

KOKORO

Brooks Jensen Arts ~ June 2019, Vol 5, No 3





Contents

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.'

#117

Earth Nudes

Earth Nudes

by
Brooks Jensen





The hills were
so shapely,
so sensual,
so evocative,
so *Rubenesque*.



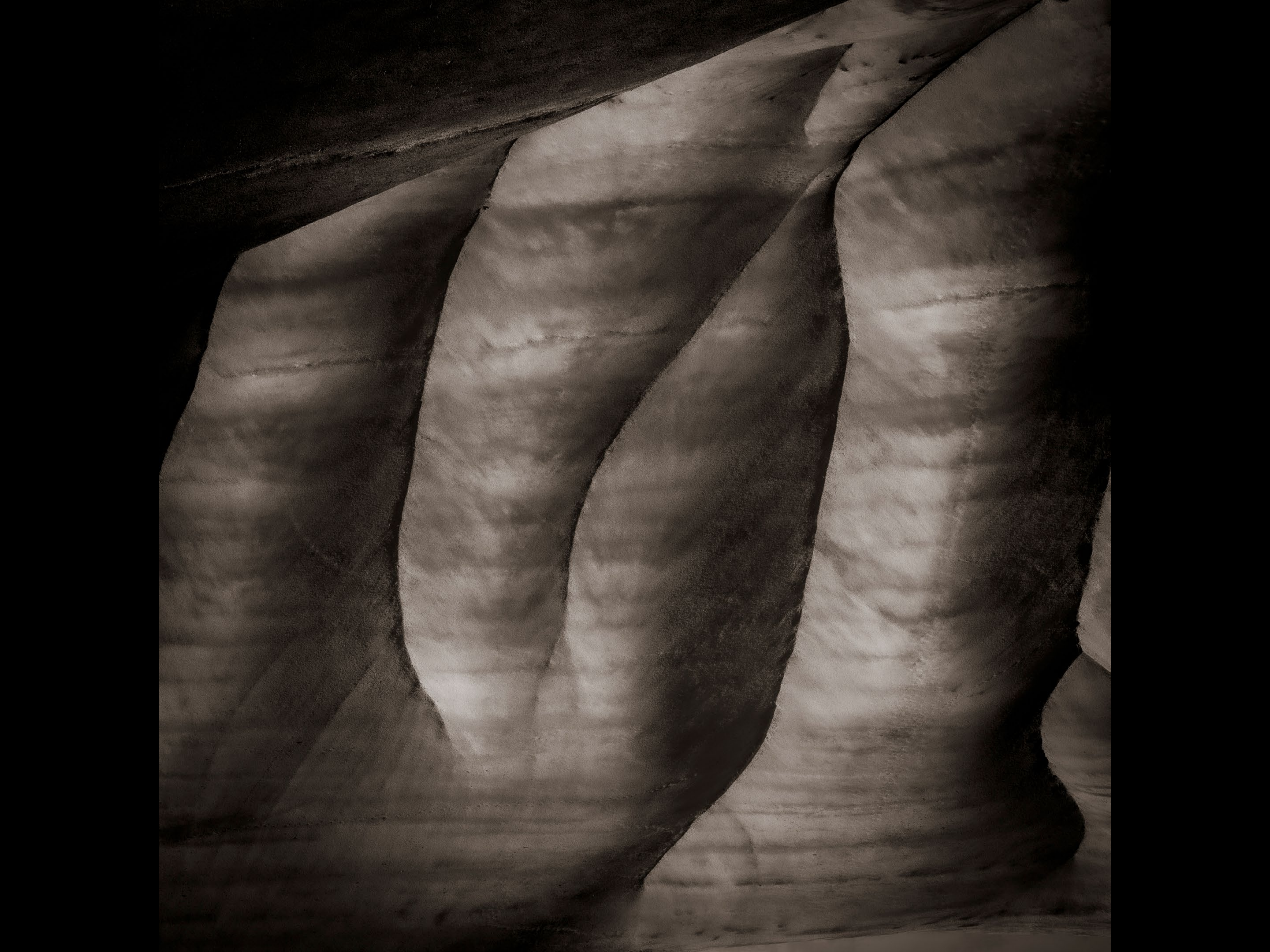
























Greg

A One-Picture Story



The doctor said the tumor in his kidney was the size of a football. Fortunately, it was whole and had not yet burst. There was at least some hope. The operation was successful, but the toll on his body was too great.

That last night, we sat in his TV room and didn't talk. He watched reruns of cowboy movies and smoked his final cigarette. We'd been brothers for 64 years but didn't have anything to say to one another.

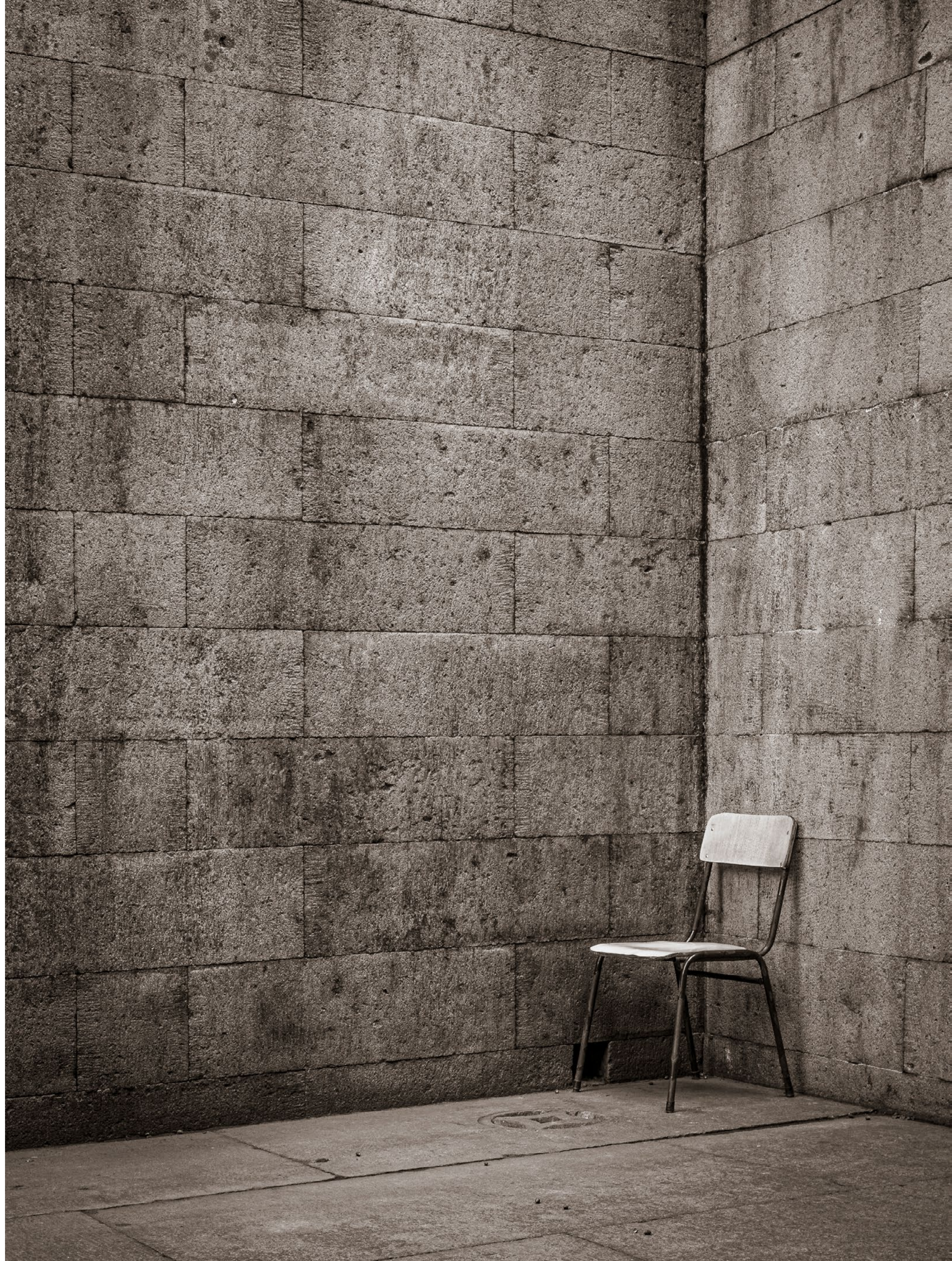
In the early morning hours, he died in his bed. I keep thinking how fragile life is and how precious are the moments we share. Why can't I think of something I wish I had said to him in those final cowboy-filled hours?

