

# *Primeval Light*

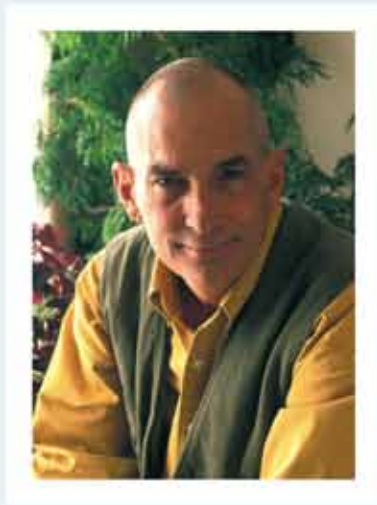


A photographic journey

Text and photographs by William Rain

William Rain lives in Boulder, Colorado.  
He is a husband,  
friend,  
gardner,  
nature photographer  
and poet.

The crystal  
and its hidden spectrum...  
The mind and its hidden light.  
- Rain



## PRIMEVAL LIGHT:

Sun light is always original light,  
new every instant. It shines on  
our world, buoyant in space.  
Everyday the light is primeval.

Earth Heart

Bosom for souls  
territory for spirits

Earth Heart...  
roost for all beings.

- Rain

Nature is looking at you.

Birds fly above -- they see you.  
They eye you. They watch you.  
Animals watch you from their  
own homes.... Their eyes follow you.  
Insects, so small, sense your presence.

Nature is looking at you.

Trees surrender their shade.  
Flowers accept your love.  
Nature, all its beings, know you.

Nature is aware of you.

- Rain

Photography for me is the process of creating a visual journal -- reflecting my insights into the order of the universe on a spiritual and physical plane. While looking is what presents itself as the obvious, seeing is the vision that travels beyond the surface. As I learned to see graphic forms in shapes and patterns, I photographed them through my inner eye, creating images that revealed a deeper or inner meaning to the physical plane.

It's important for me as an artist to have a message that permeates the body of my work. Using photography as a visual metaphor to express the spirit through form is the heart of my work; photographically weaving the patterns of nature together to create a tapestry which expresses the whole.

When I set out to photograph I feel I'm on a visual hunt, using my senses to perceive my surroundings and letting nature's conspiring forces lead me to hidden visual treasures. I stalk and watch for an outstanding pattern just asking to be photographed, or a shadow creating an illusion that's willing to be seen,

or sunlight signing the surface of the water ( page 79 ) the moment I'm present with my camera.

It's unpredictable exactly what I will be photographing, and being observant in the moment is the only clue I have.

A successful photograph is one that captures a specific energy and reflects a mood or impression beyond the subject's form. Each photograph creates a story or a legend or a visual poem, an image which is a touchstone for the imagination of the viewer. The world beyond the visible is revealed by suggestion. When my photographs leave the viewer with this sense, a view of the world has been opened, a secret has been found. The photograph has become a key that works.

These photographic studies into nature have been a hands-on, or should I say eyes-on, way to experience the interconnectedness of nature. Continually I observe patterns merging, see conflicting patterns reach a crisis of opposites, then fall into each other with ease. I have watched droplets of water and streams for so long that now I feel that motion inside of me,

releasing my spirit from the fixed position of self, to flow on with the currents and tides of the universe. Through photographing nature I have subtly come to realize I am also observing the inner workings of myself.

Juxtaposing different images and patterns to create a montage is a means of joining like a puzzle, the varying patterns of nature. The image “Many Moons” [page 61] is composed of lilly pads silhouetted against winter trees. This picture joins different qualities: combining circles with vertical lines, creating compatibility with summer and winter graphics. Another example is “Aurora Borealis” [page 68] . Here the pattern of an abalone seashell creates an aurora borealis sky for a scene of the High Sierras. Ocean life is lifted to the top of a mountain to create a sky. After a while scenes such as this begin to have a subtle impact on my sense of the order of things. There are many examples throughout the book for you to discover. The magic of working with this interplay of patterns has helped me to understand the holistic qualities of nature.



Over the years my work has shown me that the unity of life on Earth is true.

While working with a subject, I'm as much working with its surrounding space as its form, eliminating everything from a composition that is not relevant to the subject. If my photograph is about a flower and starlight [ page 25 ] then I must carefully observe in the frame what is not flower and starlight, and exclude it from the composition. The point is to capture only the energy of the subject and not a single thing else. This approach can lead to creating negative space; emptiness in the composition which allows the energy of the subject to interact only with itself. Composing form and composing emptiness deserve equal attention.

Studying nature images is like watching a migration. The Earth spins through its four seasonal cycles; spring, summer, autumn and winter, with their obvious characteristics. Spring ferns unfurl, summer flowers bloom, autumn colors blaze, winter sculpts ice and snow. From my point of view, behind the lens of my camera,

everything is in a hurry to pass. Great surges of Earth's energy are constantly on the move. Waves of flowering perennials are out of sight within a few short weeks. Everything is on a time schedule. The luna moth [ page 31 ] flies by so fast! Autumn leaves that blow into the next season, are caught in ice and are only visible until the next snowfall. Some photographic subjects take many seasons to observe. I have only one or two days or even a single moment to capture fleeting expressions of nature on film. The migration is always in full force. I have to surrender myself to nature's rhythm. There are many instances where two or three seasons have passed before I have been able to catch up with a subject that has eluded me.

Sunlight is soft and sunlight is harsh, but sunlight is always spilling through the hourglass. So much of observing and photographing nature is rhythm oriented. Watching sunlight and shadow edge across the surface of a spider web is seeing the movement of the cosmos. Sometimes I have given up on a composition, just to stare at this visible motion of the Earth.

By studying light I have discovered yet another mutable quality of the nature which in turn has further freed my photographic perspective to include celestial influences in some of my compositions.

Nature's patterns comprise the designs of the universe as a whole. In searching for images to photograph, I'm often looking for patterns that reflect shapes and forms of planets and galaxies. I keep in mind that if I want to know what is out there, I look here. An example of this approach is "Solar Flares" [ Page 21 ]. For a long time I wanted to capture an image of flames, though I was uncertain of an approach. Photographing a bonfire was too uncontrollable and didn't give me the image of single leaping flames of the sun. The thought had been in the back of my mind, as an inner guide: "What is out there, is what is here." With this I found the solar flares I had been searching for, on a sunflower. It is round, tracks and faces the sun's path, absorbs the energy of the sun's fire, and mimics the flames shapes.

Patterns transform and migrate through the elements; shapes repeat themselves in other forms. Faces stare out from rocks. Clouds resemble wandering buffalo. Shadows are the shape that cast them. Nature's arrangement, at first glance appears to be in disarray, but on closer inspection is an orderly progression of patterns dissolving and emerging throughout the elements and forms of nature.

The totem is a native structure, designed with the patterns of the Earth, which represents the genealogy of mythology, including a history of the influences of trees, animals, rocks and sky on a people's consciousness.

The mandala is a Hindu visual map of deities representing the essential nature of God. It is said to be used as an aid in reaching cosmic awareness. By meditating on the image we are drawn into a world of divine order, where all things are in a relationship to each other in perfect harmony.

