



# KOKORO

Brooks Jensen Arts ~ December 2019, Vol 5, No 6



# 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.'

#131

# The Circle of Life

# The Circle of Life



Brooks Jensen





The sensual leaves of Spring and the showy leaves of Autumn receive the most attention. But the true miracle of leafdom is when they return to the soil, to become the soil itself, nurturing the leaves yet to come, as did all those before it.













What greater lesson  
could they offer?

A miracle of self-sacrifice!









Each leaf fading...

fading

fading

fading

fading

fading

fading

An annual reminder of  
the way things are.



# Piano Days

A One-Picture Story





Perhaps it was because my father was a coach that my mother felt compelled to provide a counterbalance for all of that family testosterone. She insisted I take piano lessons. For 2 years I struggled through the scales and that dreaded *Thompson's* book until I could finally play a jerky version of *Greensleeves* with most of the notes in the right places. It was about then that I was voted captain of the football team — the end of my piano days.

#132

Big Ceiling



# Big Ceiling

Brooks Jensen

Overhead at The New York  
Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
and the temples of China and Japan

Just for fun



The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art















China and Japan









恭迎各界人士光临



# Generations

A One-Picture Story



I am now the same age as my father when he died. In some ways, I have come to realize how wise he was; in other ways he was so naive and childlike. How I wish it were possible to bring him back for an hour or two and have a conversation with him at this same age, comparing our lives and our understanding.

How sad I am that in my arrogant youth I didn't have more respect for his wisdom or compassion for his failings.



#133

A Breath of Light

# A Breath of Light

Deschutes River Canyon at Dawn

Brooks Jensen









































SIRAMOT

























To paraphrase Yogi Berra,  
“When you come to a dirt road,  
take it.”





# First Glimpse of the Sun

A One-Picture Story

All afternoon, all night, all the next day, waiting in my cramped tent for the storm to pass. Incessant drip, ever present damp, discouraging dark gray skies. I keep thinking, "This too shall pass," but more rain and more rain. I don't fear drowning, but have some concern that I might simply dissolve in the damp and disappear into a puddle in the bottom of my tent.

Day three. Lighter skies. The first evidence that the sun still exists above the clouds. At long last, a drying warmth is on the way. The sun, the sun, the sun!



#134

Prairie Quiet

# Prairie Quiet

Brooks Jensen



Quiet, but never silent

wind

birds

insects

cattle

A quiet that is still, yet *not* still

A prairie quiet



















































Notes

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## The Circle of Life

My favorite season of the year for photography has always been the Fall. Great light, comfortable weather, golden colors. But Fall quickly turns to Winter — which I'm quickly discovering is equally true for each of us. I've explored this theme in other chapters of *Kokoro* (e.g., #82, *The Shortness of Life*), but clearly it is still of interest as I count the years adding up in my own life.

**Tech notes:** All photographed in September or October, mostly with a Panasonic G9. The image on the page with text and the leaf in the gravel road were photographed with a Panasonic G7. All the images in this project employ the new "texture" tool available in the most recent update to Lightroom.

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## Big Ceiling

Most of my photography is done outdoors — landscapes and such. I have developed a lifelong habit of looking up to access the clouds for my compositions. Occasionally, when indoors, I find myself looking up — strictly out of habit. I should do it more often; ceilings can be a great source of inspiration. I should also thank *LensWork* alumnus Cole

Thompson for the inspiration to keep looking at ceilings. You're right, Cole, they *are* interesting.

**Tech notes:** Four cameras and six lenses. Of particular interest are the three images from the entrance lobby of The Met, all shot with the minuscule Panasonic GM1. I continue to be amazed how well this tiny thing performs — along with the compact 12-32mm kit lens that came with it. Proof that a camera doesn't have to be big to make successful photographs.

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## A Breath of Light

Late October. Angular sun. In one of those happy accidents of photographic discovery, a friend and I drove down the Deschutes River Access Road from Sherar's Bridge. The light was flat and boring until the very end of the day when suddenly a ray of light brightened the canyon wall. Wow. The next day, we drove the canyon again, but were disappointed with more gray skies. But on the third morning, we had perfect skies and gorgeous light. These are the days we photographers live for.

**Tech notes:** Curiously enough, every one of these were made using one camera and one lens — a Panasonic G9 and the Leica Panasonic 50-200mm telephoto zoom. (Best and sharpest lens I've ever owned). Perhaps even

more amazing is that all of these shots were handheld using Panasonic Dual IS image stabilization. You youngsters have no idea what a radical statement this is to us old guys who grew up with view cameras and the heaviest tripod we could carry.

