

# KOKORO

Brooks Jensen Arts ~ January 2022, Vol 8, No 1



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.'

#156

Conflagration

# Conflagration

Brooks Jensen







We can count the forest.  
One.

But how many *trees*?  
None **left**.

Just the scars of what was.











































The Tripod Complex fire of 2006  
burned 200 square miles of forest land  
in Okanogan County, Washington.  
It was caused by lightning.



#157

The Life of Pi

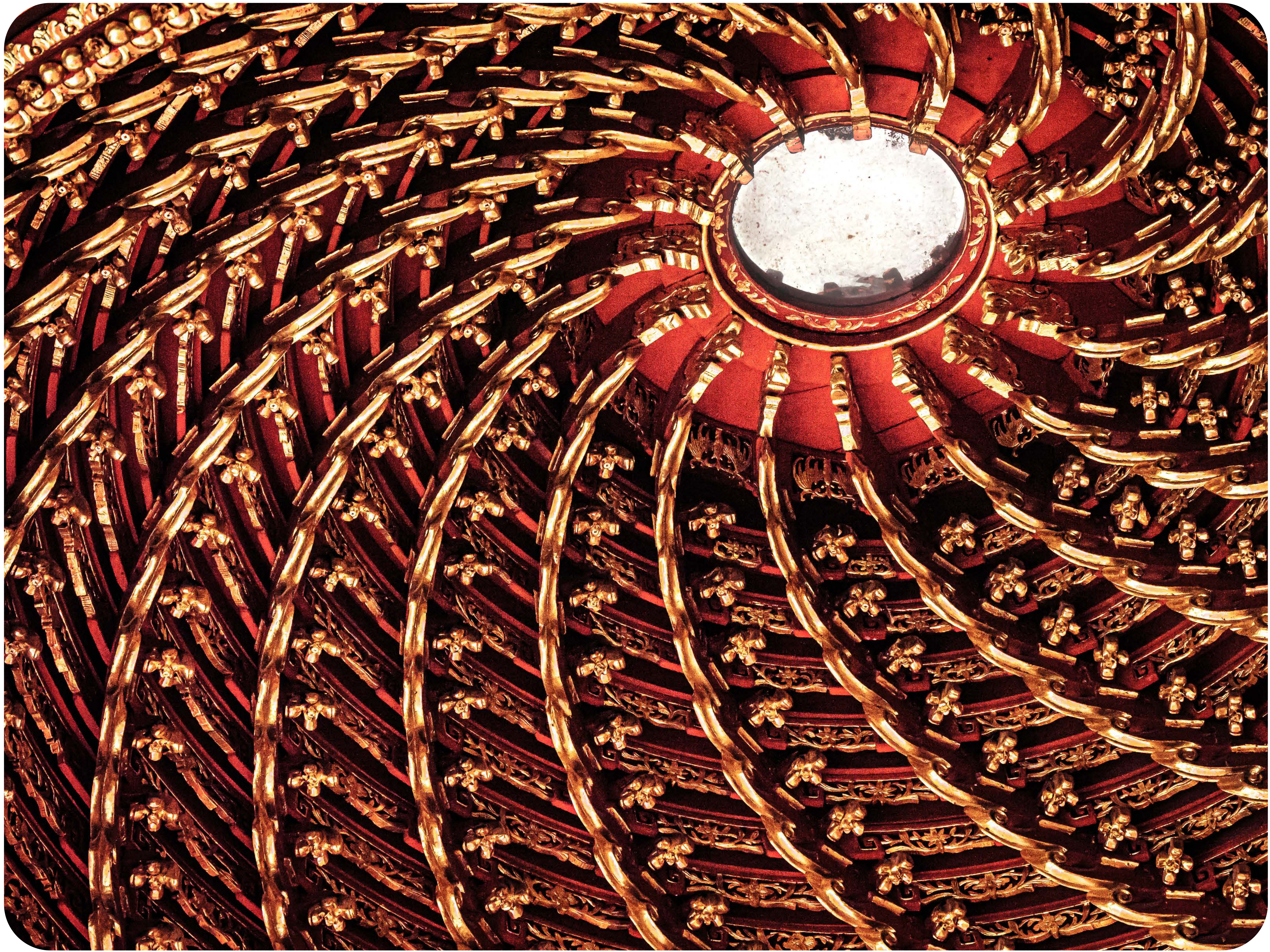


# The Life of Pi

Brooks Jensen

Door or drum, sacred or mundane, the circles of life surround us.











