

Framing Emptiness



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Writings & Photographs by Jerry Katz

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A painter brings form to a blank canvas
A photographer brings a blank canvas to form



this is what it's about
this is what it's always been about



Spirituality
is like endless signs
on a road
announcing a stretch of road
up ahead
without any signs



Walking to the end of the beach
on a freezing February day
the cold hurts
I'm in pain everywhere
My car is two miles away
the waves are crashing
my breaths are deep and cold
I'm miserable
and so amazed to be here



A pool of water left behind by the receding tide knows it is the ocean.



The people of sunset walk with the unknown.



I have to ask myself,
Do I try to show how clever I am or how miraculous God is?



some scenes take my breath away
some stop my breath
and some give breath back to me



A photograph of a gravel road with several potholes, some filled with water. The road is flanked by a wooden post-and-rail fence and a line of evergreen trees. The sky is filled with dramatic, layered clouds, with a bright light source visible near the horizon on the right side.

Even a pebble in a pothole

Is consciousness itself

You can do an online search for specific qualities in a work of art: its dimensions, predominant colours, the subject, mood, the artist, and a thousand other data points. But there's no search engine for beauty as you alone know it.



Has anyone ever booked a trip on Expedia to come here?



One of the greatest moments was when I was 7. I was sitting in the corner of a room, playing with a marble. I noticed a hole drilled into the hardwood floor. The marble sat perfectly within the hole.



stopping to gaze
before mist encloses



sometimes I ask myself,
What covers the canvas of my life . . .
arts and crafts
or the heavens and the earth?



Your sense of "I Am" is God's autograph.



What I see and how I see always change.
Here are two scenes photographed within a few minutes of each other:



Thousands are signing up for my tour to uncrowded places.



Like a photograph, a life is an instant that hardly ever existed.



Coming to the edge of a field
Gazing into the fog
Everything is clear



When I take a photograph, I ask myself, Is it a gift to God?



Interviewer: If you could have lunch with anyone from any time in history, who would it be?

Me: I want to eat lunch alone.



"There is only one day" vs "There is only this"

After two years of paying attention to "I am," I realized *there is only one day*.

After some more years, the palpable nature of "I am" evaporated. The new realization was, *There is only this*.

The two realizations may be depicted with photographs:



"There is only one day." *A man discovers the "I am," the awareness of his existence.*



"There is only this." *There is no one to know anything. There is only this.*

All I have to do is wonder
Not about anything
Just wonder



Sometimes it's pointless to take the road less travelled.



Praying the prayer I prayed
before I was taught how to pray



At times I'm a trainwreck.
But I'm a holy trainwreck.



If this isn't me
what am I doing with my life?