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## Prairie Quiet

Here in the age of Photoshop and digitally manipulated crescendo-heavy photography, I still find myself drawn to the simple, quiet landscapes that dominated my younger days. One of my favorite photographic activities is to stop the car on some dirt road, turn off the engine, and just listen. Being there is more important than photographing there. It does my soul tremendous good to know (and experience) uncrowded land. Maybe that's why I became a photographer in the first place.

**Tech notes:** All of these images, save one, were photographed in 2019. All with a Panasonic G9. All, save that one, with the Leica Panasonic 50-200mm lens. Have I mentioned how much I love this lens?

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## One-Picture Stories

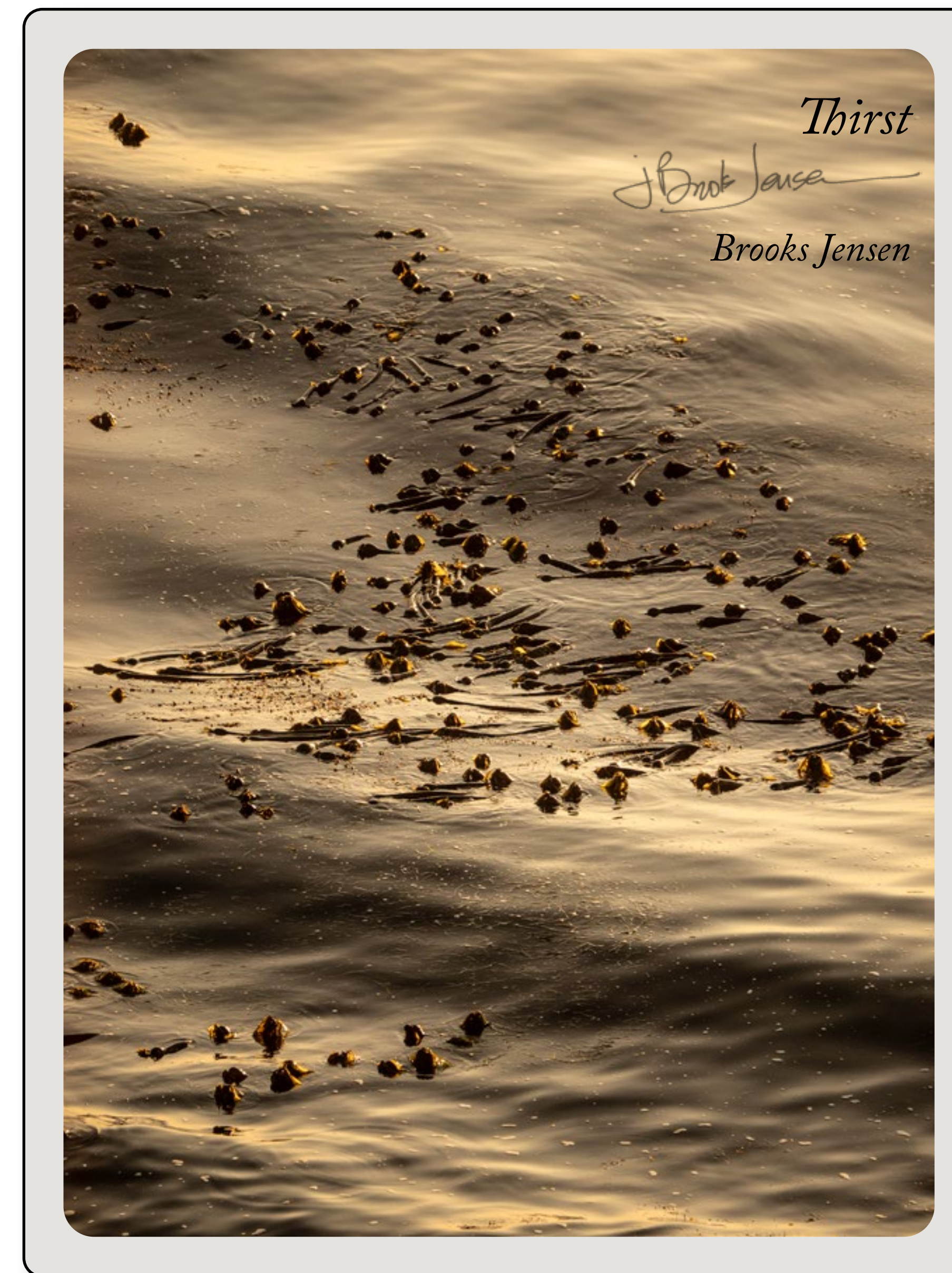
Memory, like storytelling, is all anecdotes and snippets — the story of our lives.