By applying both of these principles to a photographic theme, a natural Rorschach is created, i.e., our modern mandala.

This visual tool is used to stimulate the psyche to remember or release secrets that are buried beyond our usual recall.

This collection of photographic nature totems and mandalas is a visual echo or after-image of our consciousness. This can be used as a tool for you, to discover the other faces, beings, and thoughts that reside in your natural mind.

A face projects a focused energy. The face is also a door or portal which when looked upon allows our senses to penetrate with an ebb and flow of awareness. When something has the resemblance of a face, whether it is formed in a gnarled wood branch or the sculptured surface of a stone, I'm drawn into it, struck by a sense of psychic unity. Not only is the living world observing me, but inanimate forms take on the eyes and faces that stare back at me. The totem images, for example, mirror a single pattern which creates a symmetrical composition. When photography applies balance to nature's seeming disarray, trees and rocks can take on the appearance of the animal world, empowering them with a focused energy.

I particularly love this subject for it gives another face to nature's expression. I collect portraits, as in a family album, of "The Rock People" [ page 37 & 50 ], "The Mushroom Family" [ page 51 ]. With so many faces looking back at me from so many forms, I cannot help but feel a mythic sense through it all.

Pursuing my images is always filled with adventures and enlightened moments, creating in me a wonderful feeling of intimacy with nature. To be close with a sparkling burst of sunlight has instilled that light into my own being. To caress flowers with my eyes has truly softened my heart. Looking into the face of "Grandfather Totem" is like being counseled by an elder [ page 43 ]. At times I feel like an initiate whose only ceremony has been to draw close, and in doing so have been moved in the way a mentor moves a soul.

A philosophy that influences my perspective is the Native American sense of kinship with the animal kingdom; the attitude that we are all relatives. To Native Americans, the Great Spirit manifests itself through all forms of creation.

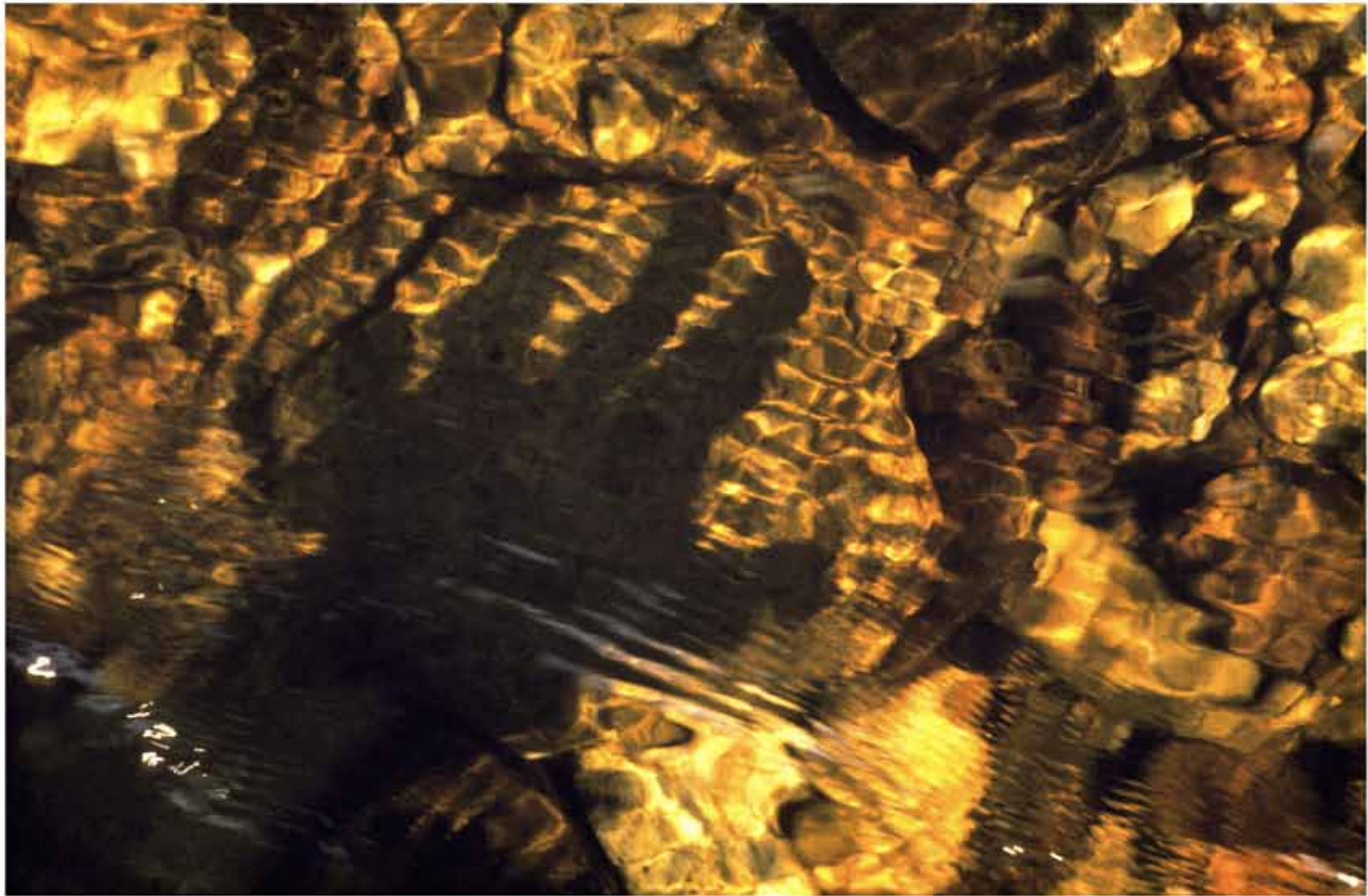
From the womb of eternal emptiness the life force emerges. Birds and flowers appear; animals run under the sun. How frail the transition from formlessness to form! That anything has managed to emerge from such immense adversity is why Native Americans feel such love and empathy with nature. To be conscious of this Great Mystery is reason to celebrate and sing joyful songs of gratefulness for the gift that has been given; the gift of being. I cannot help but relate with awe to rocks and oceans, identify with trees and animals. Our relationship with nature is intimate and full of animal and ecological families, relatives of the creation we truly are. Embracing this union and falling in love with the Earth opens the heart to compassion while awakening the mind to seeing the beauty in it all. The wonder and thrill of being in love with nature is a shared path that leads beyond the surface and continues through the inner world. As a photographer and a human being on a journey, I photograph the gifts on the Beautiful Trail.

