by the superheroes of my boyish fictions, I dreamt of flying. I remember quite clearly an afternoon one mid-summer day when I tied one of my mother's dish towels around my neck to form a cape. So prepared, I leapt off the backyard deck with arms outstretched into the grassy lawn below, over and over again, thinking, feeling, *believing* that if I willed it with sufficient ardor that I might fly, that I *would* fly if only my faith was sufficient. It was a difficult lesson for a young boy to learn that the immutable laws of physics – *gravity* – could not be overcome by even the most fervent dreams and wishes of fanciful youth. I know, there are balloons and airplanes and helicopters – but I wanted *wings*.



#127

The End of Summer



The End of Summer

Brooks Jensen







Now that I'm 65, so many of my photographic projects
are metaphors for the fall season,
the end of summer,
the approaching winter.

I guess I'm fortunate that Fall
has always been my favorite time of year.







Lao-tzu and the Cataract

A One-Picture Story

Confucius and a few of his disciples were walking in the forest. Suddenly, they saw an old man fall into the top of a cataract and plunge over the edge. “Poor fellow,” said Confucius.

A moment later, they saw the man hop out of the water at the bottom of the falls, no worse for the experience. When they caught up with him, they discovered it was Lao-tzu himself, unharmed and quite jovial. “How is it that you did not perish?” asked Confucius. “Oh it was simple,” Lao-tzu replied, “I just followed the Great Tao and abandoned myself to the currents of the water. I went in with the swirl and came out with the curl.”



#128

Hands of God

Hands of God

Brooks Jensen





Let us lift up our hearts and
hands to God in heaven.

Lamentations 3:41











From the Mission of the Sacred Heart,
the "Cataldo Mission," established 1850-53
in northern Idaho.

Dirt Roads

A One-Picture Story

“Just keep going until you hit the dirt road. All the good stuff is there. You might even be able to make a picture or two.”

He was right about the “good stuff.” He was also right about the photography. I’ve never yet driven down a dirt road that didn’t show me something, teach me something, ask me something, or lead me somewhere I didn’t know I wanted to go.