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# Folios and Chapbooks

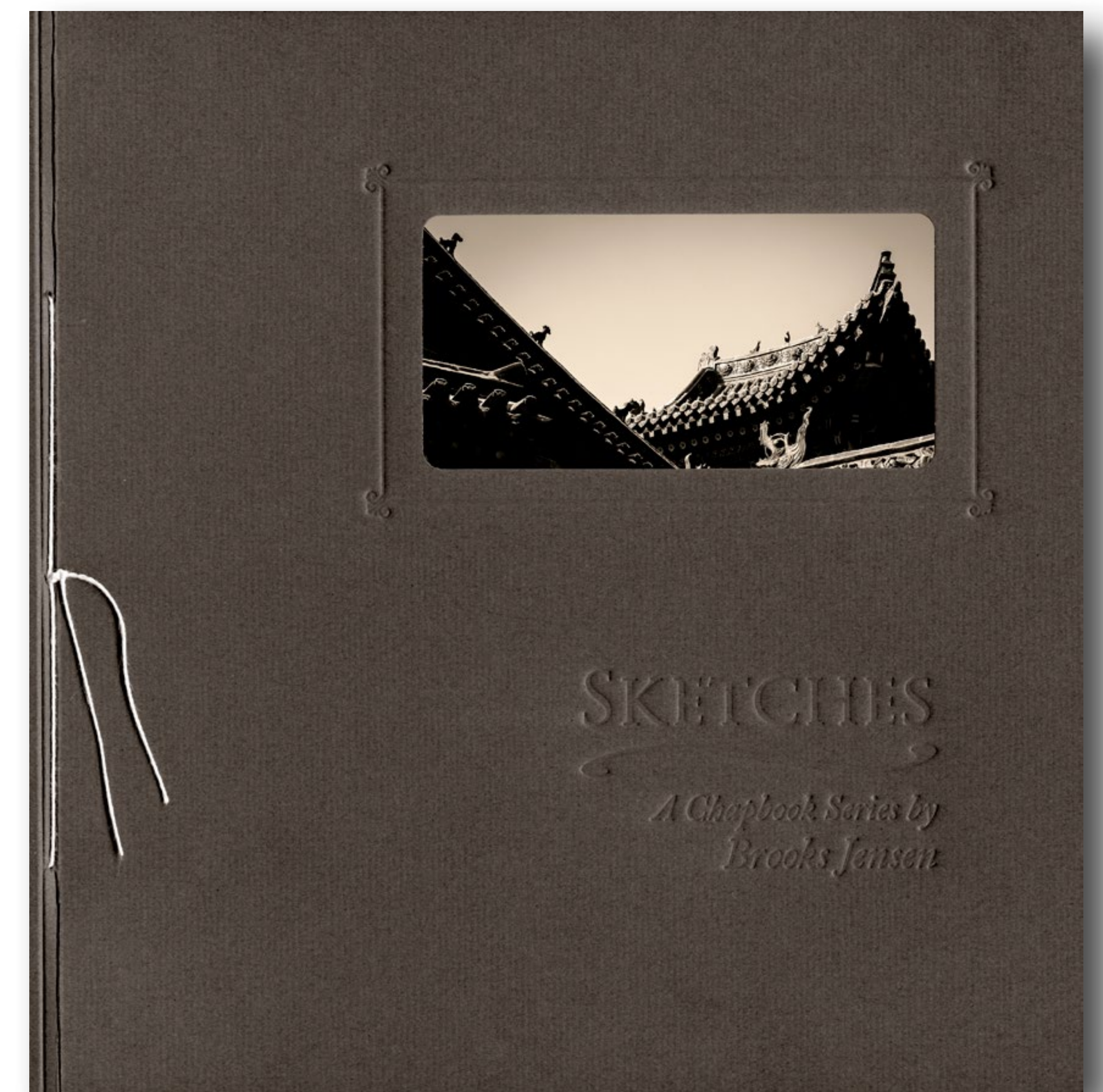
My primary media for physical artwork are handmade folios and chapbooks. These media allow me to provide a hands-on, tactile, off-the-wall viewing experience.

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](http://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 1,200+ 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 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](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://www.brooks-jensen.com).

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