#118

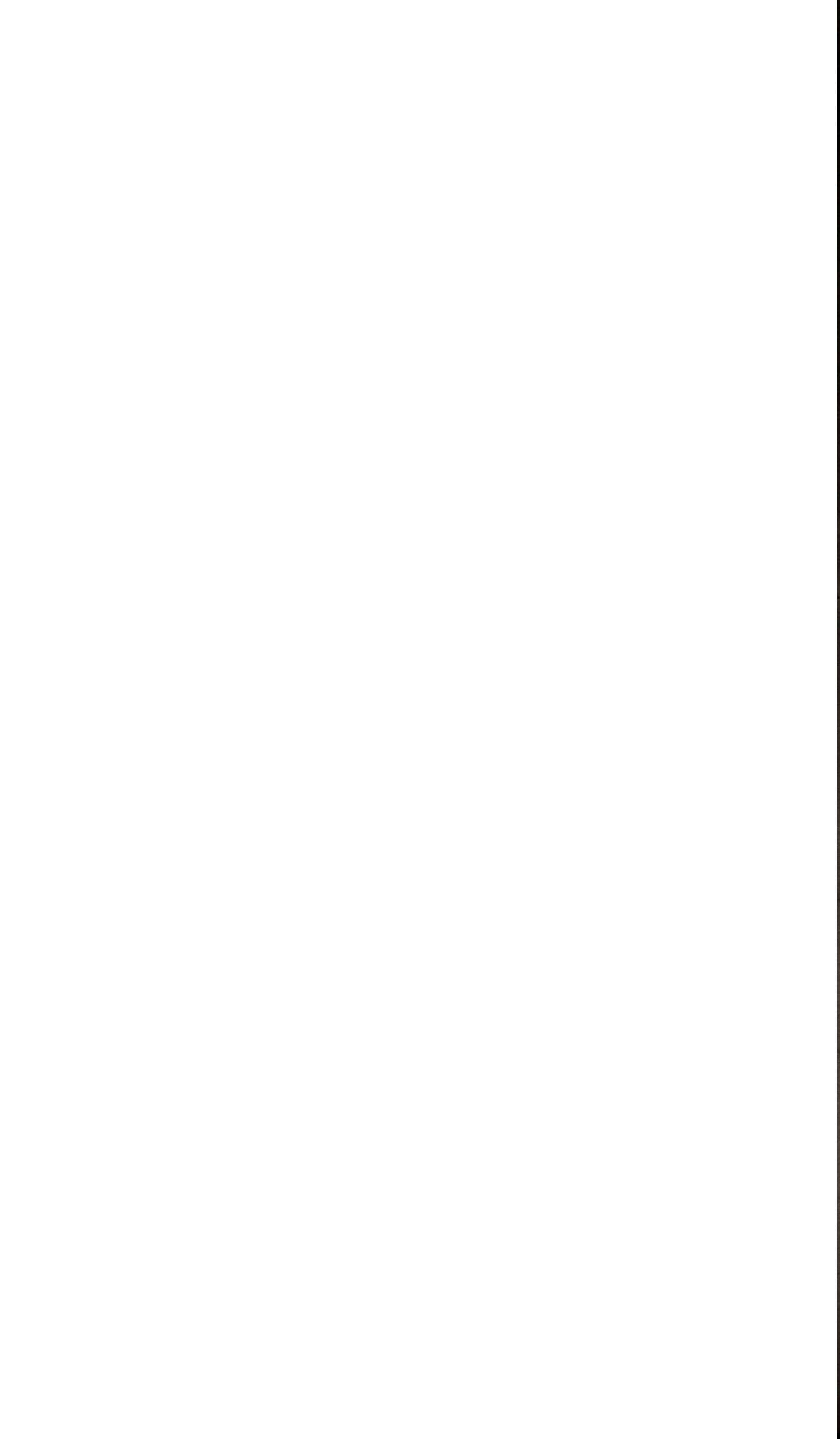
Cornered

Cornered

by
Brooks Jensen









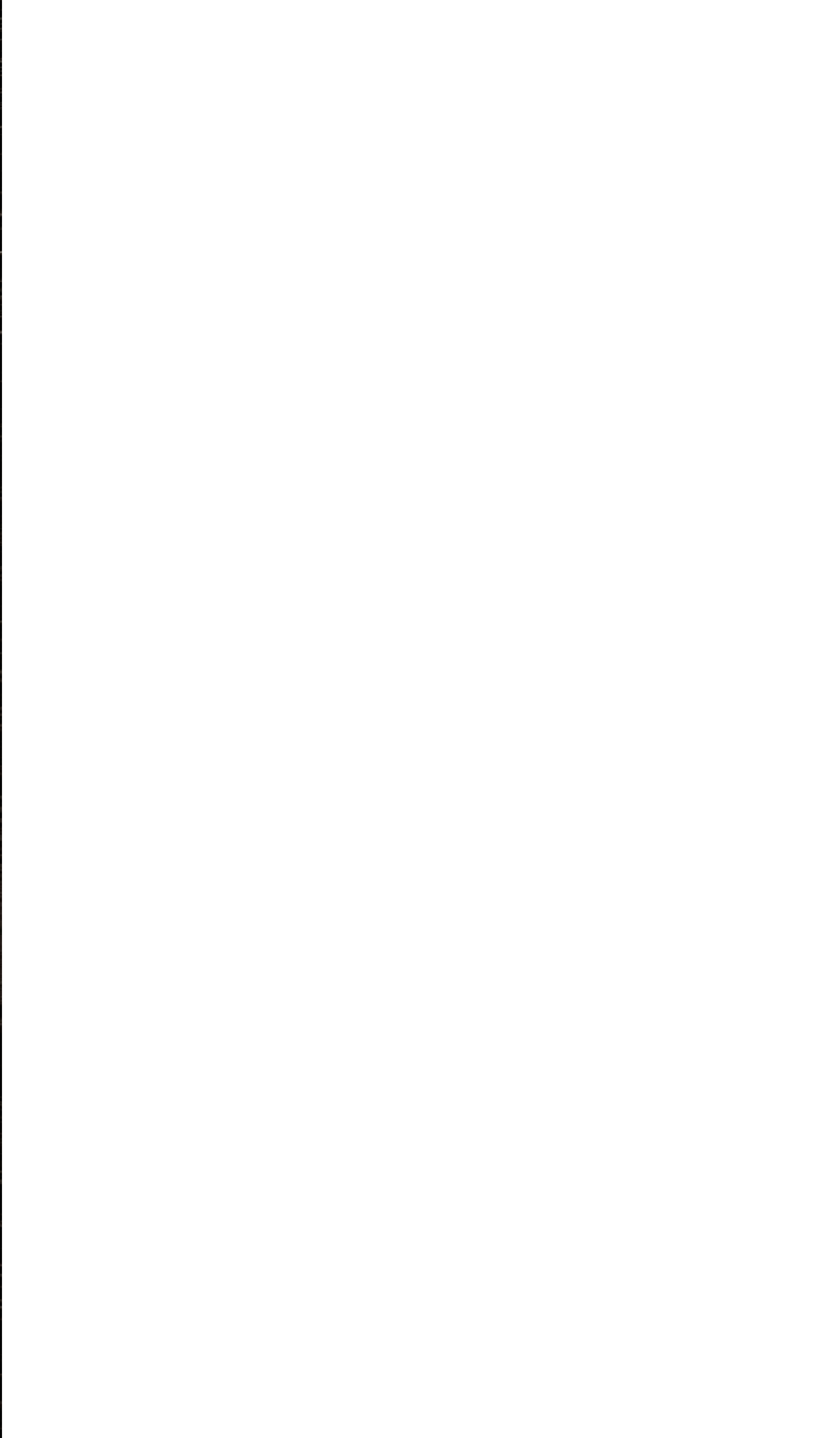




Just go to the corner
and think about what
you've done . . .

