William Rain

TRAIL GUIDES

NATURE PORTRAITS





TOUCH THE EARTH

Hand shadow stream



ICE FACE

Frozen Water



STAR CLUSTER

Queen Anne's Lace





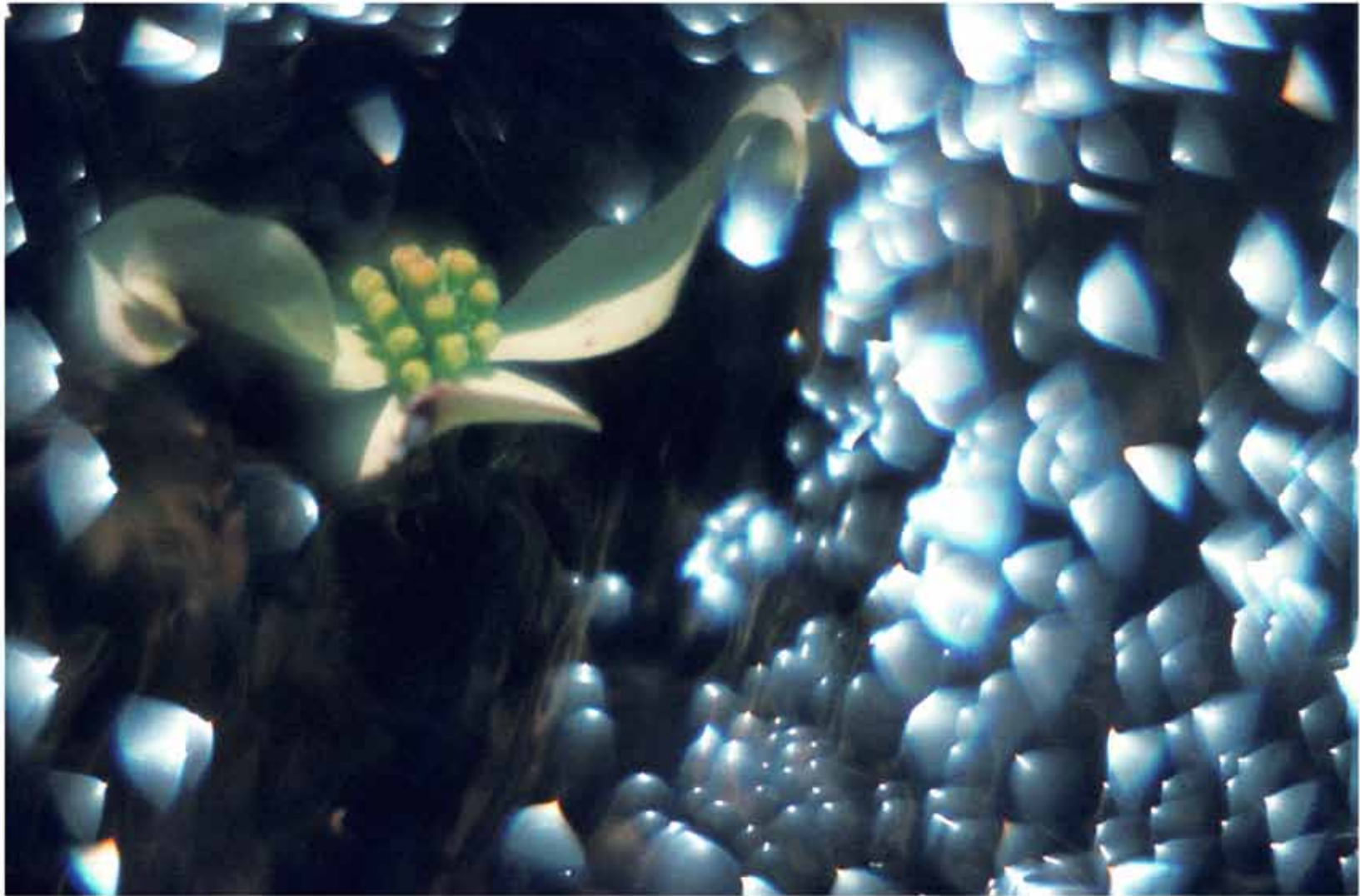
NATURE'S CALLIGRAPHY

Trumpet vine



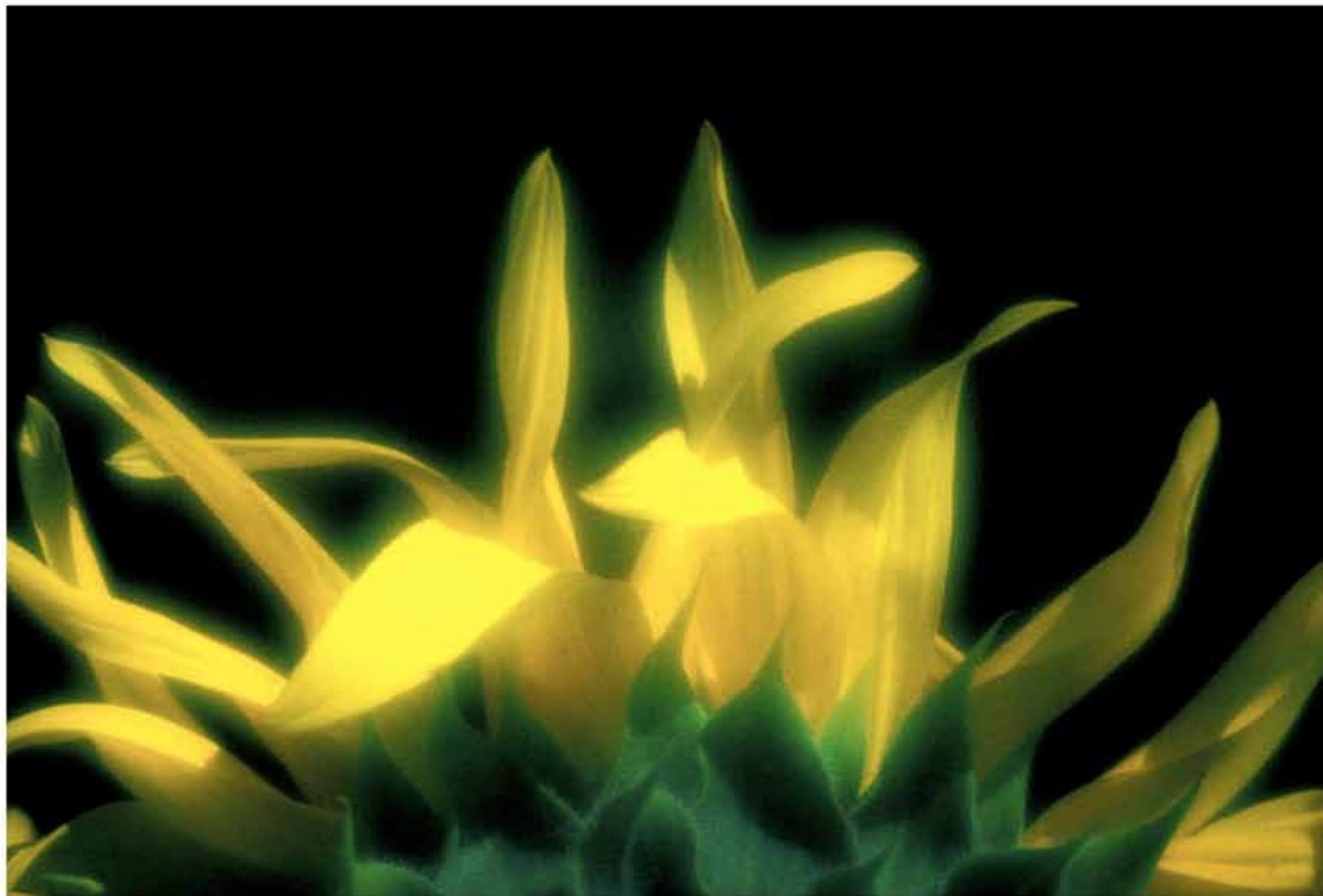
DEER

Skull



BLOSSOM IN SPACE

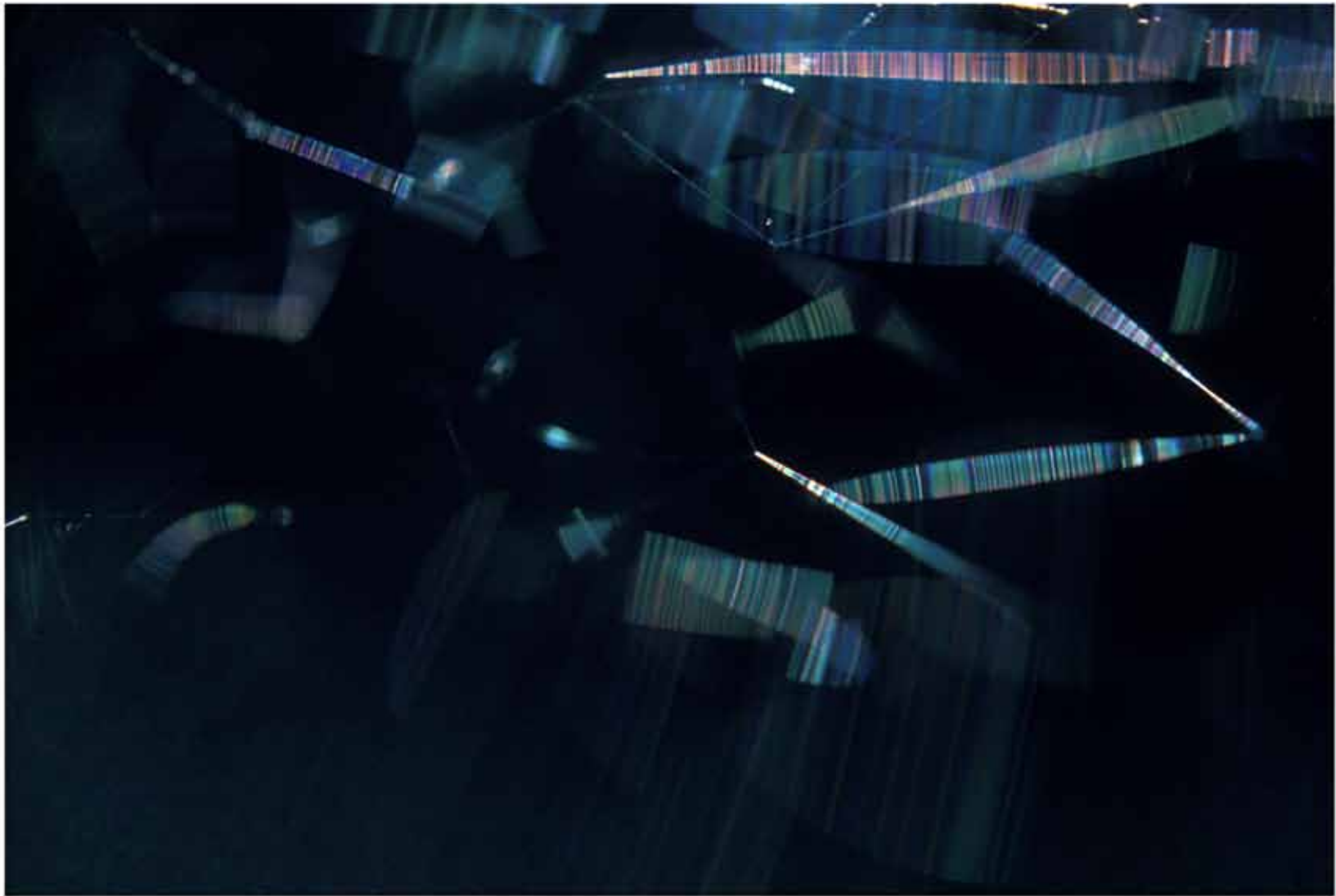