然 东

水

气







官店

老幼

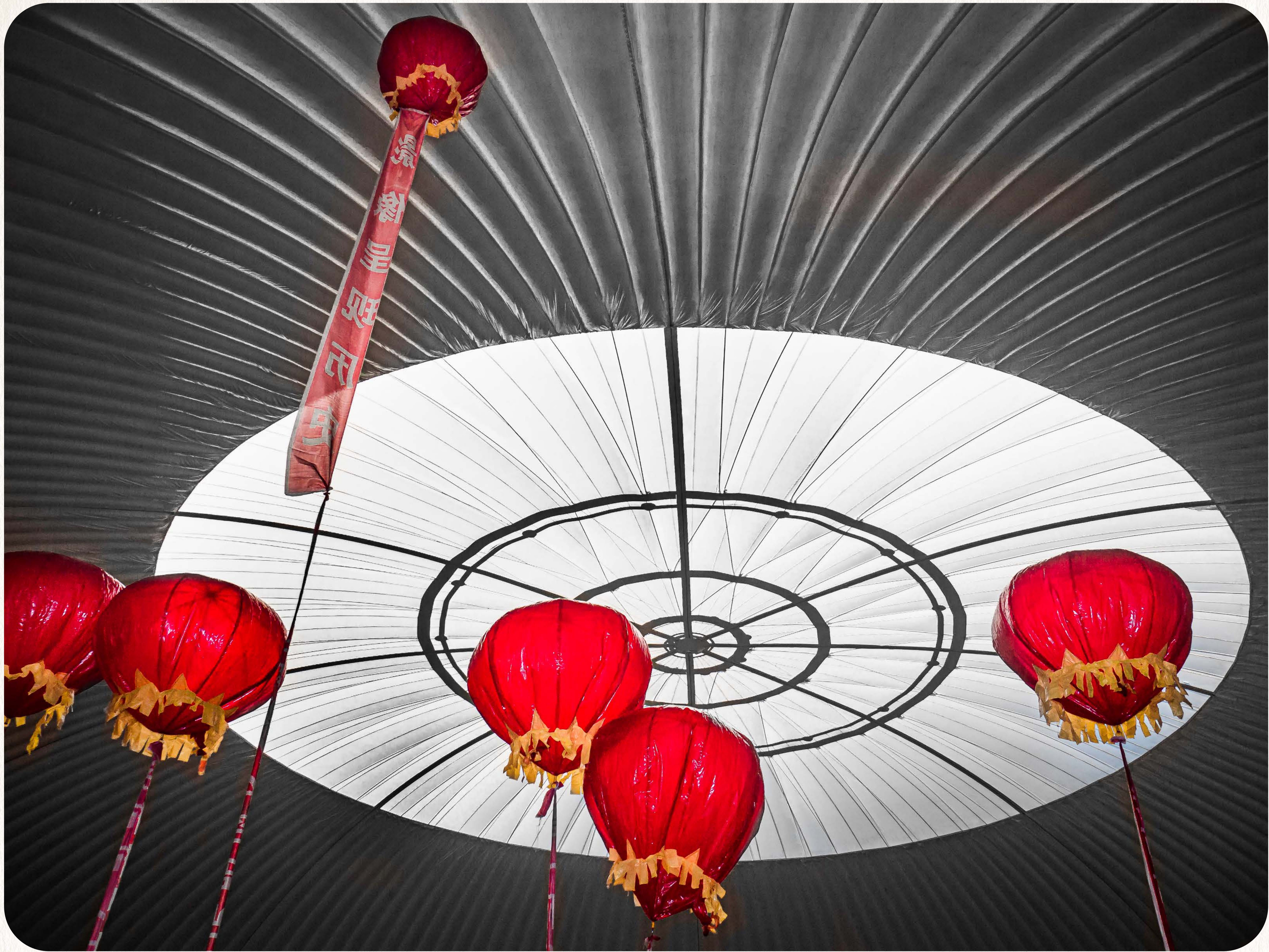
二〇〇五年







惟觀世音  
 手持柳枝  
 圓如滿月  
 瑩如琉璃  
 明如慧日  
 能破諸暗  
 住清淨觀  
 除煩惱燄  
 妙音所薰  
 慈目所覩  
 一切障魔  
 永為依怙  
 觀音乃唐  
 道子筆余  
 母氏昔日  
 訪求累年  
 于長安僧  
 譚因摹刻  
 石又繫之  
 二贊且俾  
 人瞻敬供  
 同結善緣  
 爾光祐辛  
 仲夏望日  
 南呂由聖  
 方真











