

THE LIPKA JOURNAL

PHOTOGRAPHS / STORIES / OBSERVATIONS

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FEBRUARY 2024

WELCOME TO THE JOURNAL FEBRUARY 2024



A Moment Later



Runoff



Elysian Landscapes

With the extra day in this leap year, we have a little bit of extra time to ponder about what happens next. We ooh and ahh when the big waves crash against the rocks sending water and foam air borne, but the water seeking its own level after the waves crash is just as mesmerizing as the event preceding it. Springtime in the Snowy Range marks the end of snow and the beginning of water running down hill to the North Platte River. The quiet of winter gives way to the next phase, a noisy downstream run to lower elevations. Finally, we visit a Cemetery in Troy, New York where the present and the hereafter are melded into one harmonic scene. We wander the modern-day Elysian Fields meditating on what the future holds.



A Moment Later

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We seek explosive, dramatic moments in our lives. Movies, television, and books promote action, adventure, and tales of derring do. We “ooh and aah” as the big waves crash against the rocks. We pay attention to the maximum point of impact; the distinctive thump of the wave striking solid rock and we anticipate the excitement of the next big wave.

We ignore the moment later when the water gurgles and slides down the back side of the big solid rocks. The shushing of the water returning to the ocean is more relaxing than the thunderous collision of water upon rock. The patterns of the water seeking its own level are more intricate and longer lasting than instantaneous impact of the wave upon the rocks



















Single Image Project

There were only a few folks left in town, but the men decided they needed a baseball diamond. There weren't enough men and boys to field a single team, much less two. "Build it and they will come," the men told us. Well, they built it, and no one came. After a one game season (we lost, 8 to 3), Kenny moved the sign back inside the school. Thora, Kenny's wife, told me it would have broke his heart to have the sign he worked so hard on be ruined by the winter weather.



Runoff

Runoff

Frozen water stays put until it gets warm enough to return to a liquid. Once it becomes a liquid it begins to runoff to a lower level; slowly at first, then, as the drop in elevation increases its speed toward the end of its journey as part of a river.

We follow the runoff for a little while. The water flows faster than we can walk, so we are reduced to being a spectator using our cameras to capture a fraction of a second of the journey. The runoff started well before we came and will continue long after we leave. It has been doing this for eons and will continue to do so long, long after our descendants have forgotten about looking at the images of an afternoon experiencing the runoff.























Six Word Story

No clouds. No wind. Only heat.