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1963 DECEMBER 1963

LAST MONTH	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	FIRST MONTH
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Greg 2

A One-Picture Story



Our mother was distracted with her bridge club. My brother talked me into sneaking down to the canal where we were strictly forbidden by our parents.

I was only six years old, but my brother taught me two lessons that day — how to thread a grasshopper onto a fishhook, and that sometimes you can disobey authority and get away with it. Looking back, now that he's gone, I realize this was a major theme in his life. Even in his final weeks, he refused to take his medications and continued to smoke. I never understood what made him so rebellious. He was my only sibling — and stubborn and loyal and an enigmatic stranger to the end.

#119

Unintended Beauty

Unintended Beauty

*Discovering the accidental aesthetic
in pottery studios*

by Brooks Jensen



Pottery in North Carolina is like
the air in the sky —
it's everywhere.

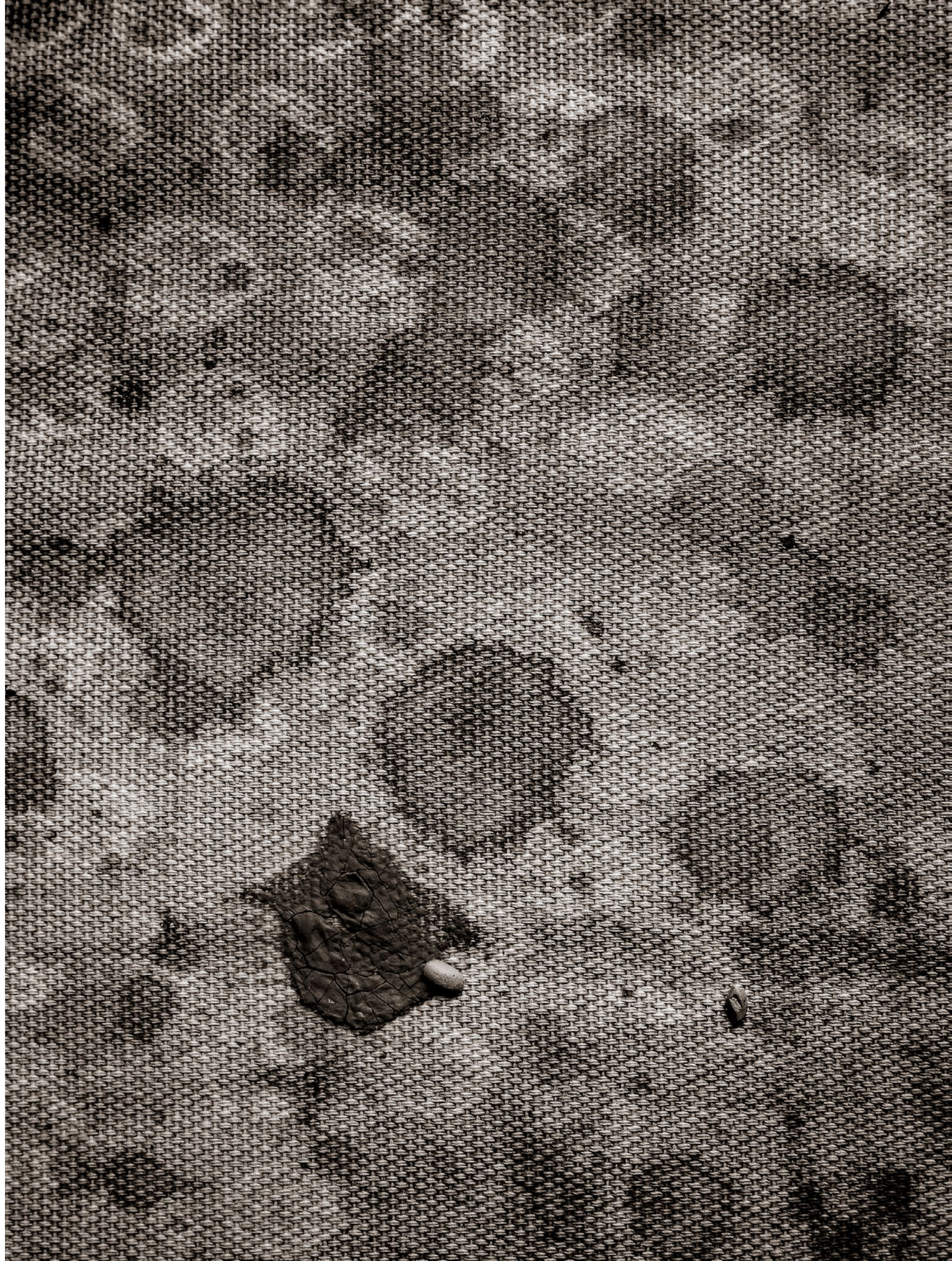
I thought pottery was about
pots and clay,
finishes and firing.

After having spent several days
photographing in a number of
pottery studios, I now know it is
a way of life.





Most of these photographs
are of the tools,
the workspaces,
the unintended beauty
that simply results when we
surround ourselves with
aesthetic karma.