#158

The Light Gives Rise to the Dark

# The Light Gives Rise to the Dark

Brooks Jensen

Every weave has its warp and weft.

Every coin has its head and tail.

Up, down.

Left, right.

Life, death.

Light, Darkness.

It only takes a fold  
for the light to reveal the dark.

Every weave has its weft and warp.

Every coin has its tail and head.

Down, up.

Right, left.

Death, life.

Darkness, Light.

It only takes a fold  
for the dark to reveal the light.







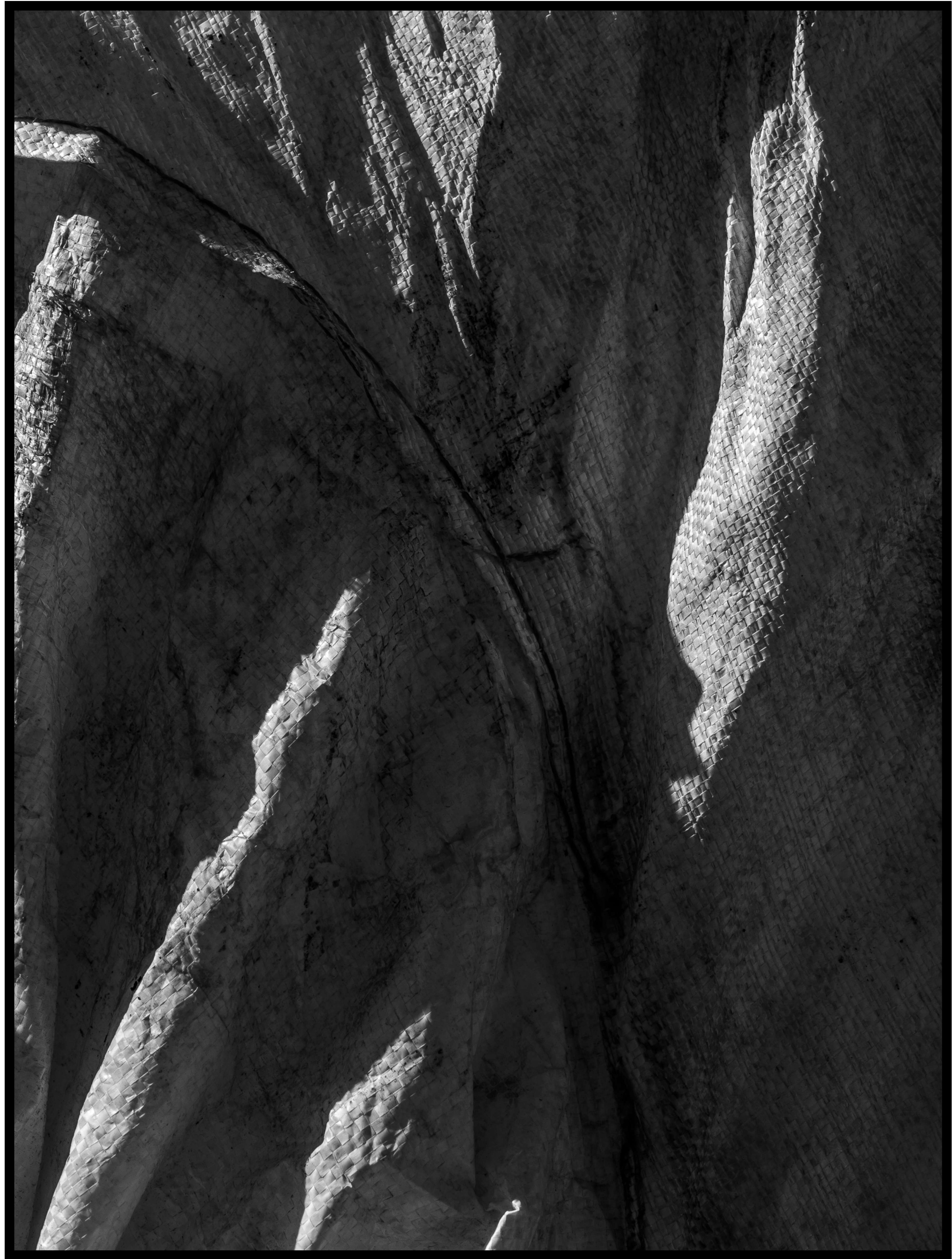












#159

Just a Trickle



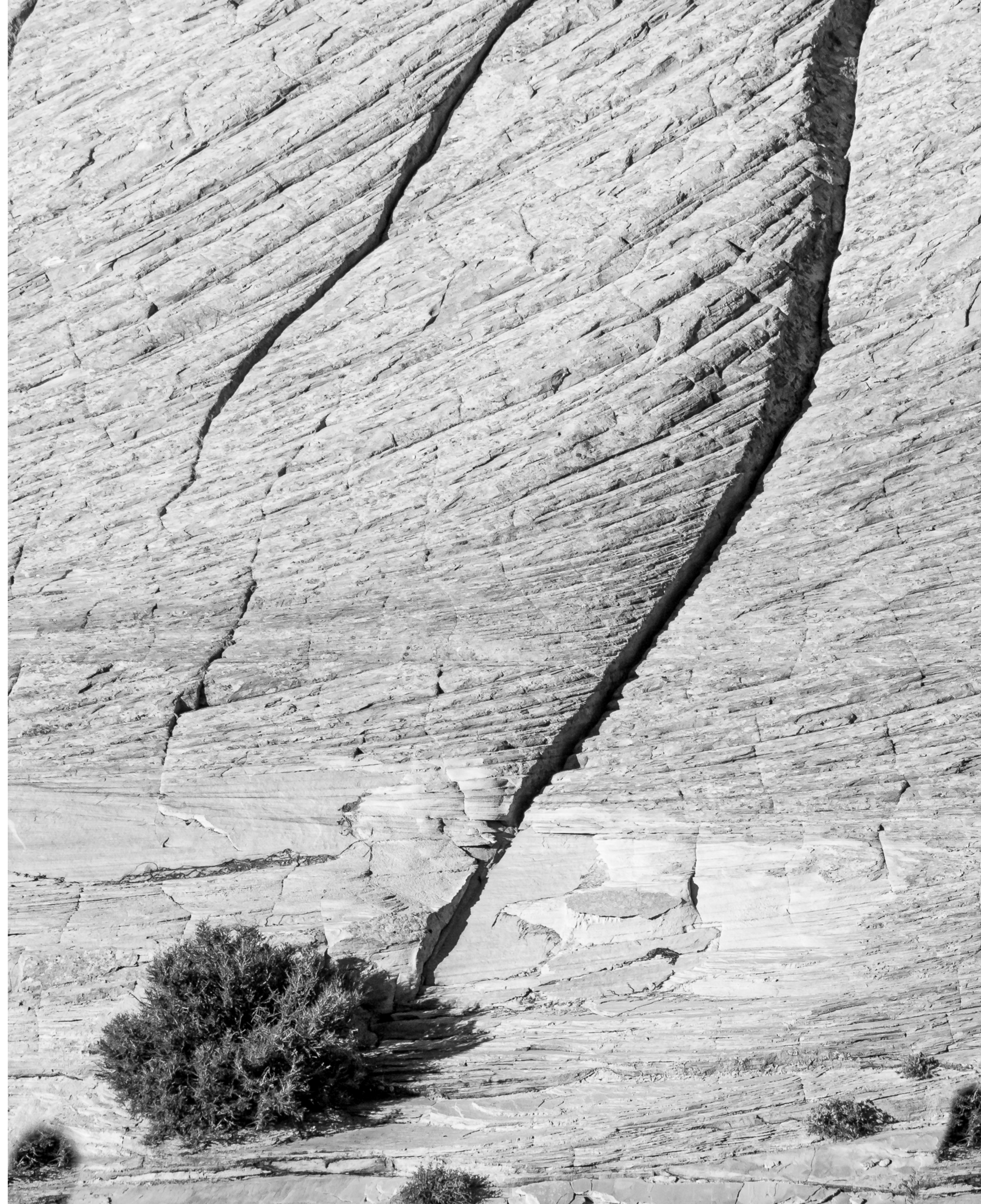
# Just a Trickle

Brooks Jensen

Water.