Dogwood



SOLAR FLARES

Sunflower





SPIDER ART

Web





SEA GULL'S VIEW



AUTUMN GALAXY

Leaf in stream

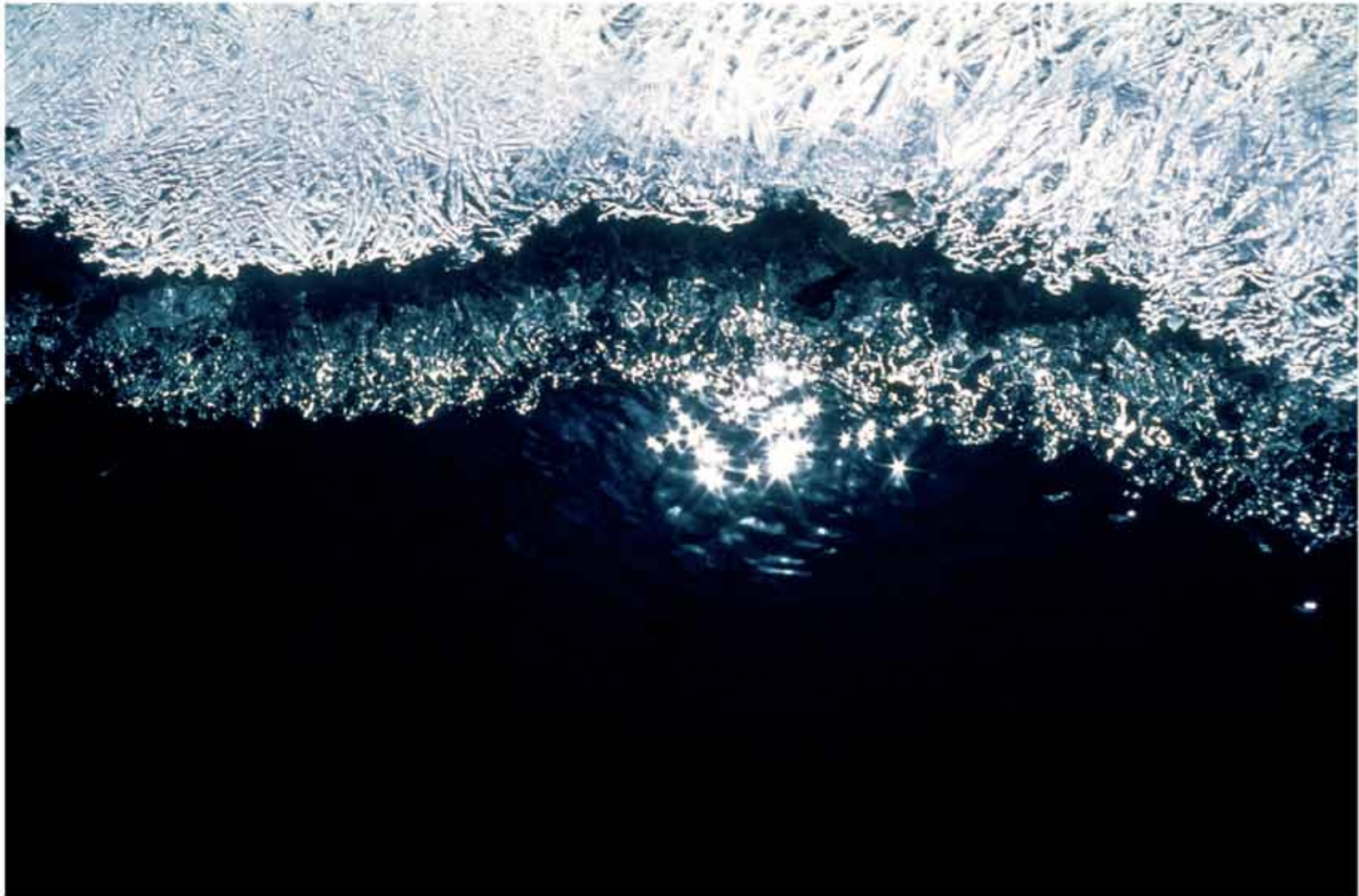


SUN and STARS

Dandelion







EDGE of the UNIVERSE

Ice shelf





CROW

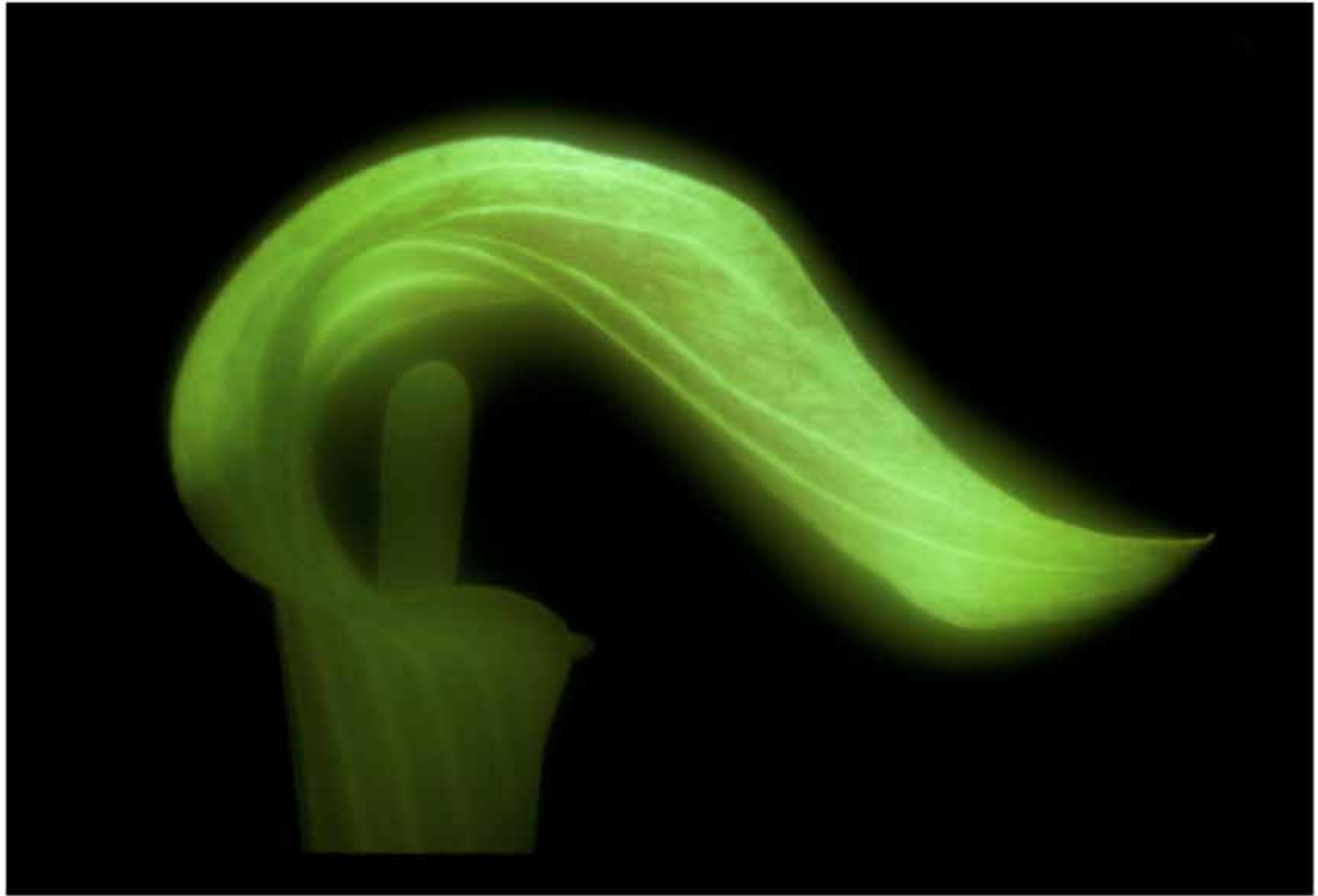
Ice formation



LEAPING ICE FISH

Winter pond





JACK IN THE PULPIT