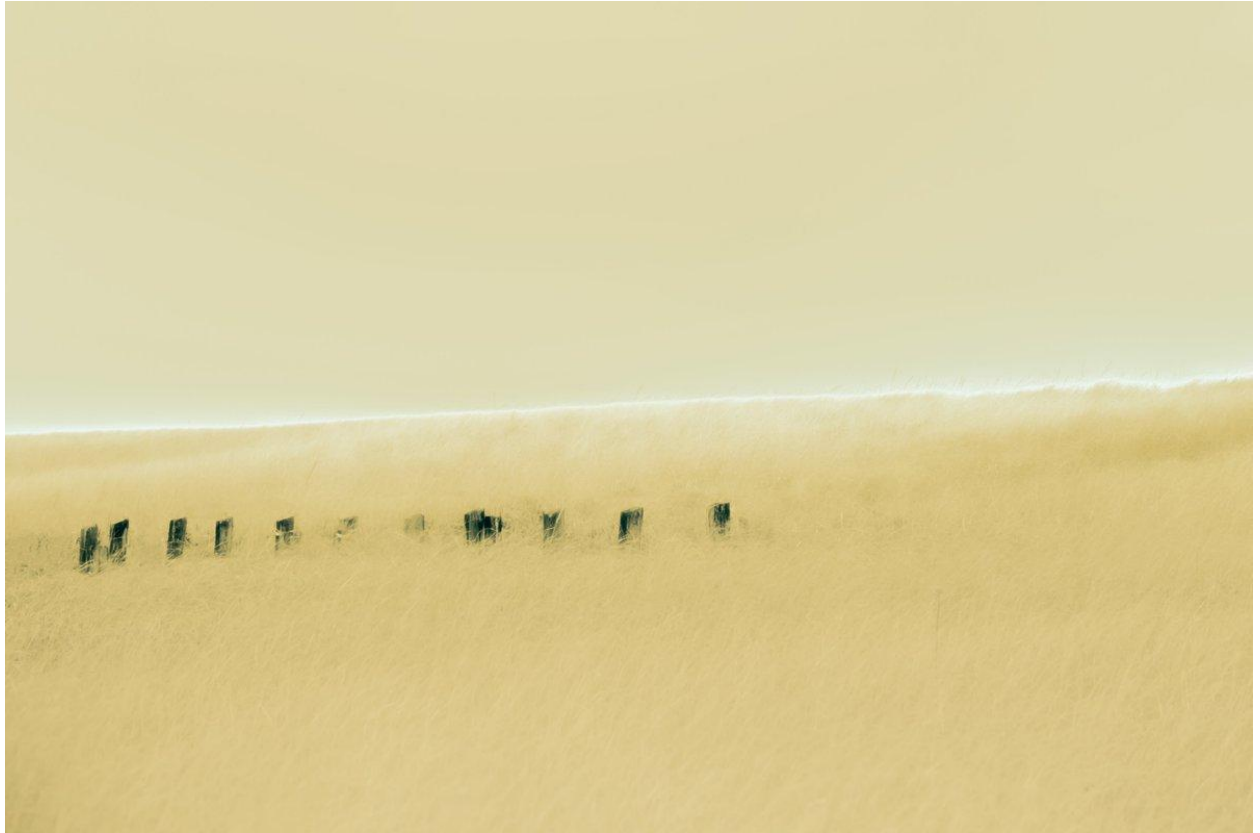
I like rocks and seaweed on a beach.
And bacon, mayo, lettuce, and tomato on a burger.
And coffee black.
I don't where I'm going with this.
I only know that I'm here.



Waiting for a wave that will take me home.



The world gets stranger and stranger
but never as strange as I am.



I remember when I met Jiddhu Krishnamurti.
We shook hands and he gazed at me as though I were the only
thing in existence.
It shocked me
because he made me realize I am the only thing in existence.
I have tried to see in his way.
So upon this tree
I gazed
like Krishnamurti.



Awakening is confusion turned into wonder.



Imagine all the people breathing freely.





Explore what whispers

Follow what knocks

I'm a grateful caterpillar far away from mad doped butterflies.



Of what do you need proof?
This?



If I can see the depths within
I can see the depths beyond



The awareness of my home is homeless.



I don't believe in God.
I don't know God.
I have no faith in God.
I see no proof of God.
I pray to God.



This is my first experience.
I'll remember this forever.



A cloud seeks no shelter from the wind.



When I saw how everything was so false
one thing remained
holy communion



A lake behind a church.
Do you prefer bingo and french fries
or hungry frozen aloneness?



Religion is the effort to make God sane.



Framing emptiness



nothing special
only a photograph revealing that life is kissed by God



Self-portrait.



Sometimes beauty brings me to my knees.
It frightens me.
And I know what I must do:
Intoxicate people with God.



Not much more to it than this.



This picture pleases me.
That's all I have to do:
make things that please me.



Do you feel you have lost your way?
What knows that
is the way.



In stillness, when you realize your true nature is like the tide, you are free to live as unpredictably as the wave.



Nothing in place.
Nothing out of place.



Sometimes, for no reason at all, I'm overcome by sadness.



Waiter, I'll have whatever God's having.



Can you remember when you used to swim to the dock and how it felt when you arrived?



I took this photograph at sunrise. A dog was barking at me. A woman called to the dog, "Why are you barking? Who's out there?"



Truth is not a man or woman
not an idea or intuition
neither joyful nor sorrowful
not bliss, being or consciousness.



The path to no path.



