

# KOKORO

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# KOKORO

## *Wandering Through a Photographic Life*

*An Image Journal  
with Commentary, Meditation, Philosophy,  
and Unanswered Questions*

*Brooks Jensen*

*Brooks Jensen*

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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# JUST STUFF



*J Brooks Jensen*

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## Just stuff. A state of mind?

A description? A philosophy? A way of life?

No, in this case, the name of a business, in New Pine Creek, Oregon, deep in the outback of Lake County, near Goose Lake on the Oregon/California border. Forty miles north of Alturas. Well, you'll find it.



S

MEAT

PEACE IS PATRIOTIC  
CEASE-FIRE NOW  
You May Say I'm a Dreamer  
But I'm Not the Only One  
DON'T STEAL  
GOVERNMENT  
COMPETITION  
I have women  
make history.  
What is cost?  
Peace is the price  
The problems we face  
will not be solved by the  
minds that created them  
If you're not outraged,  
You're not paying attention  
It will be a great day when our  
schools get all the money they  
need and the air force has to  
hold a bake sale to buy a bomber  
HONOR THE DEAD

PEACEMONGER  
BUY AMERICAN  
FLIP BURGERS

Schilling  
Coffee







I found a clean copy of an autobiography of Tolstoy I'd been wanting. No kidding. And a Zippo lighter that works like new. No relation between the two, but they were on the shelf next to each other.







I now own that shaving brush. No reason. Shoulda bought the Mr. Potatohead, too. Oh, well.







Good prices, nice folks, just stuff.

Or, I should say, *Just Stuff*.

Piled high and priced for you to buy.



# AN ORGANIC SILENCE



*Brooks Jensen*

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**Looking at the landscape** is an eyes-only thing; *being* in the landscape — at least for me — is an *ears-present* thing. It's a special kind of quiet — not the silence of deafness, but an organic silence that is engulfing, enriching, alive without effort. Not the quiet where you can hear a pin drop, but the quiet where you can hear a bee zoom by and fade into the great emptiness — a distant call of some unseen bird — the wind in the grass — the call and echo of an invitation to a mate from a frog, or an elk. After each, the quiet returns. My breathing, my own heartbeat. *In* the landscape and *of* it.