Flower





LUNA MOTH



PRESENCE

Cyclamen

LIKE THE MOON...  
THE DISCIPLE  
SOON GROWS FULL

## NATURE TOTEMS



PASSAGE

Rock formations



MEDICINE SONG

Cottonwood





ROCK FACE

Sandstone



HEADDRESS

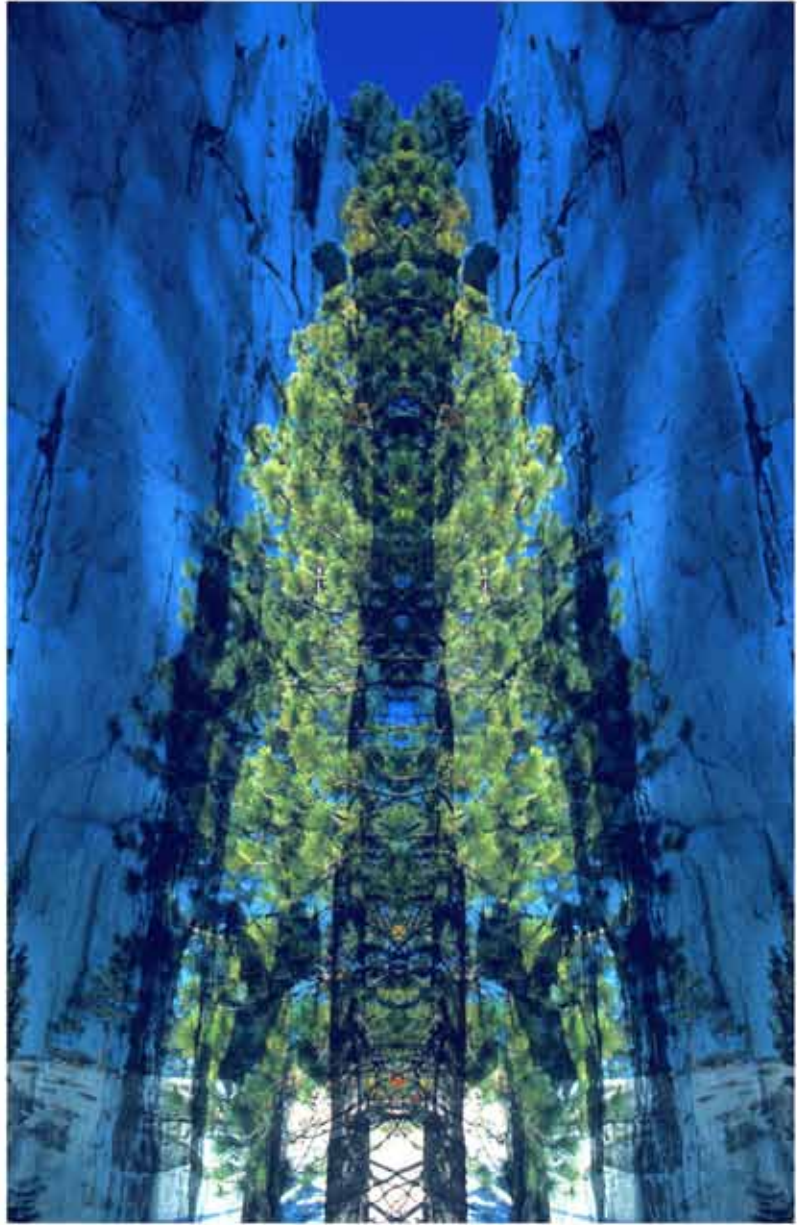
Autumn forest





MEDITATION

Cliff



GUARDIAN

Standing pines



NIGHT COUNTRY