The essential element of  
*life.*

And it only takes a trickle.









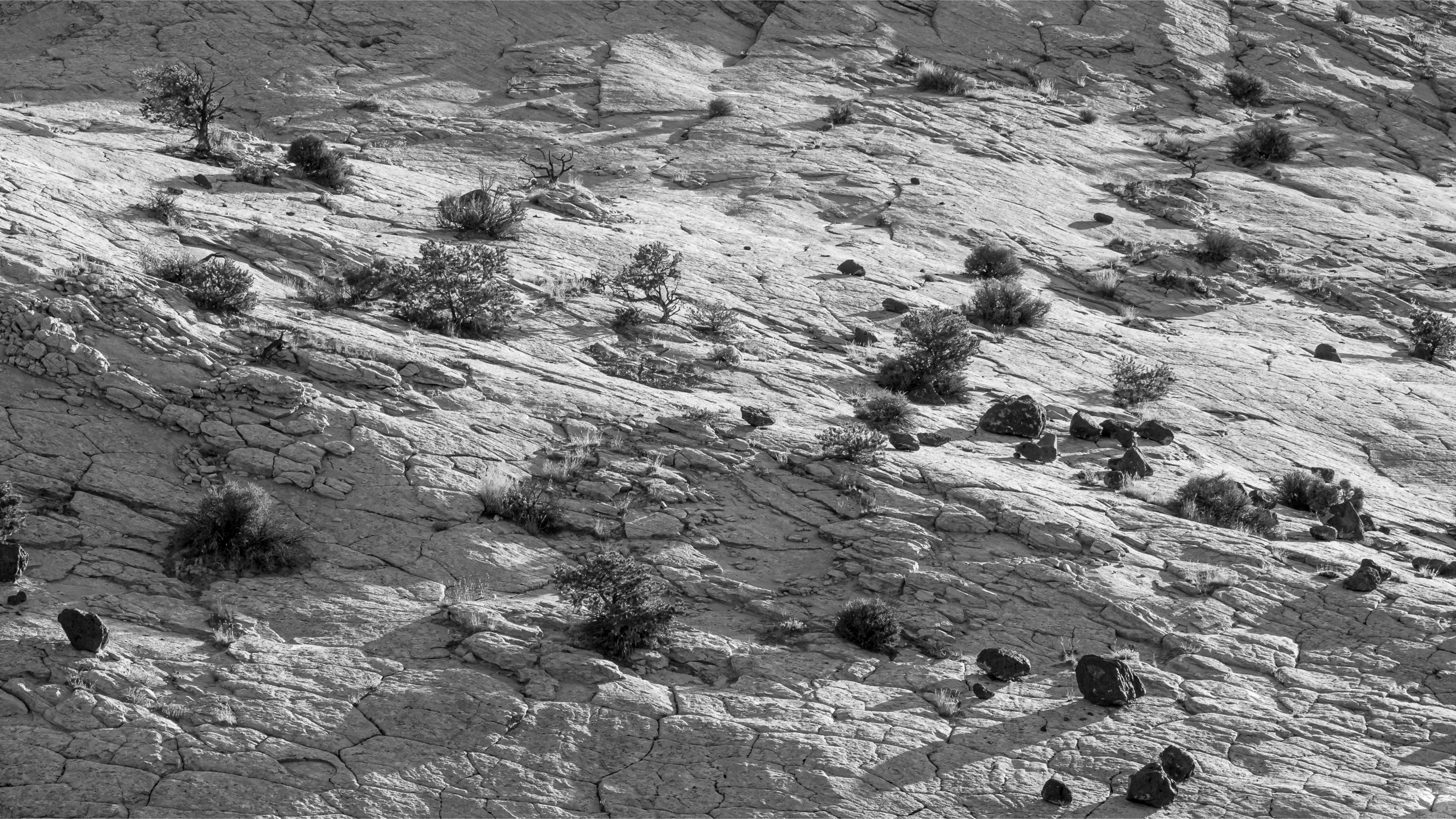










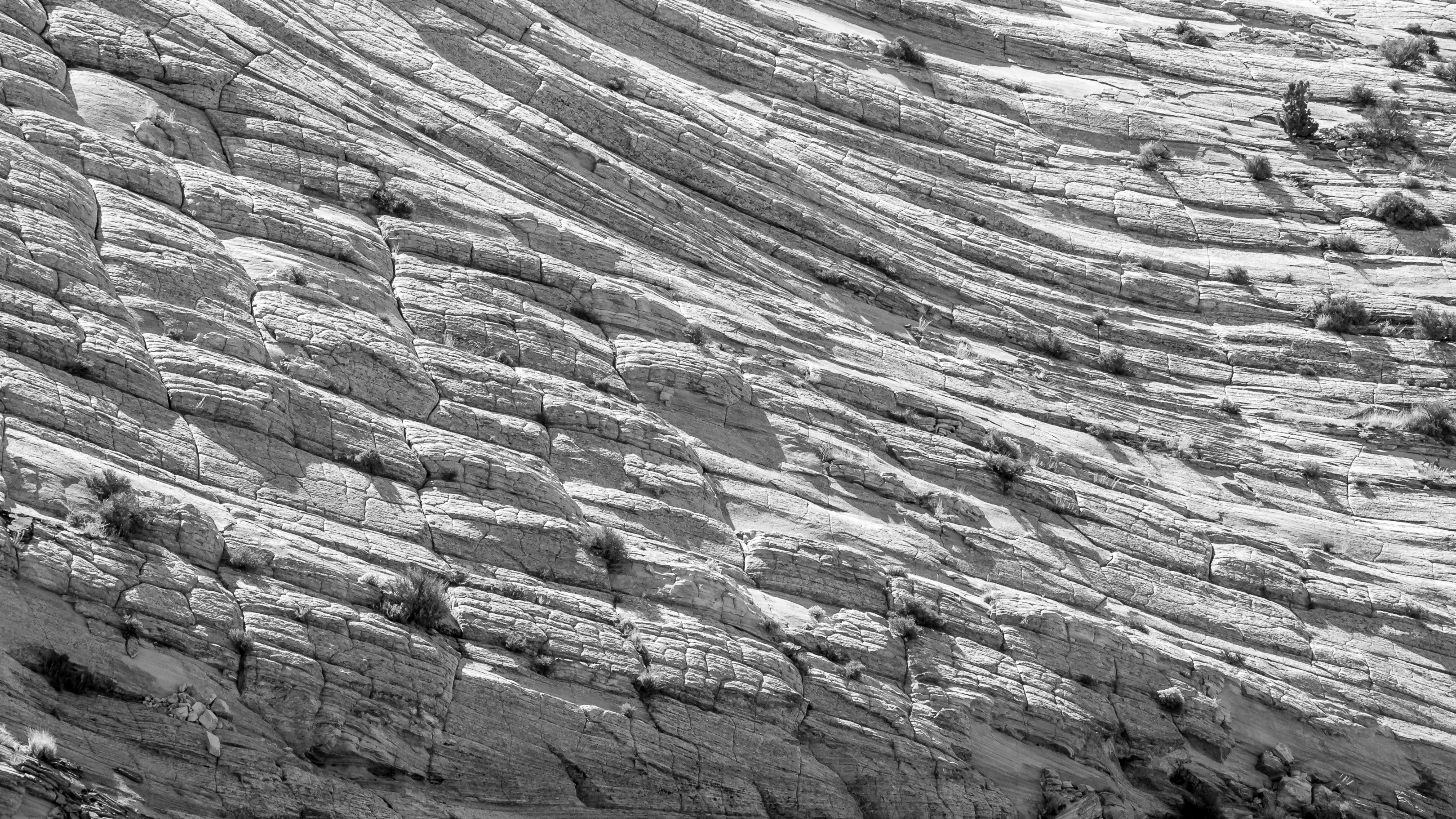




























#160

Beyond My Imagination

# Beyond My Imagination

Brooks Jensen





L6

L6

L6