#129

Leaf Journeys



Brooks Jensen

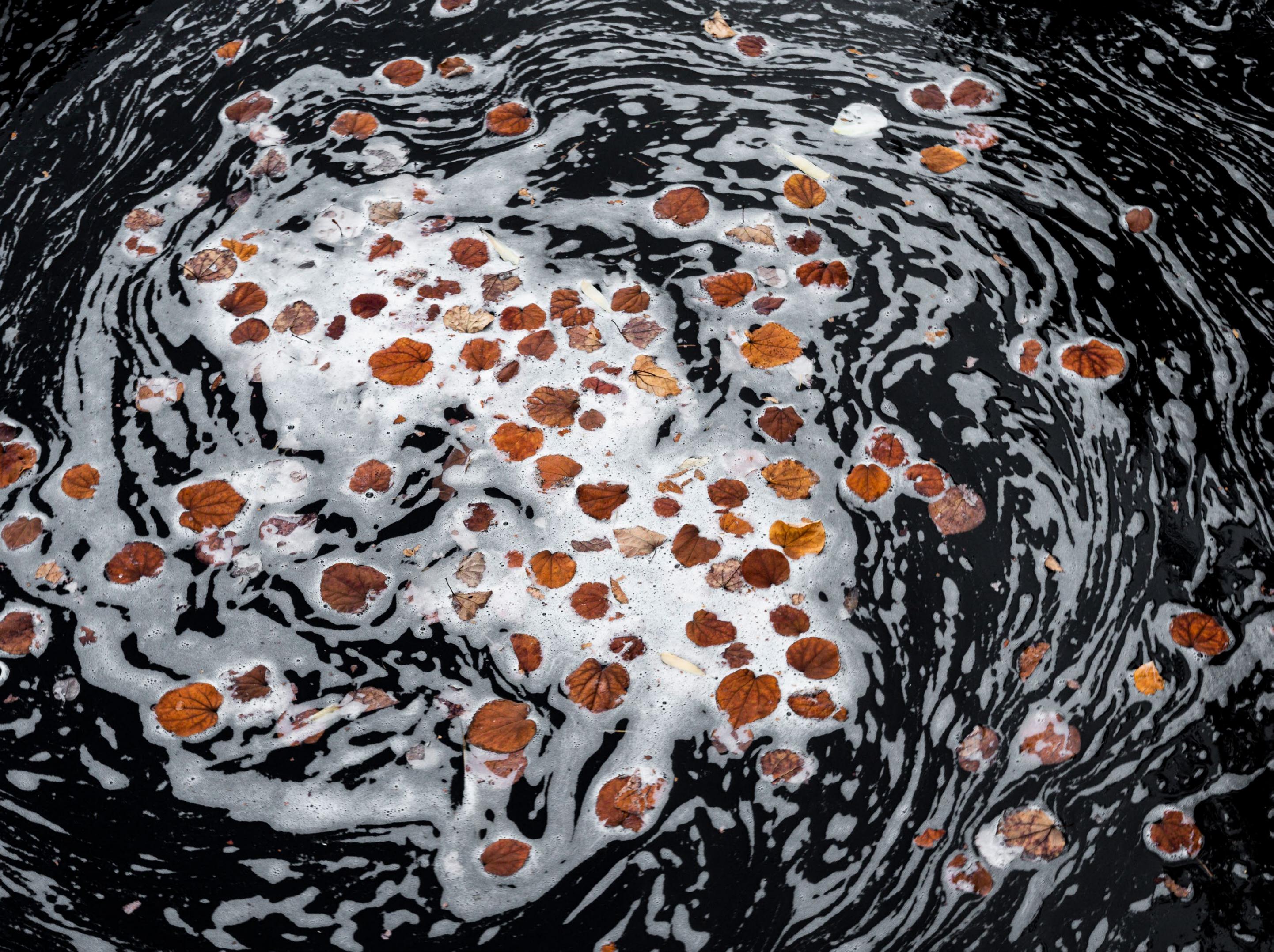
Leaf Journeys











John Bolton

A One-Picture Story

Kingsley Catholic Cemetery
Donate 6-25-1989 by
Remi, Jessie Ronneau

Mrs Bridget J. Bolton
Erect this monument
To the memory
of her family.

John Bolton

A native of
County Clau Ireland

DIED

Oct. 3, 1891

AGED. 63.

May they Rest in Peace.

*And 46,739 days later,
he still rests under a summer moon
with an eternal view of Mt. Hood.
Well done, Mr. & Mrs. Bolton, well done.*



#130

Perch

Perch



Brooks Jensen

There is an attitude to
proper perching.

Stately and alert,
Disinterested,
Distant,
Very cool.

The James Dean of
bird poses.















Notes

Thirst

Some thoughts on *objects of desire*. The Buddhists say that suffering exists (the First Noble Truth) as the consequence of *trishna*, or thirst. It surely can be.

Tech notes: The floating kelp were all shot this year on the Oregon Coast with a Panasonic G9. The wave was with a G1, the overlook with a G2.

Grace and Beauty

I don't shoot fashion. Just never had the chance to, so when we were invited to work with these models in China, I was nonplussed. I decided to concentrate on their hands and the fabric of their costumes. I still am not a fashion photographer, but I did have fun.

Tech notes: Shot in 2016 in the Mullan Paddock region of China on a Panasonic G7 with the kit lens.

The End of Summer

I'm drawn to the chaos – and the golden colors – of fall grasses. There is something perfectly *organic* about their gestures of submission to time.

Tech notes: I did do some white balance work so the seven images would harmonize, but other than that, they are straight out of the camera. Six of these were shot handheld with the marvelous Panasonic Leica 50-200mm lens – which has quickly become one of my favorite lenses of all time.

Hands of God

Wandering around the State Park which is the Cataldo Mission Church, I realized I was photographing mostly the *architecture*. Wrong. It then occurred to me that this facility was filled with *gesturing hands*. One of the few times I've conceived the title for a project while still photographing in the field.

Tech notes: Photographed in 2010 with a Panasonic G1 and the much maligned 45-200mm lens. If I hadn't confessed this, would you have known these were shot with a crappy lens? Hmmm. . .

Leaf Journeys

Another fall season project. For reasons I cannot explain, I never tire of photographing fall leaves. I connect with them in some unknown way. Perhaps it's that we are all eventually compost ourselves. A bit too morbid? Sorry. But, true.