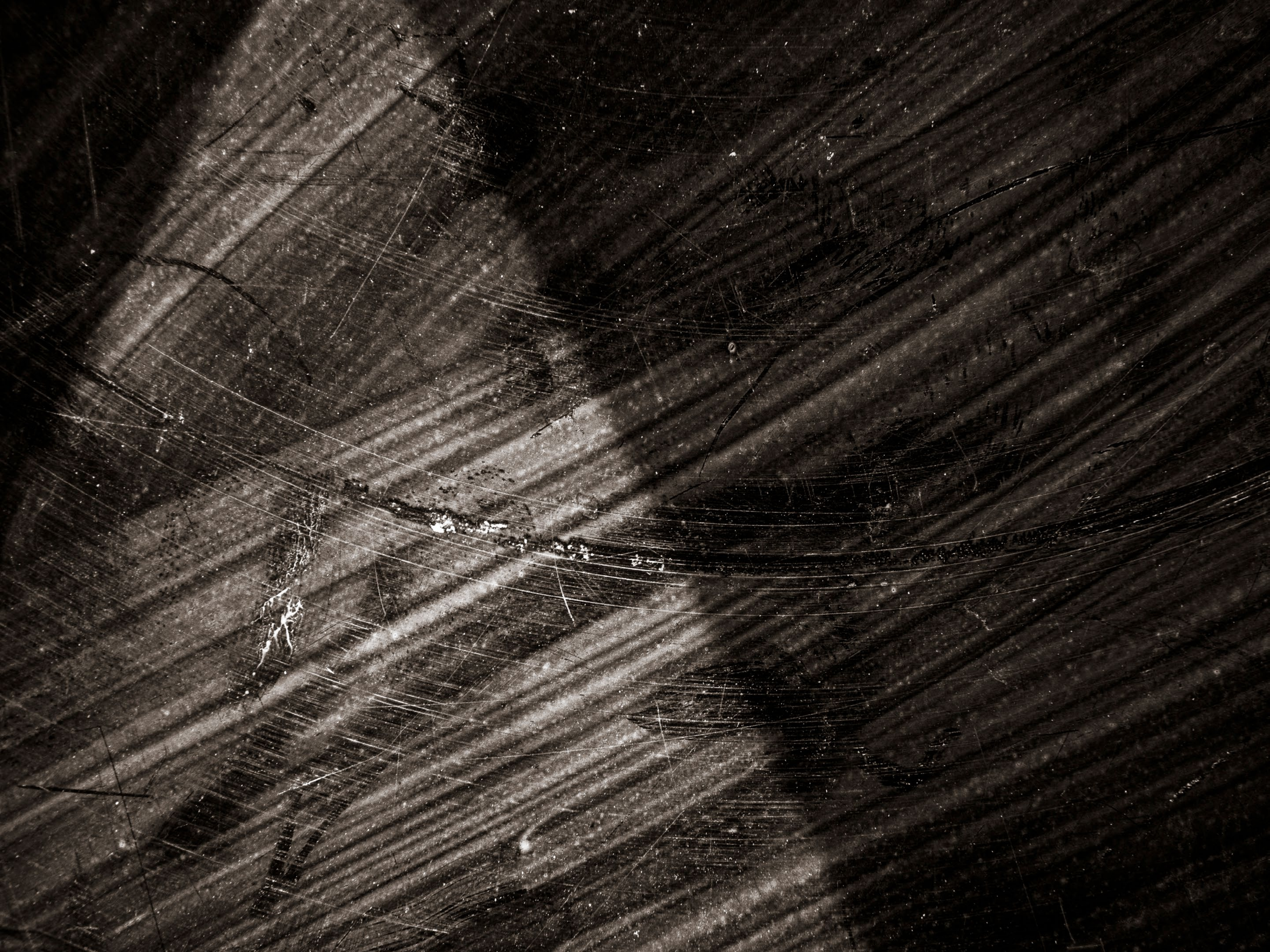


Even a broken shard or a wet clean-up bucket can be infused with the overflow of a creative spirit, unconscious, unplanned, unexpected.



















Greg 3

A One-Picture Story

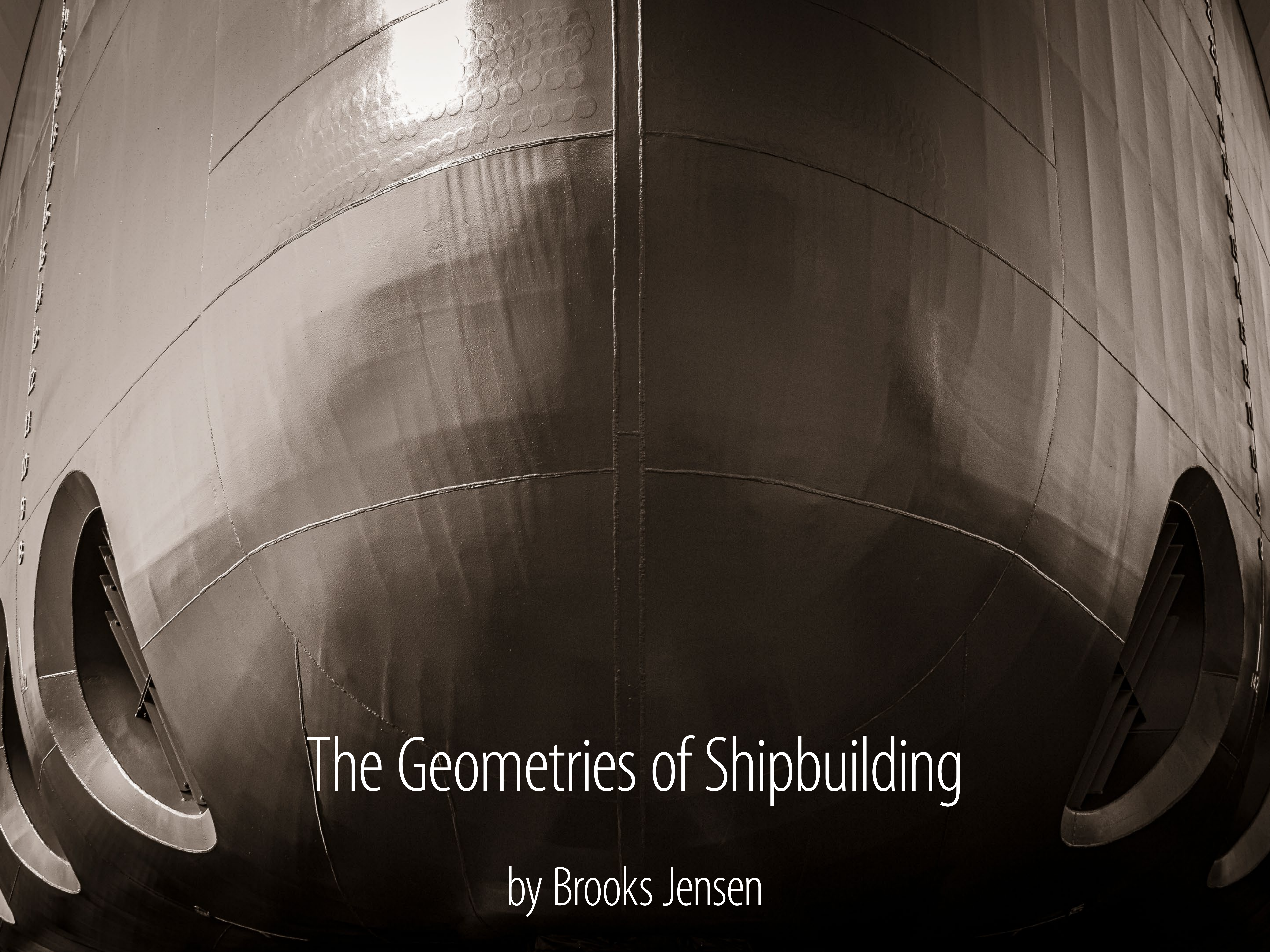


We were both born in Wyoming, but that's just about the only sibling bond we had. He was six years old than me — which was a lifetime when we were growing up. He had a flattop and wore shirts with collars and buttons; being younger, I had a crewcut and wore T-shirts. Later, in high school, he smoked and drank and got into all kinds of trouble; I was president of the math club. He was a bartender and a carpenter; I'm an artist and don't drink. Neither of us were jealous, but we knew we were different.

From his hospital bed a month before he died, out of nowhere and without elaboration he said, "I wish things had been different between us." A minute later — and for the first time in our lives — he added, "You know I love you." I believe he did.