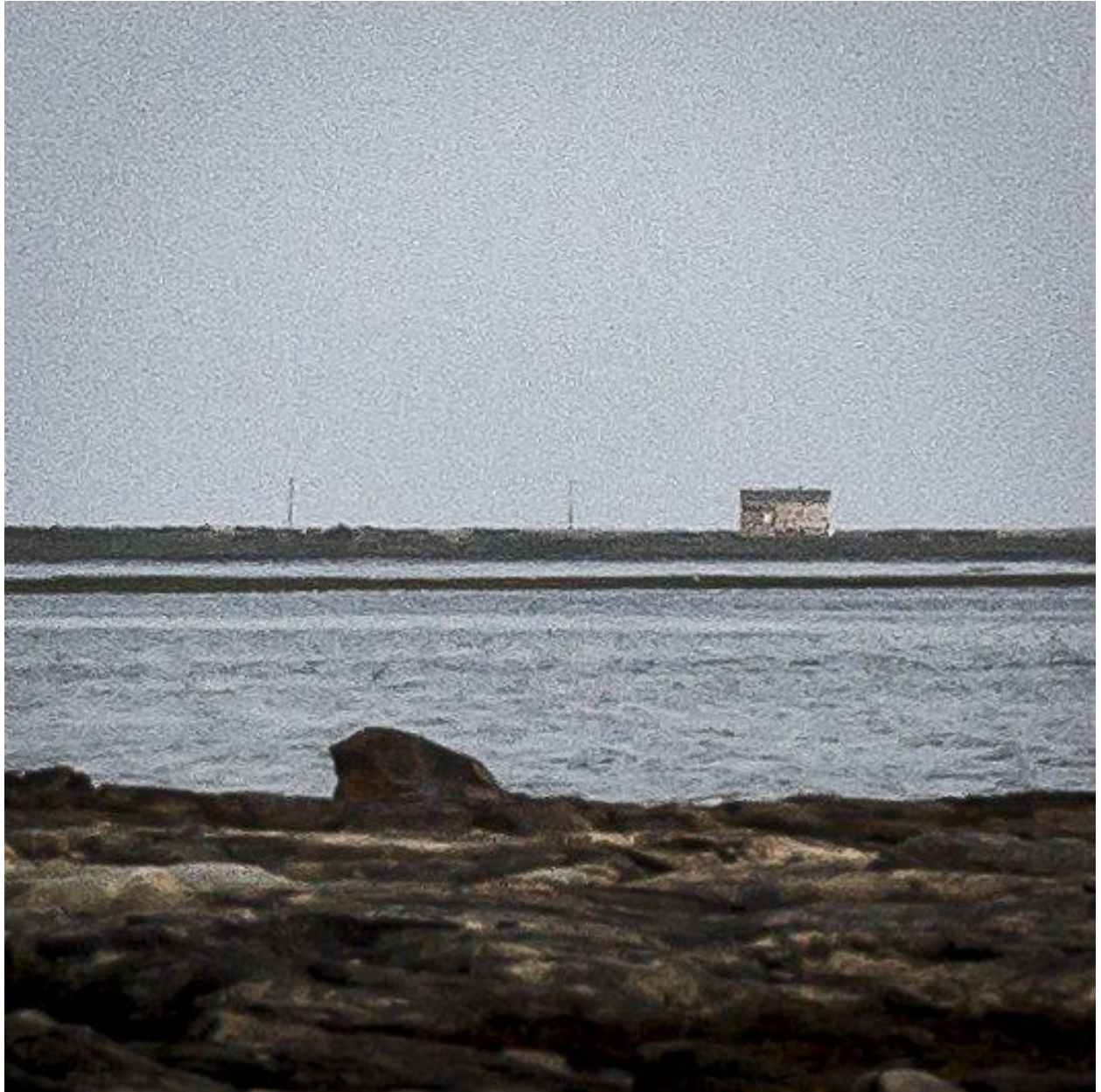
a painter bestows form upon a blank canvas
a photographer bestows blank canvas upon form

(I know, I said nearly the same thing earlier using a different photo.)



Someone suggested I get a telephoto lens so I can capture the detail of faraway objects.

I told them that I know what I want to be in focus.



Don't try to see nature. Let nature see you.