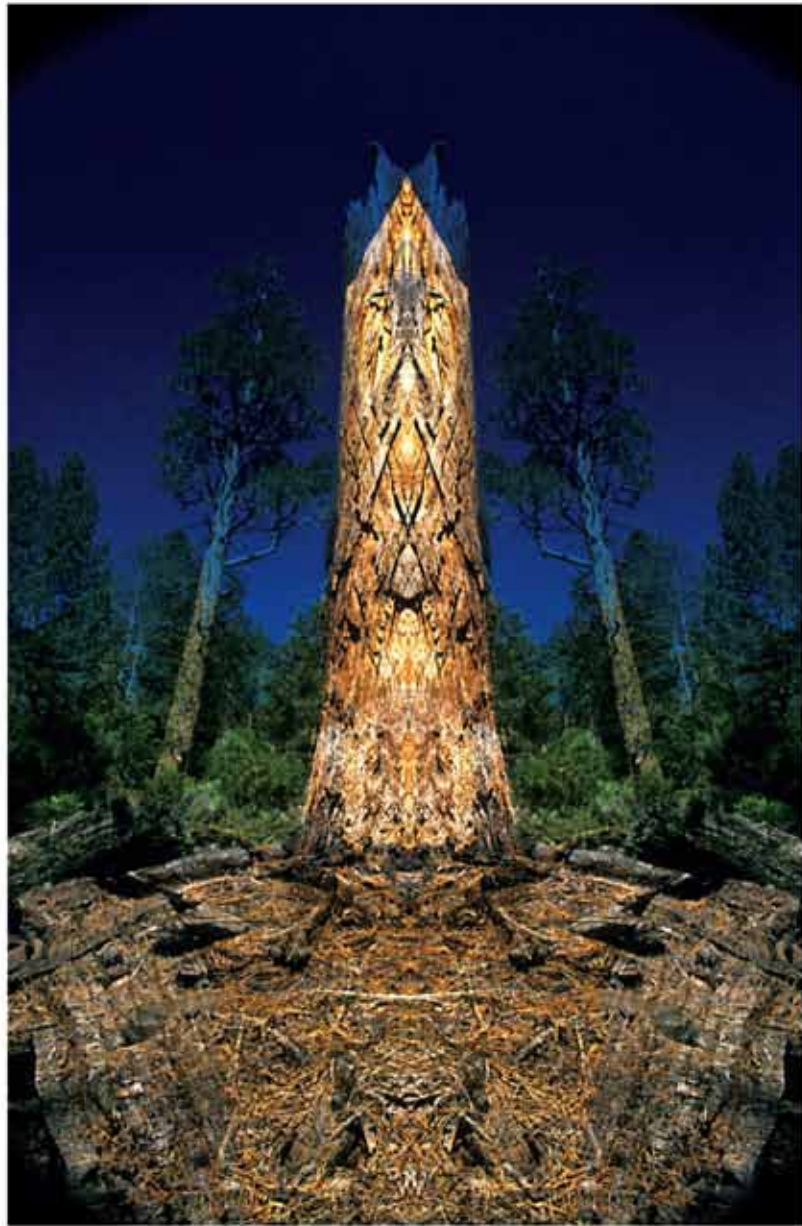
Woods





ELK TALE

In the meadow



GRANDFATHER

Ponderosa pine



UPPER WORLD

Mesa Verde





SHAMAN

Anasazi ruins





SACRED PINES

Grove





WINTER LODGE

Snow storm





TURTLE ISLAND

Sycamore and boulder

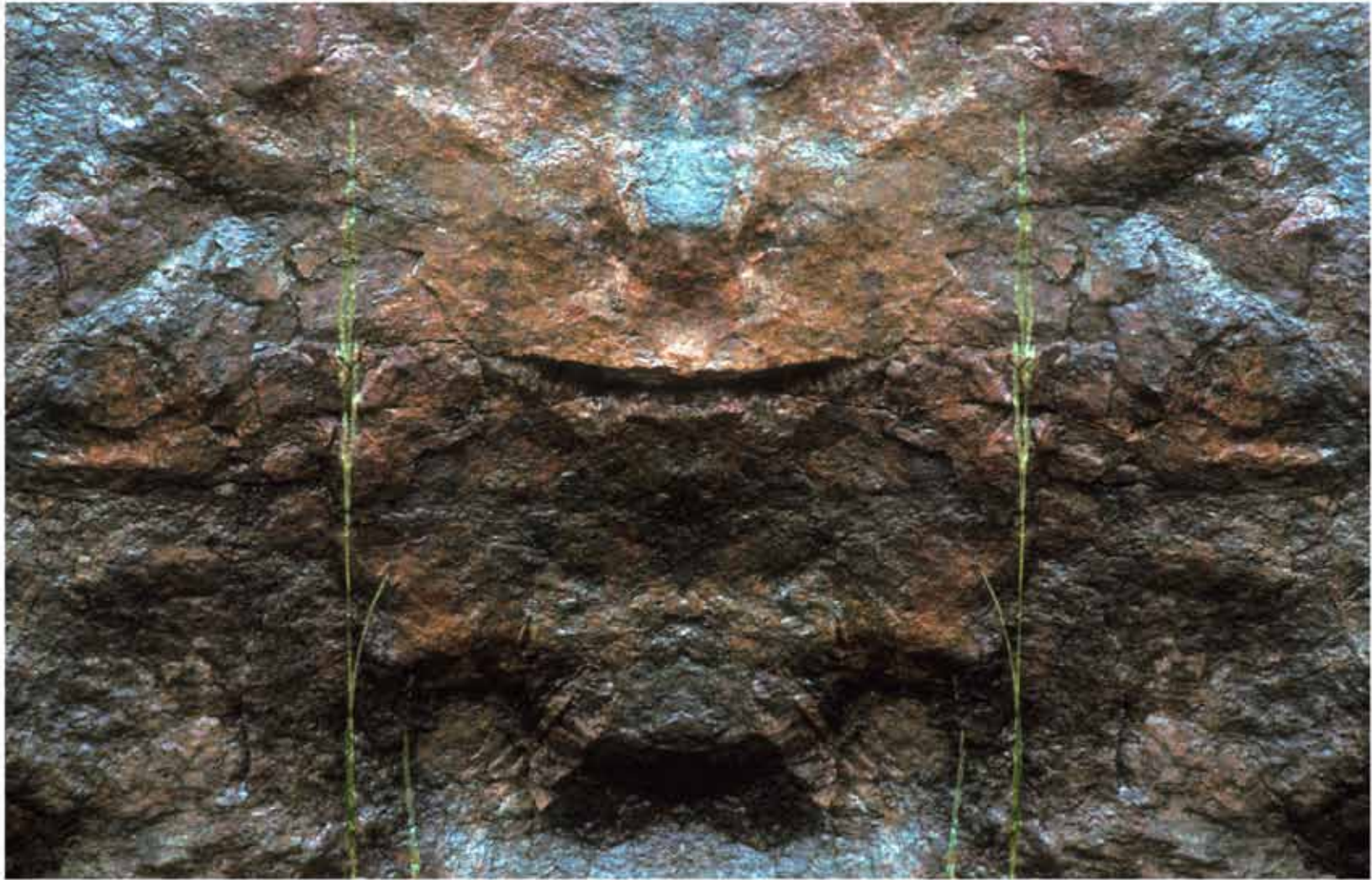




WOLF

Country stream





ROCK FACE