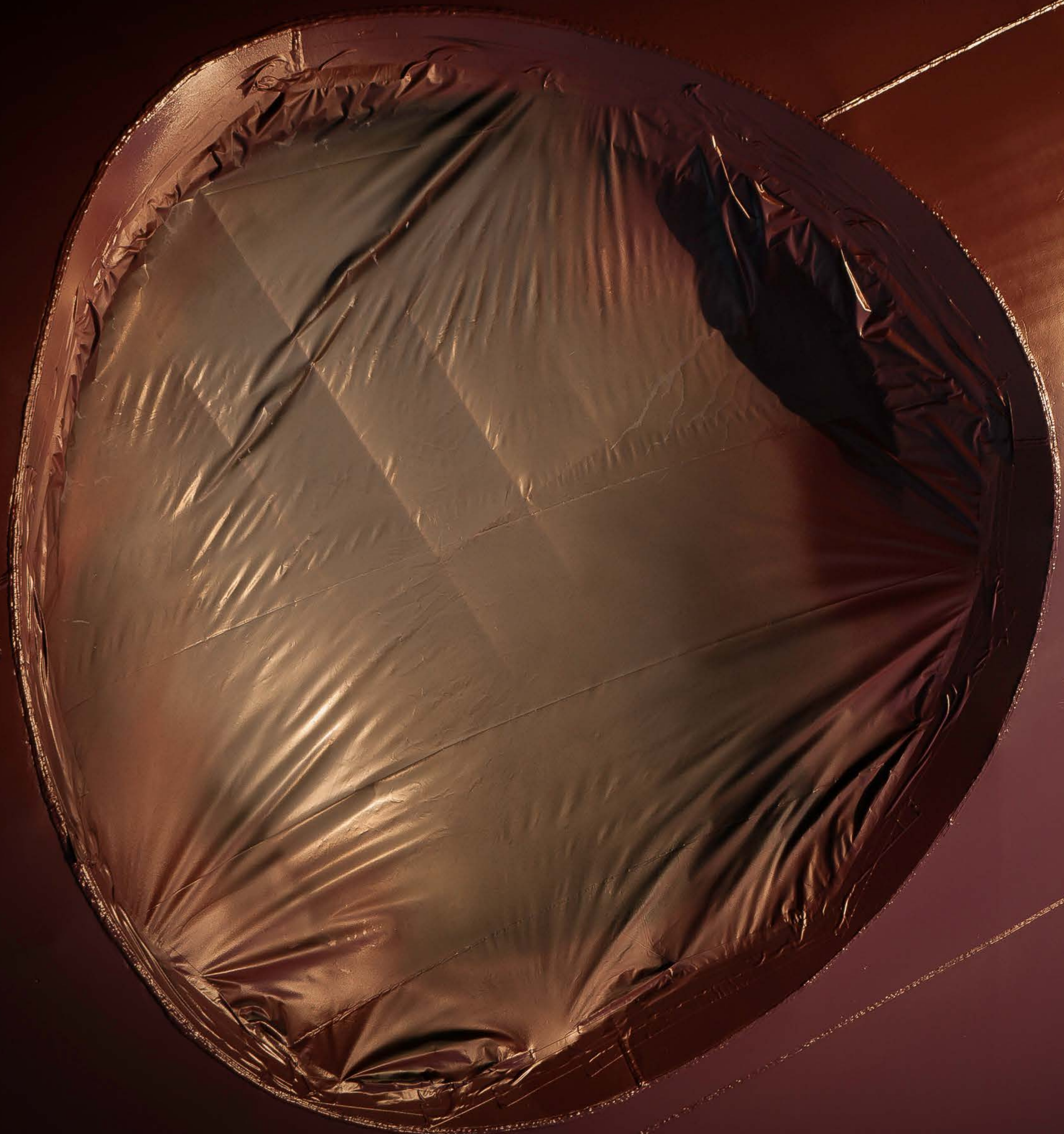
L6



















#161

Booming Life, Prosperous Business



# Booming Life, Prosperous Business

Brooks Jensen



These red decorations are just about everywhere in China. Photographing them is almost unavoidable. At the time, I had no idea what they were or why they are so prevalent. Finally I remembered to ask my translator. She said, "They are symbols for a *booming life* and a *prosperous business*." I'm not sure if something was lost in translation, but hope that's exactly what they symbolize.