Tech notes: China, Japan, Portland, Seattle. I love themes that we can carry with us and photograph wherever we find ourselves. Panasonic G1, G6, G85, G9. Five different lenses. Whatever works.

Perch

This one snuck up on me. As seen in a recent issue of *Kokoro*, I love photographing leafless trees. Every once in a while, after I'm back and reviewing images on the computer, I'm surprised to see a bird that I hadn't noticed when I was making the exposure. The little guy on page 61 was the inspiration for this project. And besides, I really needed to do *something* with all those pelicans.

Tech notes: Bird photography is its own specialty – and I am *not* a qualified practitioner. I bow to all the bird photography specialists and offer these as *artwork*, rather than as bird photos. Go easy on me, please.

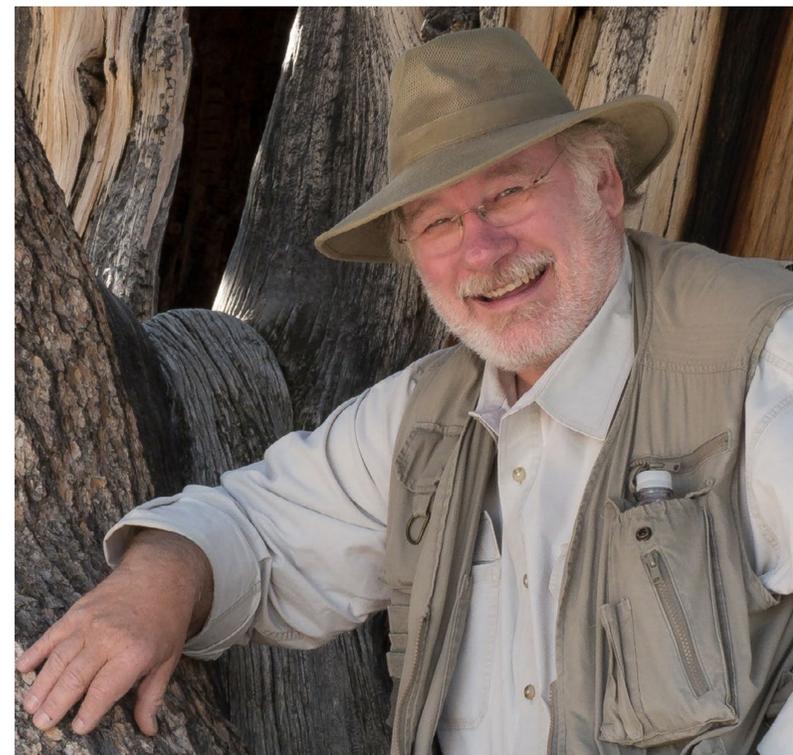
One-Picture Stories

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

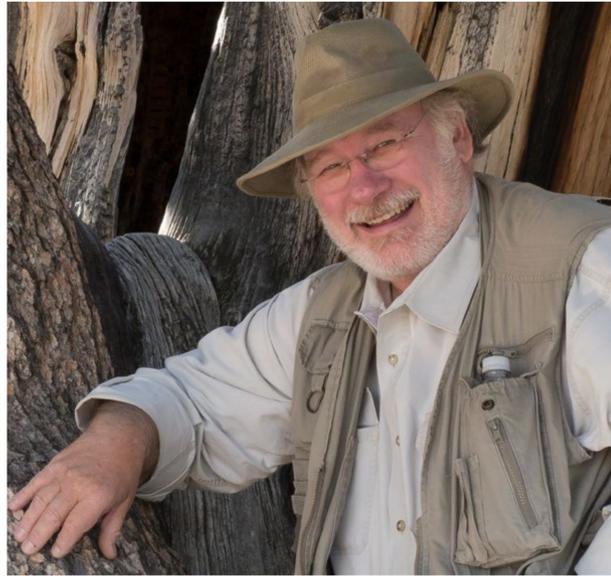
\$100 Essential Support - You'll receive a signed Full Quarto (16-page, 8x11") chapbook handmade and signed by the artist

\$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://www.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). His next books will be *Those Who Inspire Me (And Why)* and *Looking at Images 2019*. [Kokoro](https://www.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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