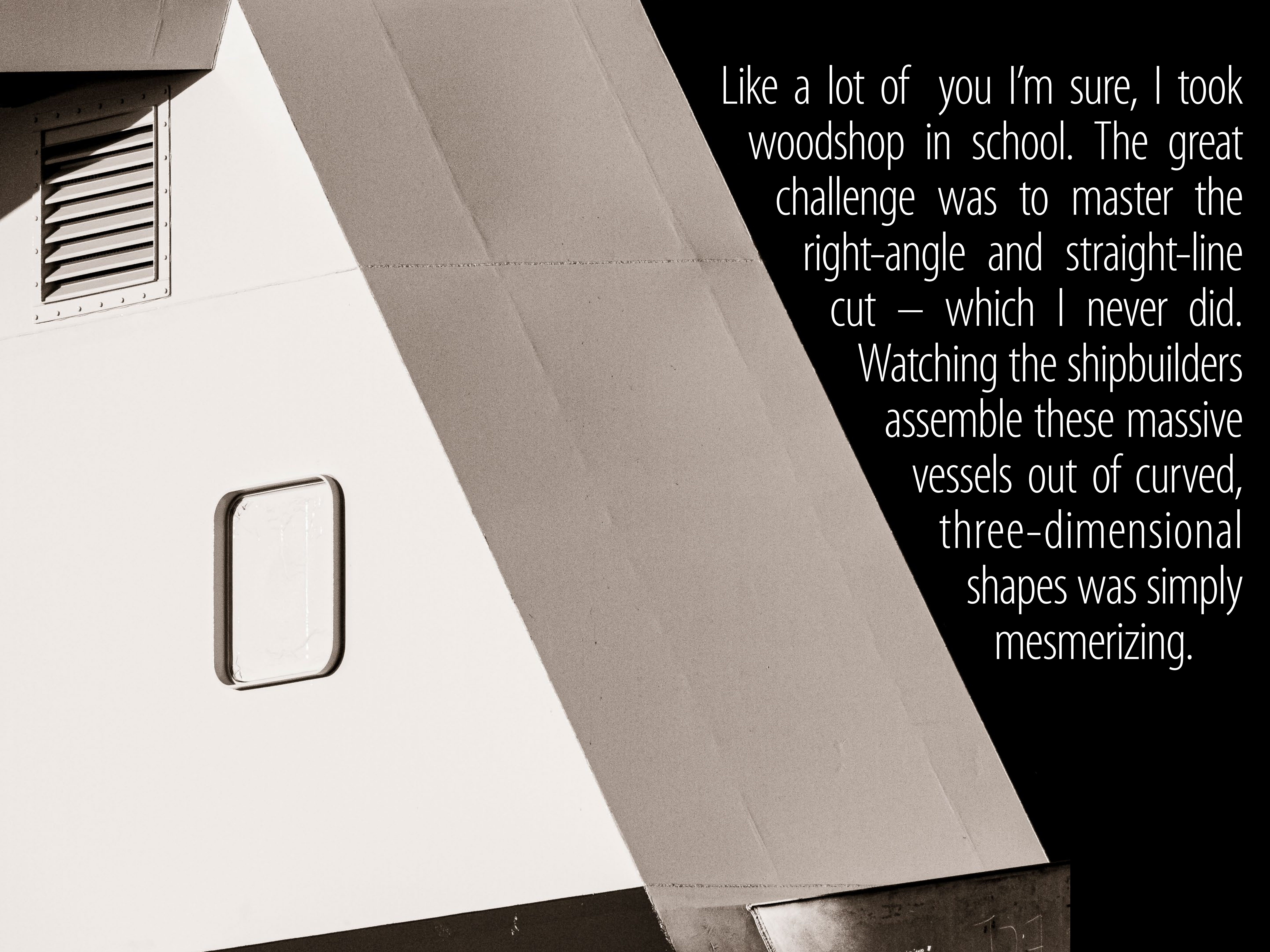
#120

The Geometries of Shipbuilding



The Geometries of Shipbuilding

by Brooks Jensen



Like a lot of you I'm sure, I took woodshop in school. The great challenge was to master the right-angle and straight-line cut — which I never did. Watching the shipbuilders assemble these massive vessels out of curved, three-dimensional shapes was simply mesmerizing.