千黃仰徽魯永作母儀婦範

謹盤匪瀆榘之

貞



武官官員軍民人等...

...



當







Notes

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## *Conflagration*

Forest fires are so incredibly devastating. We call them “forest” fires, but that disguises the fact that a fire destroys tens of thousands of individual trees. Life goes on, but the scars remain for so long.

Tech notes: I’ve been up to visit the Old Baldy mountain fire site several times. All of these images come from a three-day shoot in May of 2019. All shot with a Panasonic G9 and either the Leica 12-60mm or the Leica 50-200mm lens.

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## *The Life of Pi*

I usually photograph subjects rather than shapes, but the Chinese have circles so embedded in their culture that it’s hard to miss it. Round shapes abound, so I photographed them.

Tech notes: These images all come from the decade between 2009 and 2019. Six cameras and eight lenses. A great example of the “gathering assets” approach to field work.

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## *The Light Gives Rise to the Dark*

Another example of a ten year project,

although I had no idea it was a project as I was gathering these images. I just like the shapes of unfolded cloth. After looking at these for some time, it struck me that all of them are white clothes, but in every picture there are dark areas. Hence the title of the project.

Tech notes: I originally gave all of these images a warm tone, but then it occurred to me that they were all white fabric. Neutral black-and-white is a better fit.

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## *Just a Trickle*

Life is so resilient! Even in the dry climate of the desert Southwest, all it takes is a trickle of water and some weed or bush will grow. Tough guys to survive these conditions..

Tech notes: Funny story — in 2013 I photographed along the Burr Trail Road just south of Boulder Mountain in Utah. For some reason I’ve now forgotten, I decided on this trip to shoot everything in 16:9 aspect ratio. Of course, this turned my 12-megapixel camera into a 9-megapixel capture. I didn’t think about this 25% loss until I was home and tried to use some of these 16:9 images in a 4:3 project — which now left only 6.7-megapixels. Silly me. Stupid me.

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## *Beyond My Imagination*

I’ve often advised photographers to

watch out for the images they don’t remember photographing. These come from deep within our creative subconscious. The images in this project are ones I have no recollection of photographing. They are beyond my imagination.

Tech notes: One of these images was photographed in 2005 with an Olympus C8080W — an early 8-megapixel camera with a 2/3” sensor. Can you tell which image that is?

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## *Booming Life, Prosperous Business*

There is an old maxim in color photography that jokes “if you can’t make it good, make it red.” I think it was red. Maybe it was yellow, I don’t remember. Either way, these red decorations are a ubiquitous splash of color all over China. The old b/w photographer in me loved using these intensely red objects in mostly monochromatic photographs.

Tech notes: All of these were shot during two days in late November, 2019. Again with my Panasonic G9 and the Panasonic Leica zoom lenses using dual image stabilization. All handheld. Half of these image were shot at ISO 6400. What noise?

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 is the owner, co-founder (in 1993, with his late wife, Maureen), editor, and publisher of the award winning *LensWork*, one of today's most respected and important periodicals in fine art photography. With subscribers in more than 70 countries, Brooks' impact on fine art photography is truly worldwide. His long-running weekly podcasts on art and photography are heard over the Internet by thousands every day. All 1,200+ podcasts are available at [LensWork Online](#), the LensWork membership website. He also publishes a daily *Here's a Thought...* video with short inspiration for creative photographers.

LensWork Publishing is also at the leading edge in multimedia and digital media publishing with the *LensWork Tablet Edition*, and *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* (3 books in a series, random observations on art, photography and creativity); *Looking at Images* (2014); *The Best of the LensWork Interviews* (2016); *Seeing in SIXES* (2016); *Seeing in SIXES* (2017); *Seeing in SIXES* (2018); *Seeing in SIXES* (2019); and *Our Magnificent Planet* (2020 and 2021).

[Kokoro](#) is a free, bi-monthly PDF e-publication of his personal work and is available (both current and back issues) for download from his [website](#). He has published two printed monographs of his photography, [Made of Steel](#) (2012), and [Dreams of Japan](#) (2021).

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