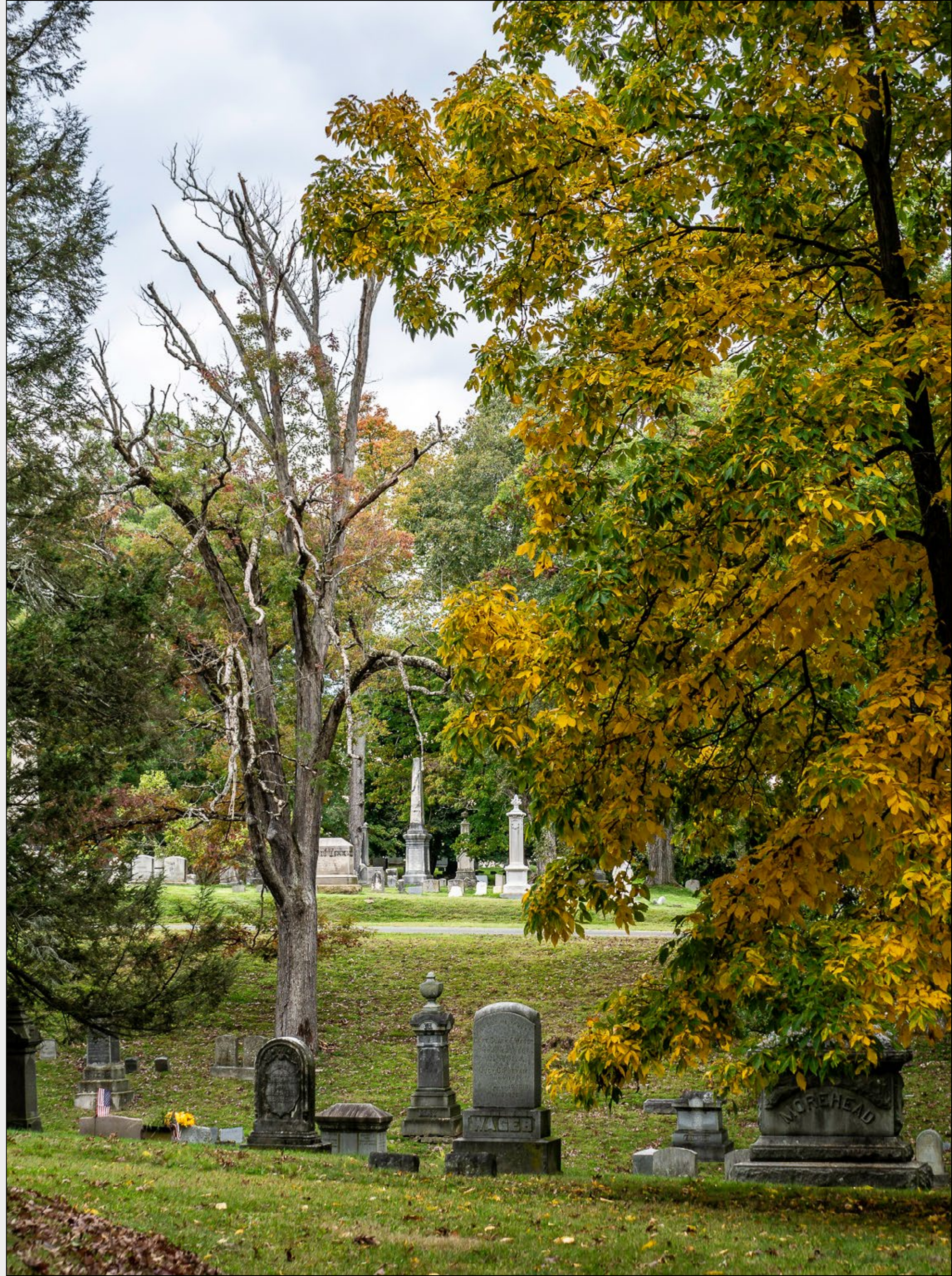
Elysian Landscapes



Elysian Landscapes

In Greek mythology, the Elysian Fields is a vision of the afterlife for those chosen by the gods, the righteous, and the heroic. They would remain at the Elysian Fields after death, to live a blessed and happy afterlife, and indulge in whatever enjoyment they had enjoyed in life.

We wander through the modern-day Elysian Field marveling how life and death flow together seamlessly, monuments springing out of the turf along side trees and among bushes and flowers. It is a landscape of both living and dead.

















Lesson Learned

On our latest Photo Safari Brooks Jensen and I started photographing the Jewish cemetery in Albany. Those images became a catalog of statuary, but I was able to salvage a small project, "Anonymous in Death." That project is part of the [January Lipka Journal](#).

I was not thrilled with the results of that day's work and felt that all I had was a catalog of headstones and statuary. During the self-critique, I came up with the idea of changing the emphasis from a catalog of funeral monuments to photographing the landscape of a cemetery. This change would let the landscape predominate and incorporate the monuments and statuary as elements of the landscape rather than be the main subject of the composition. This change in emphasis made the Elysian Fields project (photographed over the next two days) much easier to visualize and execute because I know landscape photography.

I turned something I couldn't photograph well into something that I could photograph well.

This was the big lesson learned on this Safari. The world does not change to meet your expectations. To be successful you have to change your approach to the world so that it more closely aligns with what you are capable of doing.



Postcards from the Creative Journey

April 17, 2011

Expertise

Expertise is now acquired quickly rather than through a craft honed through years of practice. The definition of photographic experience has changed. Being a master of version 1.0 doesn't hold much credibility when the rest of the world is operating at version 8.4. In the world we now live in, experts come and go with amazing speed.

I shall not discount the value of the experts because we all need teachers to guide us through the next version of whatever it is we need to learn. But lest we not forget, learning and mastering the tools is the basest part of the task. To me, the technical part of photography, using various tools to create and distribute your vision to the world, is about ten per cent of the process. Where should the major part of your effort be focused? It is the content of the images you are creating.

What story are you telling with your photograph? How are you going to make your audience feel what you felt when you made your photograph? How do you do this and make the experience different from other photographers? These questions have haunted artists for a long time. No experts can answer these questions for you. These are questions you must answer yourself.

This part of photography will never be overrun with experts. Content is still something we have to figure out for ourselves. It does not come as easily as software training.



A FEW CLOSING WORDS



A Moment Later

Wave watching during a storm on the Oregon Coast is mesmerizing. We stood on the Big Overlook at Boiler Bay and watched the waves crash in for way too long. Wave watching is designed for burst mode on a digital camera. We used to have to wait and “time the waves” to get “the shot.” Now, we hold the shutter release down and sort everything out later in Lightroom.