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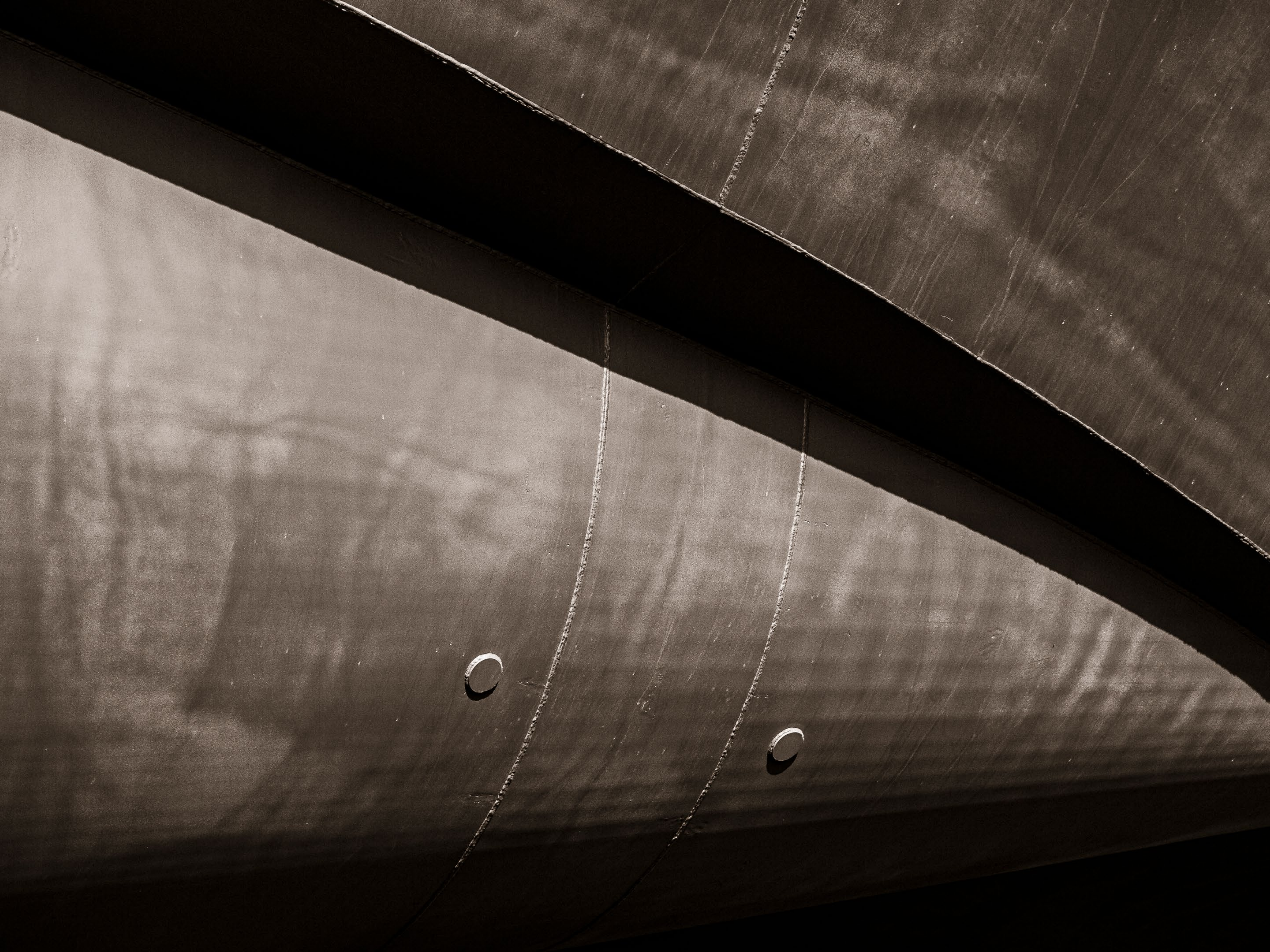
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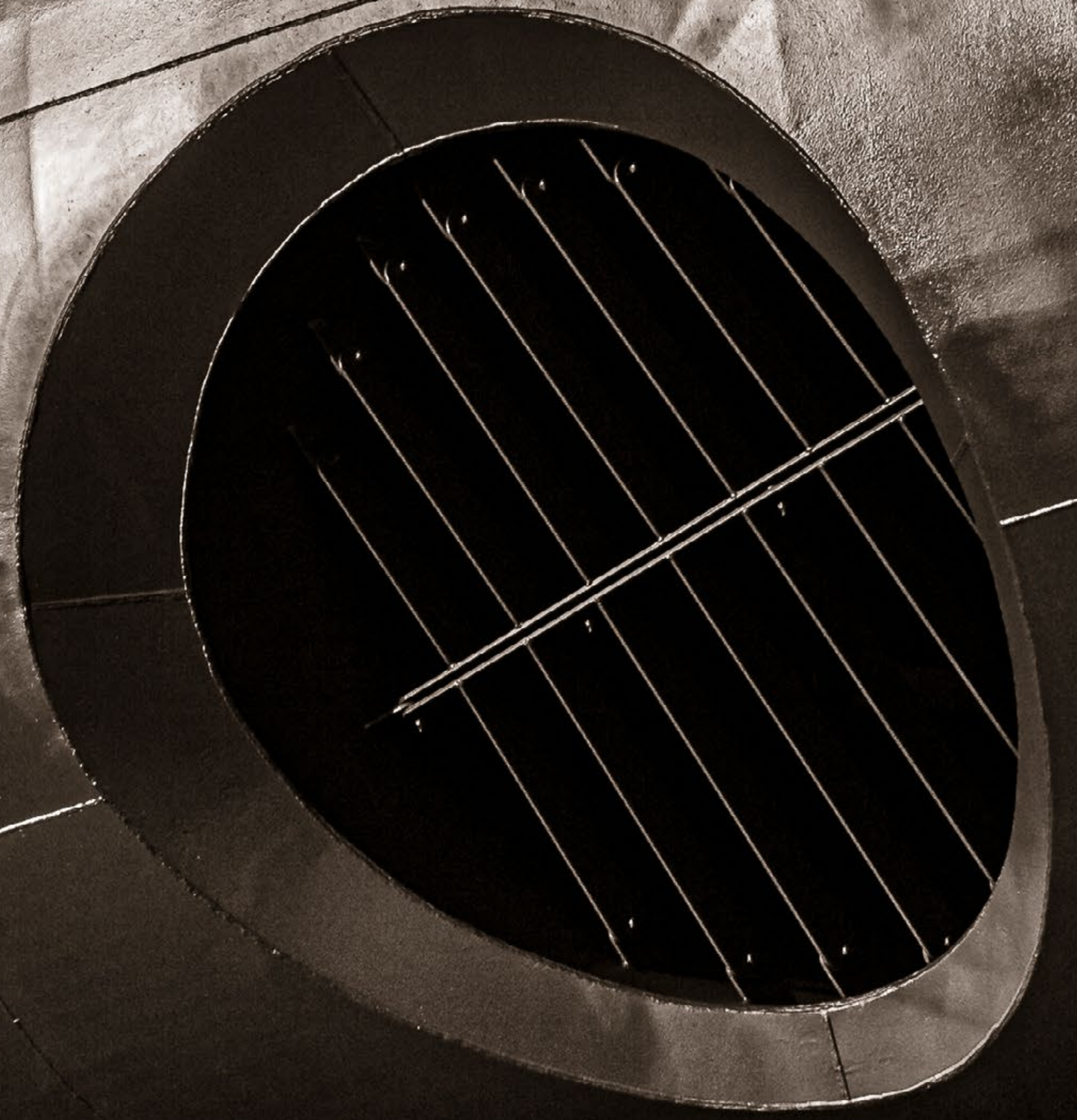
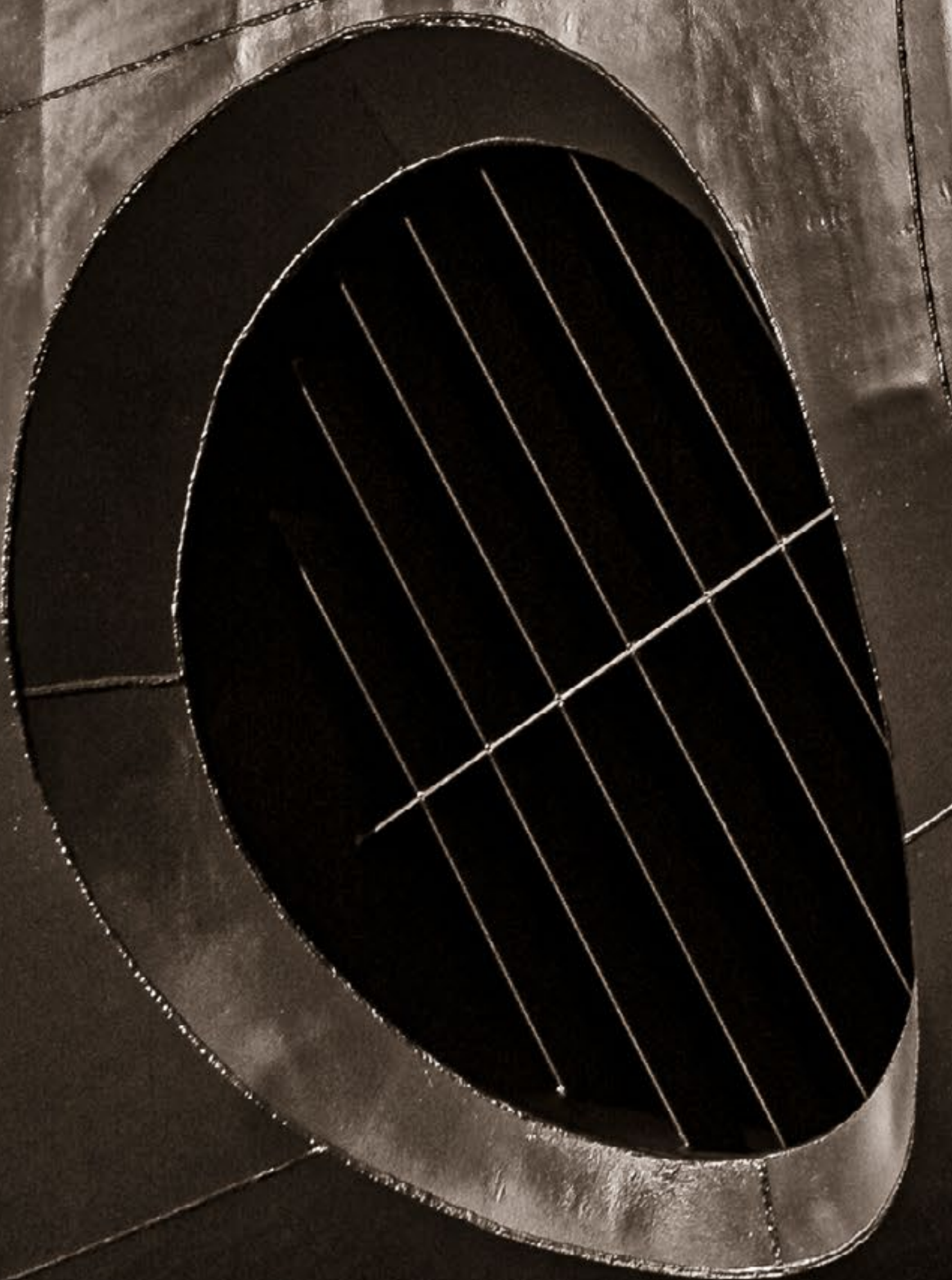
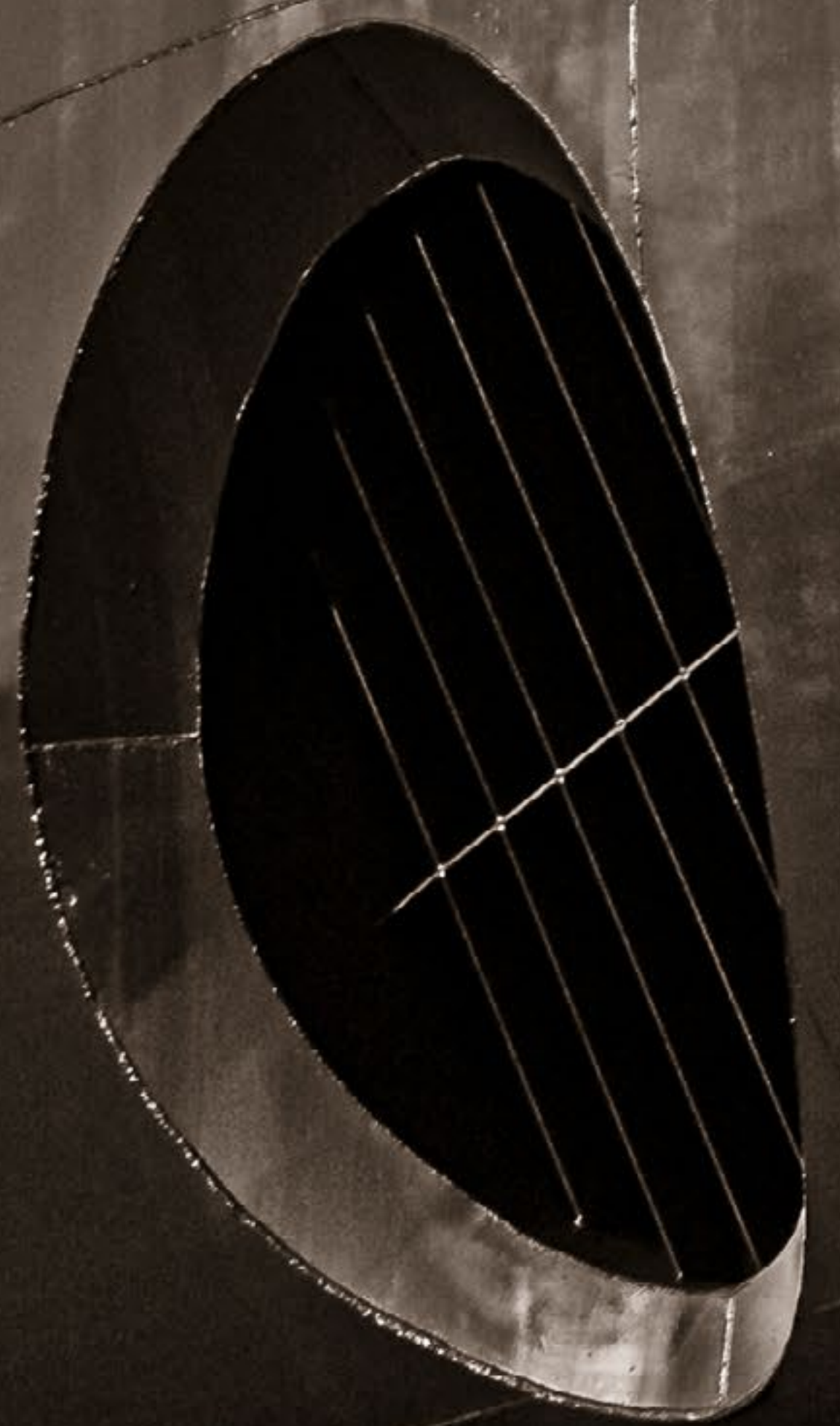