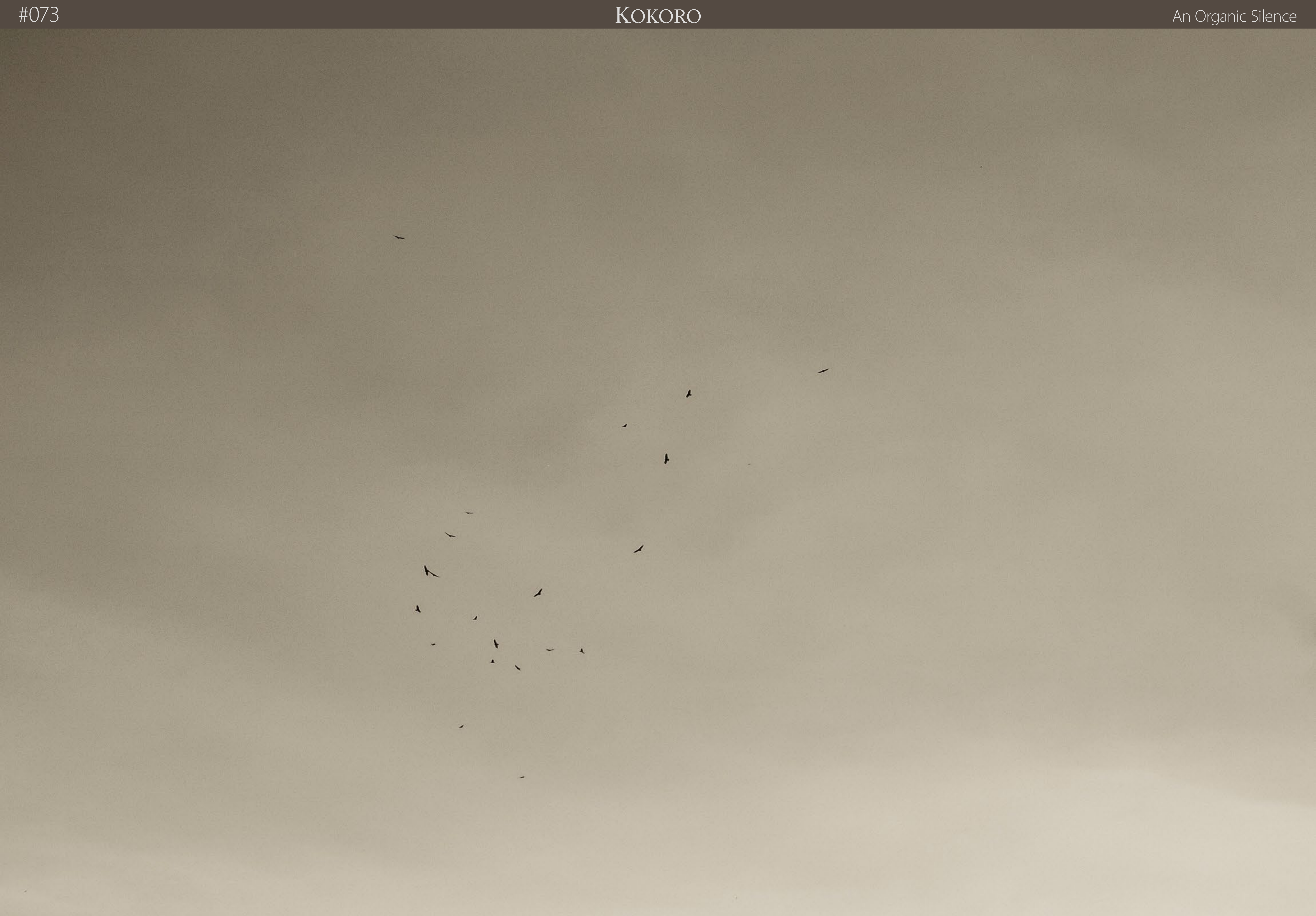






























# REAL TIME

*Or, can you slow down  
to the speed of Life?*



2½ minutes in real time to

*Breathe,*

*Pause,*

*Observe*

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These 14 photographs were made in the same  
2½ minutes you just took to experience them.

The speed of Life.

# ONLY THE SURFACE



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**We see only the surface;**  
the deeper truths, the deeper lives,  
the deeper connections can only be  
surmised by the evidence that floats  
up from the depths; and felt only in the  
shadows of consciousness.





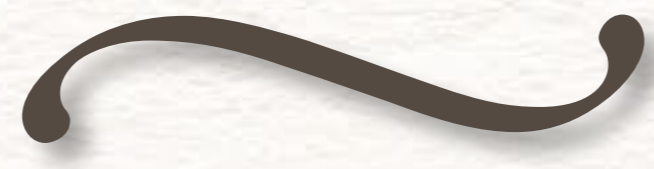








# SEAGULP



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## To the never-ending amusement

of my family, as a five-year-old I coined a new taxonomic name for a species of bird — the *seagulp*. I was never corrected and still used the term — behaviorally accurate, I insist — well into my school years.

Little did I know I had so early on discovered one of the most maligned subjects of my chosen passion. Along with dewy spider webs and kittens playing with yarn, the “seagulp on a piling” has become an artistic taboo, at least in photographic circles. Trite, banal, only a simplistic buffoon would attempt a serious photograph of a seagull. Even more reason, in my way of thinking, to photograph them.

My parents always told me I had a touch of the  
*contrarian.*



Seems they were right.









Perhaps I shall, someday soon, show my photographs of dewy spider webs.

I have no pictures of kittens playing with yarn,  
but where there is life, there is hope.



## *Confessional*

I must now bare my soul. In truth, in only one of these photographs did I purposely make a photograph of a seagull. In all the others, I was poised to make a landscape when an unanticipated seagull flew into the composition and “ruined” the exposure. Ruined, that is, until now. I have recently become more modern; I have developed a mature appreciation for the accidental. Yes, that’s it — *a mature appreciation for the accidental*. Especially with seagulps.

No, I’m not telling you which one.

That’s what you get for laughing at *seagulp*.



**Brooks Jensen** is a fine-art photographer, publisher, workshop teacher, and writer. In his personal work he specializes in small prints, hand-made artist's 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 world-wide. His long-running podcasts on art and photography are heard over the Internet by thousands every day. All 900+ podcasts are available at [LensWork Online](#), 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 seven best-selling books about photography and creativity: *Letting Go of the Camera* (2004); *The Creative Life in Photography* (2013); *Single Exposures* (4 books in a series, random observations on art, photography and creativity); and *Looking at Images* (2014); as well as a photography monograph, *Made of Steel* (2012). His next book will be *Those Who Inspire Me (And Why)*. A free monthly compilation of of this image journal, [Kokoro](#), is available for download.

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