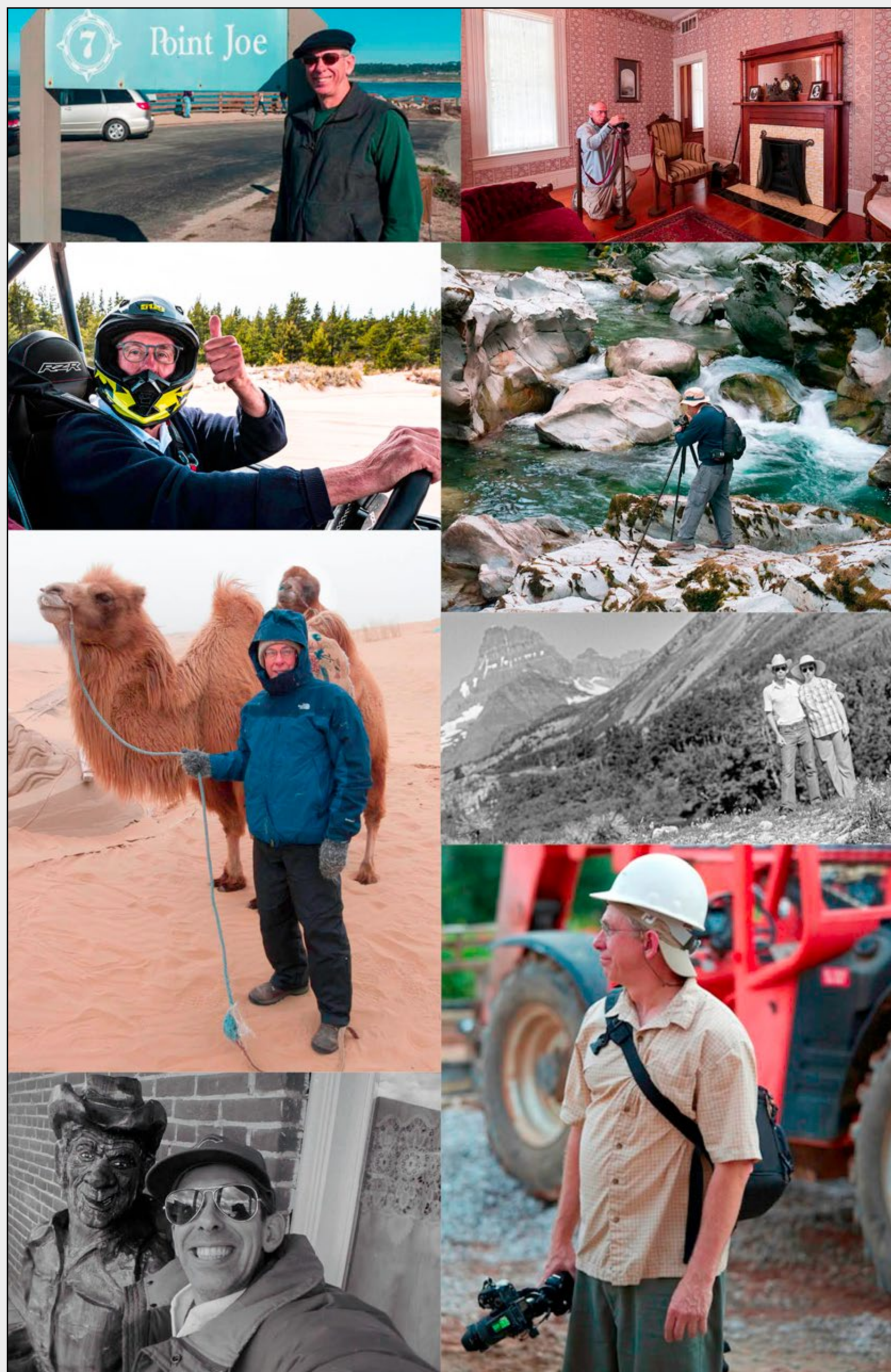
Runoff

It was early June and the snow was still knee deep in places, or at least in one or two places I stepped. The road was passable for the first time since September and the temperature was barely above freezing. The snow was trying to melt and make its way down to the North Platter River. It would be a while before that journey would be completed.



Elysian Landscapes

This project was created at the cemetery in Troy, New York. It was unlike any other landscape I had explored. It is impossible not to look at the monuments and wonder about the lives of those laid to rest there. The earliest monuments were plain. From the 1860's to the 1930's the monuments were extravagant pieces of art. Monuments from the 1930's on returned to simplicity. I wondered if the changes were due to economics or a societal view of the afterlife.



Joe Lipka has shared his vision since he began photographing.

In the last forty years, his photographs have appeared in over one hundred twenty juried exhibitions, more than twenty solo exhibitions and his images have been published in *LensWork*, *Black & White Photography* (UK) and *F-Stop* Magazines.

His website www.joelipkaphoto.com has continuously evolved since it was launched in 2004. His blog *Postcards from the Creative Journey*, published weekly since 2010, feature a photograph and a little bit of writing.

His newest blog, *The Daily Photograph*, is simply that. A new and interesting image posted every morning at 8:00 AM.

The Lipka Journal, February, 2024

Joe Lipka

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Web site: www.joelipkaphoto.com

Blog: <http://blog.joelipkaphoto.com/>

Blog: https://joelipkaphoto.typepad.com/the_daily_photograph/

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