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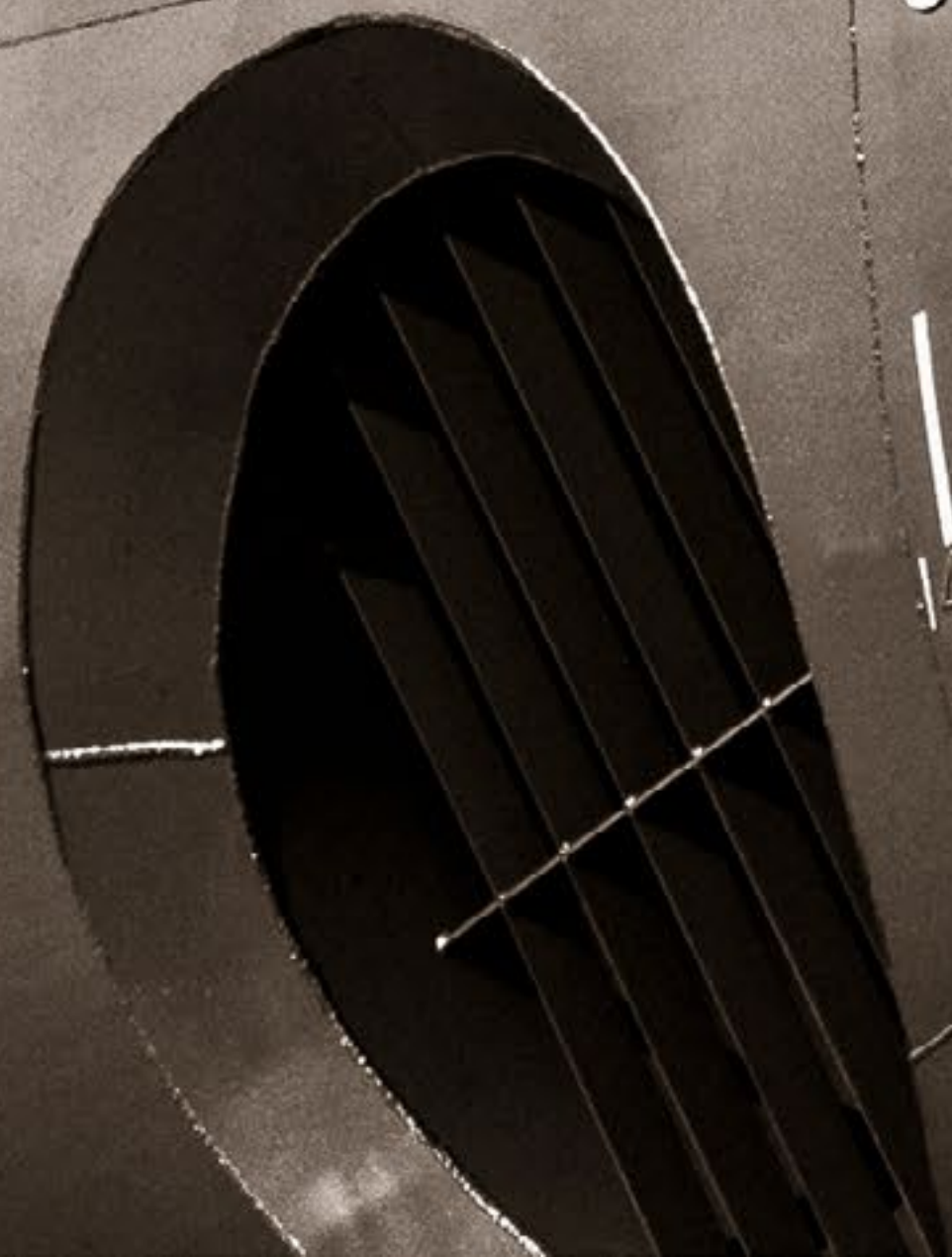
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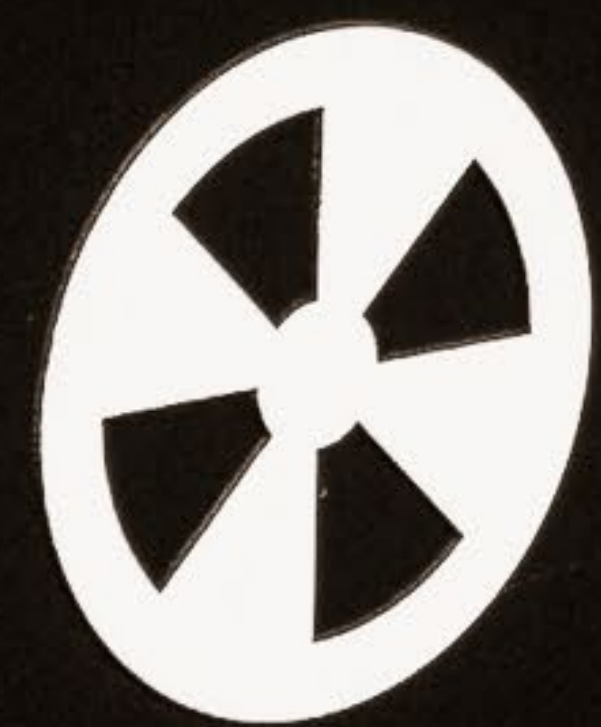
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Notes