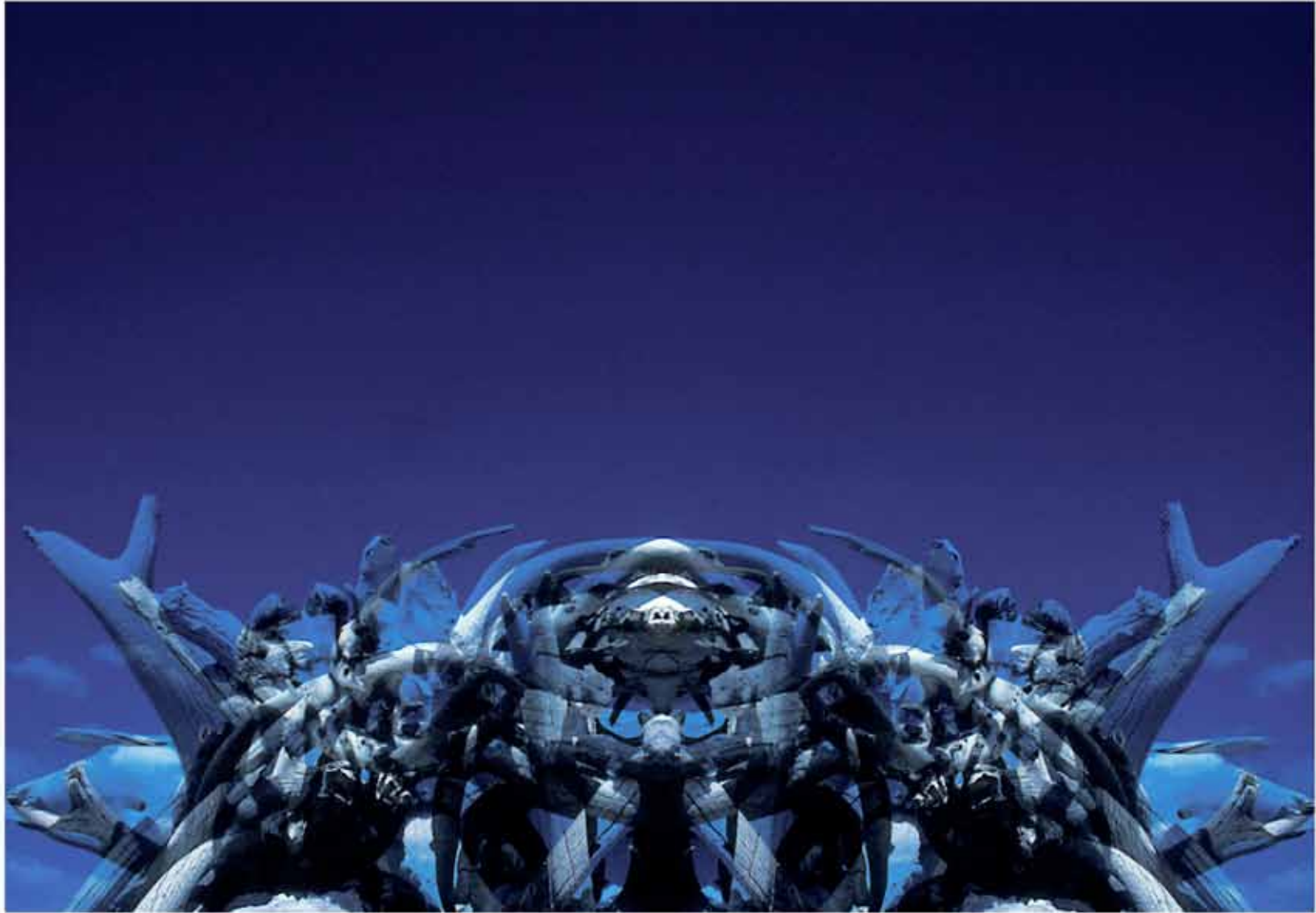
Boulder





FAMILY

Mushrooms



DREAMS

Antler pile



BEAR POWER

Stone outcrop





KIVA

Chaco Canyon





ENERGY

High alpine

## VISUAL POEMS



GREAT BIRD DESCENDING





GHOST DANCERS

American Indians





HORSE DREAM



AUTUMN GALE

Stream and trees





MANY MOONS