Too alone to feel alone.



I am both form and vast space at the same time.



Because of clouds, the sky vibrates.



This autumn I did not make the trip to see thousands of trees afire in colour.

My autumn photograph was of a small water plant and its woody companion.



The crow has no urge to open a spiritual book to a random page in anticipation of hearing something truthful.



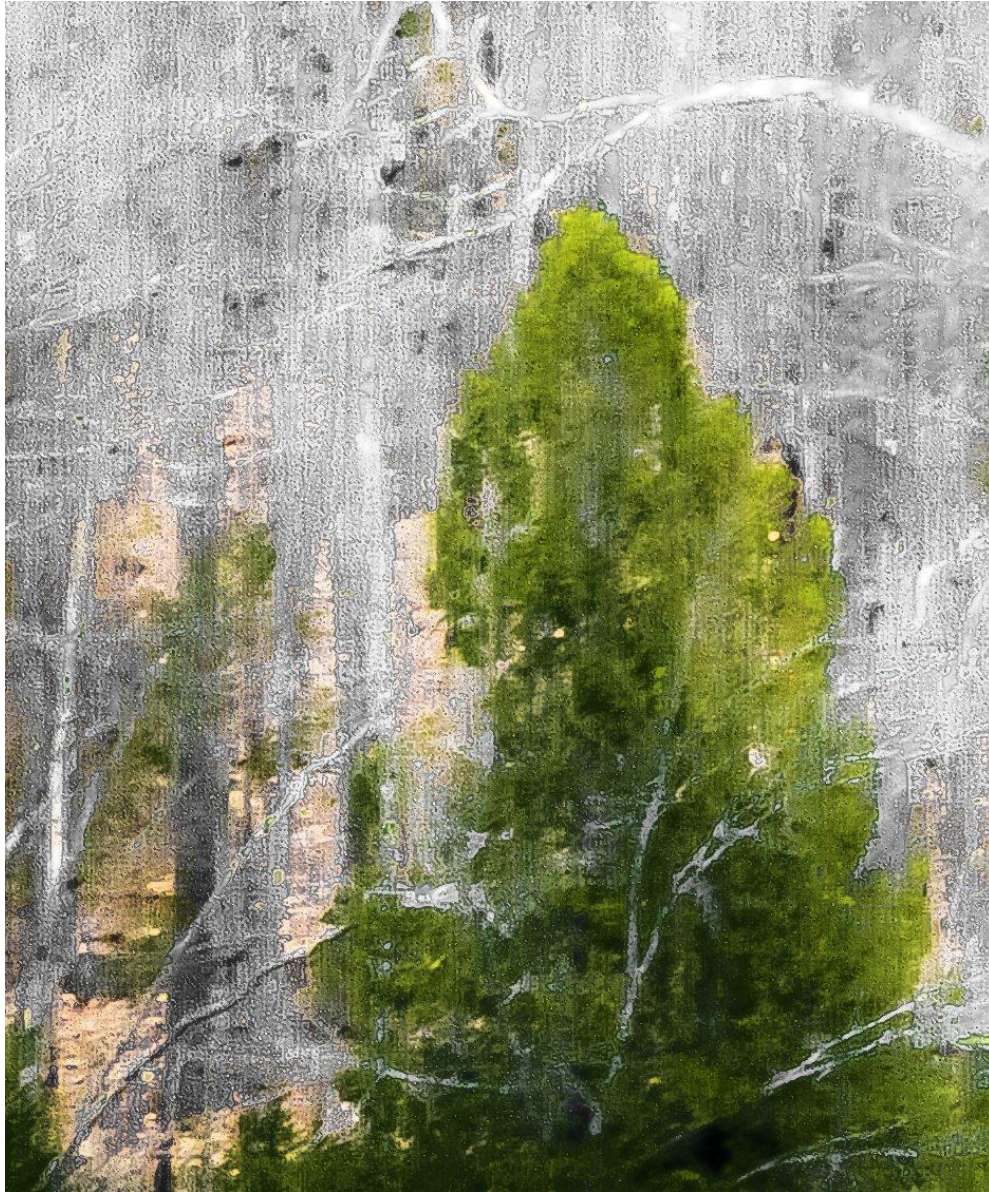
A handful of soil is a national park.