Earth Nudes

I've photographed the Painted Hills in Central Oregon since my earliest days in photography. I've never made an image there I would be willing to show to anyone. Mine always looked like everyone else's, only not as good.

This time, after some heavy post-processing, I noticed the hills started to change – to look more like sculpted, Renaissance models. At last I had some images from the Painted Hills that I liked.

Tech notes: About 30 minutes of photography from the viewpoint everyone goes to. All shot hand-held with a Panasonic G9 and a 50-200 Leica lens. Heavily processed. And just in case I haven't mentioned it, heavily processed.

Cornered

Photography always seems to me to be about the intersection of photographer and viewer via the photographic image. I guess corners are a bit of a metaphor for that – an intersection where two planes meet. I always find corners to be more interesting than walls. It's a matter of two things finding and touching

one another. Calling Dr. Freud, calling Dr. Freud. Or, perhaps, it's just a corner. Corner, from the French *corniere*, from the Latin *corne* – meaning horn. Yup, where is the good Doctor when you need him.

Tech notes: Photographed over 14 years using eight different cameras in 16 locations. There is no pattern to this other than I must love photographing corners.

Unintended Beauty

So many of us photographers define ourselves as “photographers.” I've stretched beyond that to egotistical-ly think of myself as an “artist.” No one I know would dare call themselves an “aesthete,” but that what artists often are. We surround ourselves with aesthetic joy – in a pebble or feather we bring home from a walk, to a fascination with the abstract patterns on bottom of the frying pan. When we bring aesthetic sensitivity into our lives, we find it everywhere – and it changes us.

Tech notes: Photographed in three days in 2017 using a Panasonic G-85 and either a Panasonic 42.5 mm prime lens or a Panasonic 12-35mm f.2,.8 lens – both of which are among the best lenses I've ever owned.

The Geometries of Shipbuilding

For over 10 years we lived across the street from the Dakota Creek Shipyard. I photographed it extensively – perhaps a bit too much. How does one edit over 4,000 images of one location? Only by waiting for something to bubble up from the Creative Muse within us. When it does so, it seems so obvious. Geometric shapes – so, so obvious.

Tech notes: Curiously, most of the images in this collection were shot with a 12 megapixel Panasonic G1. I loved that camera.

One-Picture Stories

My brother – my only sibling – passed away in May 2018. I still find myself forgetting and thinking, “I should call Greg ...” but then I remember. Snippets of scenes appear at odd moments: a gesture, the way he laughed or cursed or teased, the odd and chaotic way his mind sometimes worked. I am now the last of our little family, the last repository of all those family memories.

Folios, Chapbooks, Prints

Folios and Chapbooks

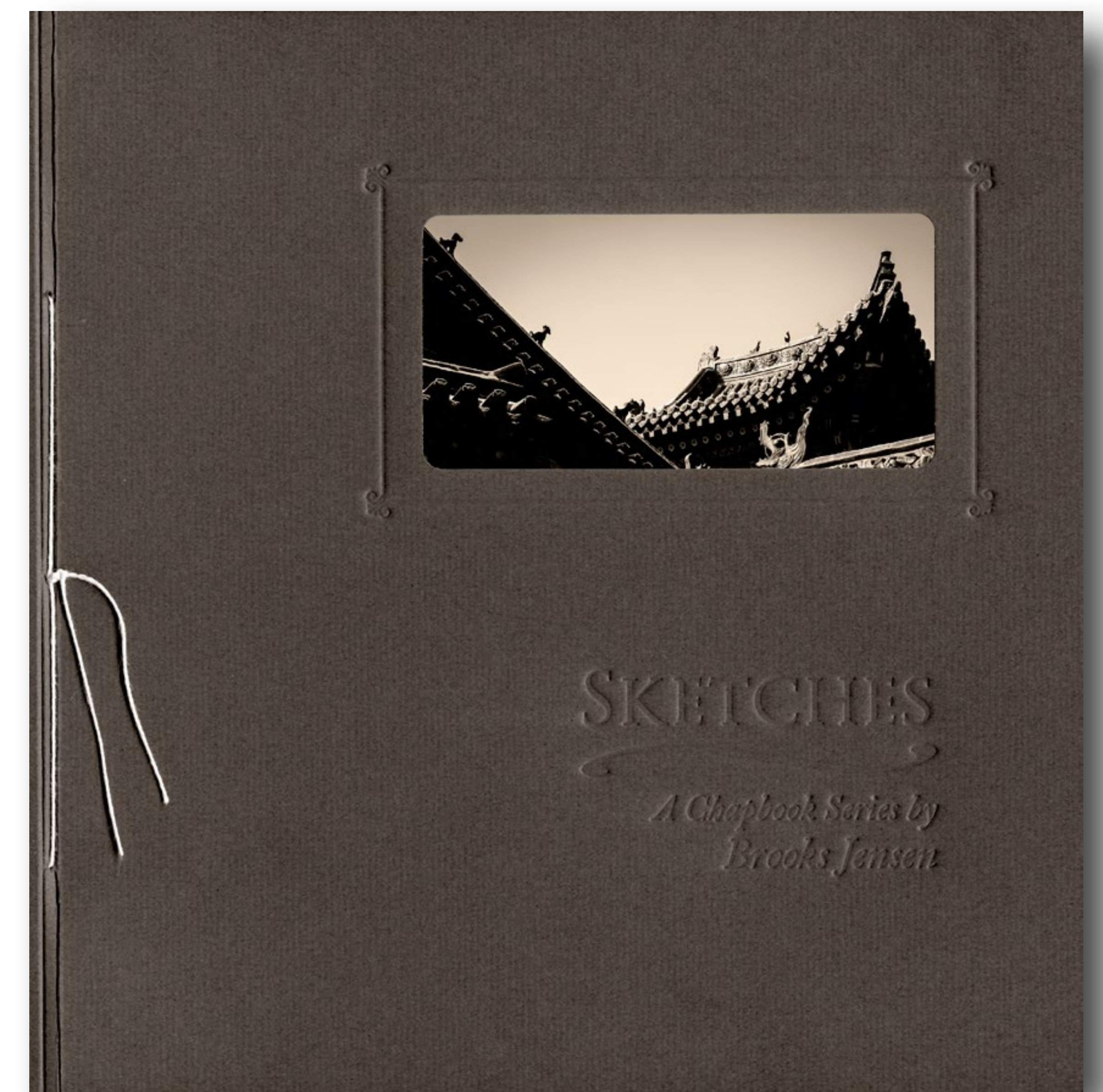
My primary media for physical artwork are handmade folios and chapbooks. These media allow me to provide a hands-on, tactile, off-the-wall viewing experience.

Folios are sets of unmounted sheets, typically related by theme or place. Folios include an introductory text sheet or folded signature. The art-paper enclosure is embossed. These are numbered and signed.

Chapbooks are sewn, handmade books that present more flexible possibilities for storytelling and predetermined sequencing. Chapbooks use two-sided printing and are typically between 8 and 12 pages. The covers are made from embossed art-paper. Chapbooks also are numbered and signed.

I do not use the artificiality of “limited editions” — a marketing strategy that conflicts with the very nature of photography’s reproducibility.

Currently available titles are listed at www.brooksensenarts.com.





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 1,000+ podcasts are available at [LensWork Online](http://LensWorkOnline.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 twelve best-selling 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); *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 2018*. [Kokoro](http://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](http://brooks.com).

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