I can't give directions on how to get to a holy place.



Birches and evergreens. (I secretly wish to be a painter.)



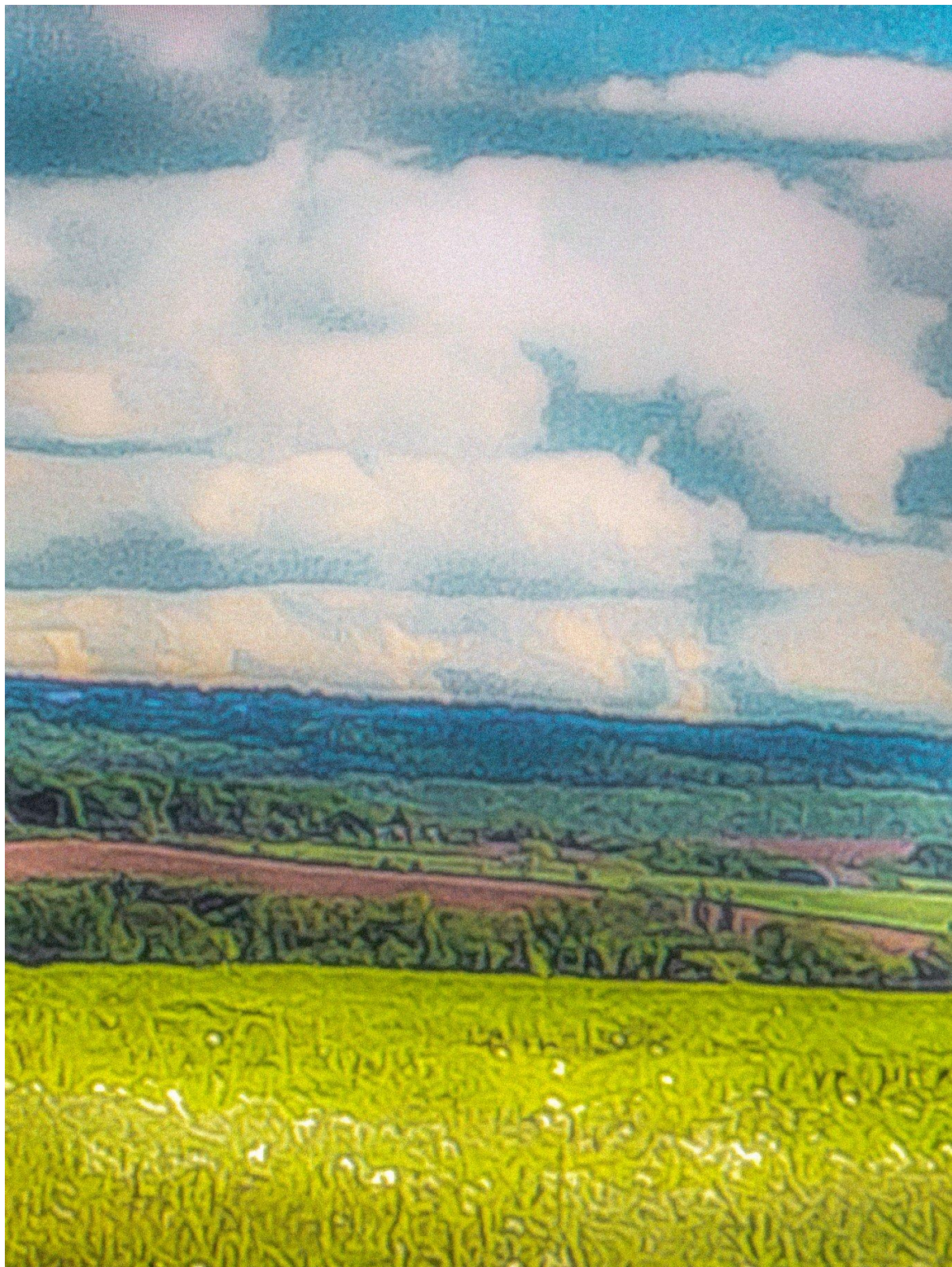
In an instant, I had stopped asking,
"What is this?" "What is this?" "What is this?"
Wherever I looked was the answer.



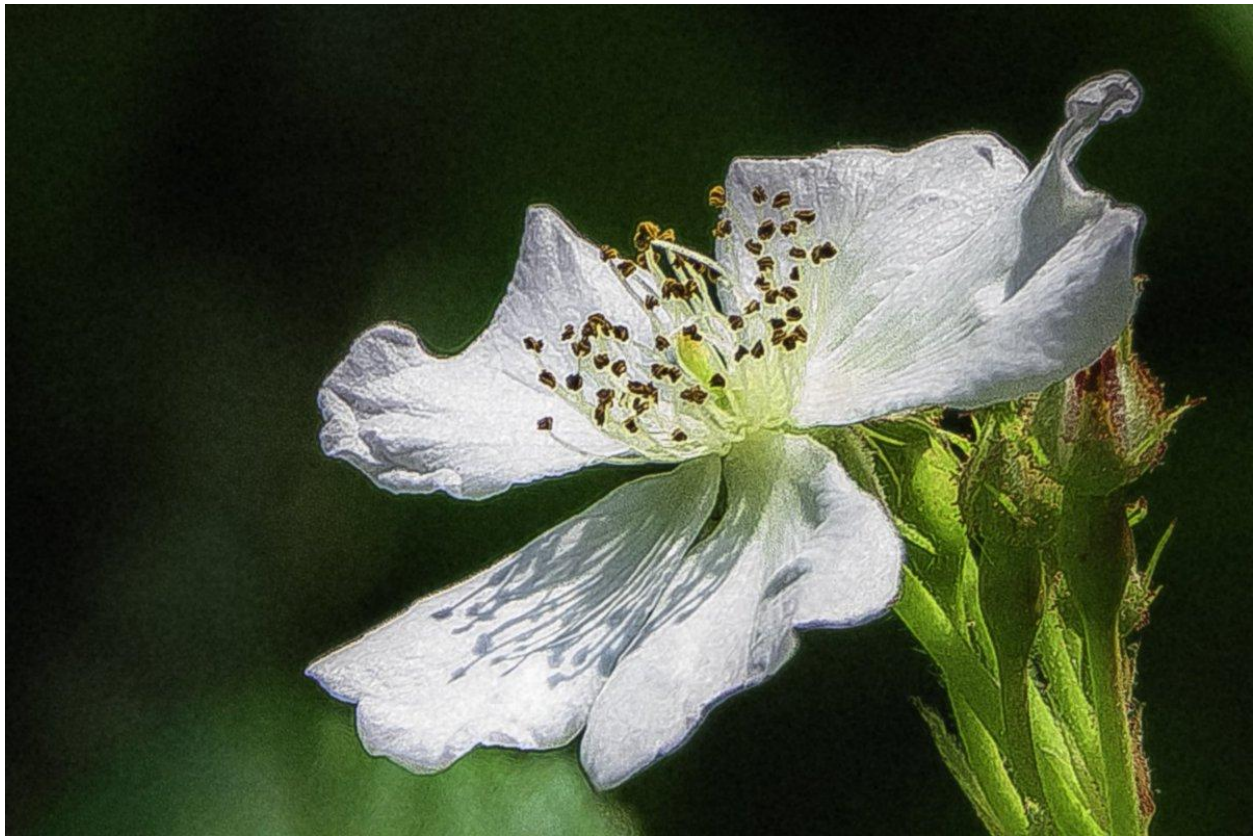
Experts say that when photographing wildlife, it is most important to make sure the eyes are sharp and clear. I ask, "Whose eyes?"



My life is enchantingly plain.



I intentionally look for amazing grace.



Frozen beach
no footprints



Moonlight reveals what sunlight can't.



Is your life as stunning and unknowable as a blank signpost reflected in luminous waters?



I walk through thousands of acres of burnt forest. Nobody else goes there. Why would they? What is there to see?



I wander through life
understanding nothing
secretly hoping to lose everything
so that we will no longer be
an ocean apart





Comfortable with wonder?

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