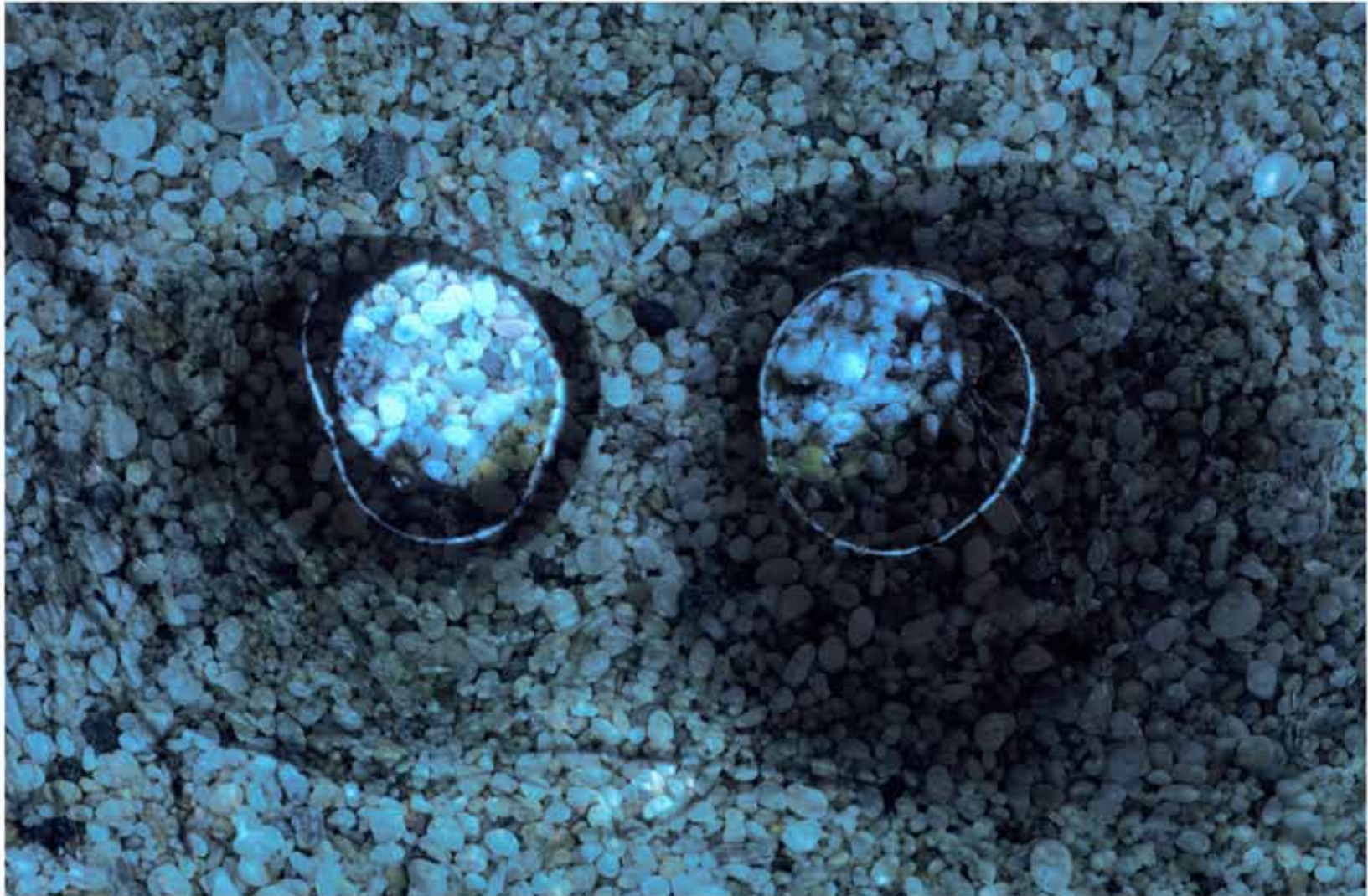
VANTAGE POINT

Waterfall





FULL MOON



OWL EYES

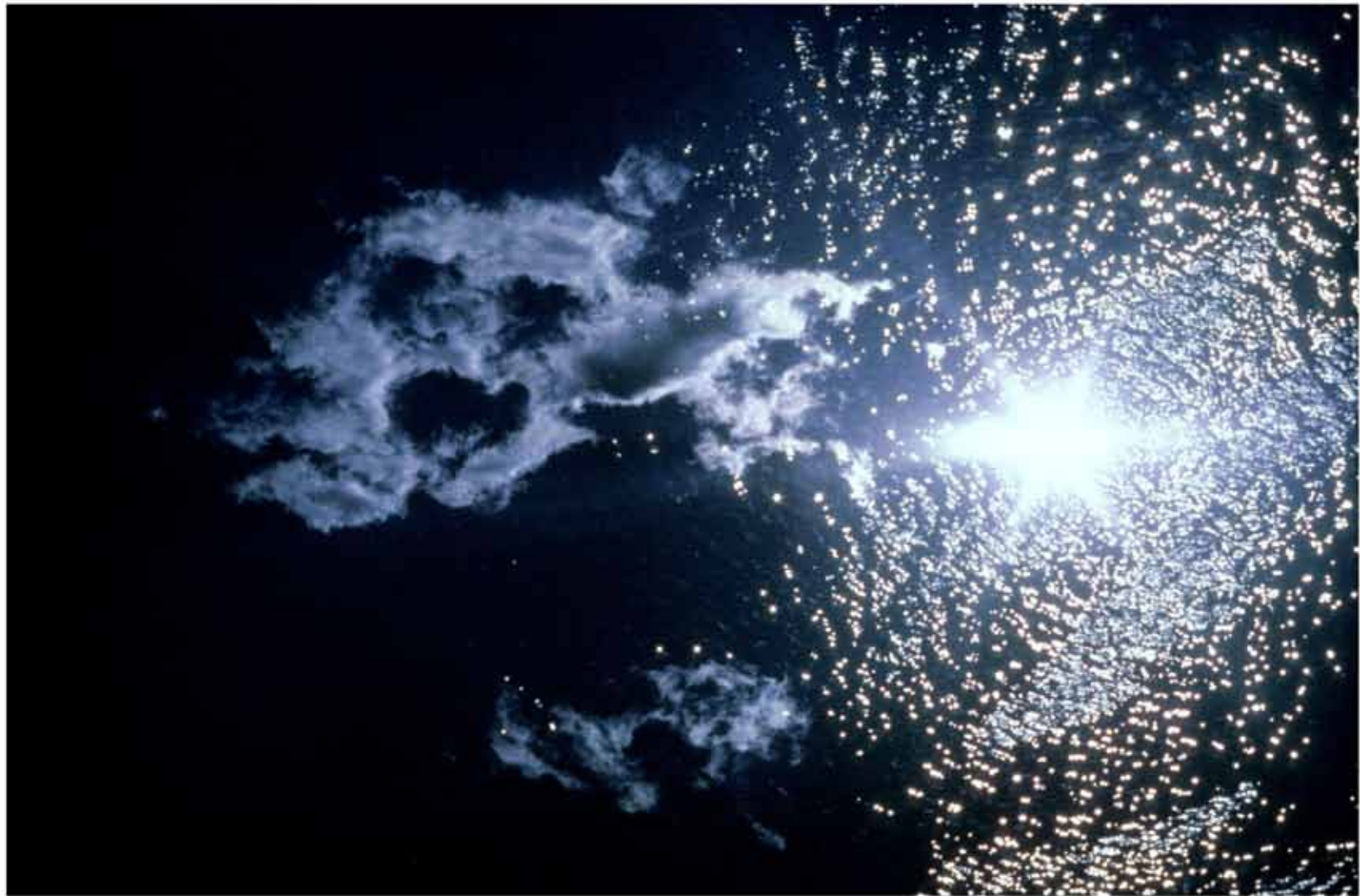
Stone wells



CROW

Sea cave





CLOUD CONSTELLATIONS

Water and sun





STORM

High mountains



AURORA BOREALIS

Mountain and abalone seashell





REFLECTIONS OF A FOREST

Field and river





BONE WOOD

Jaw bone

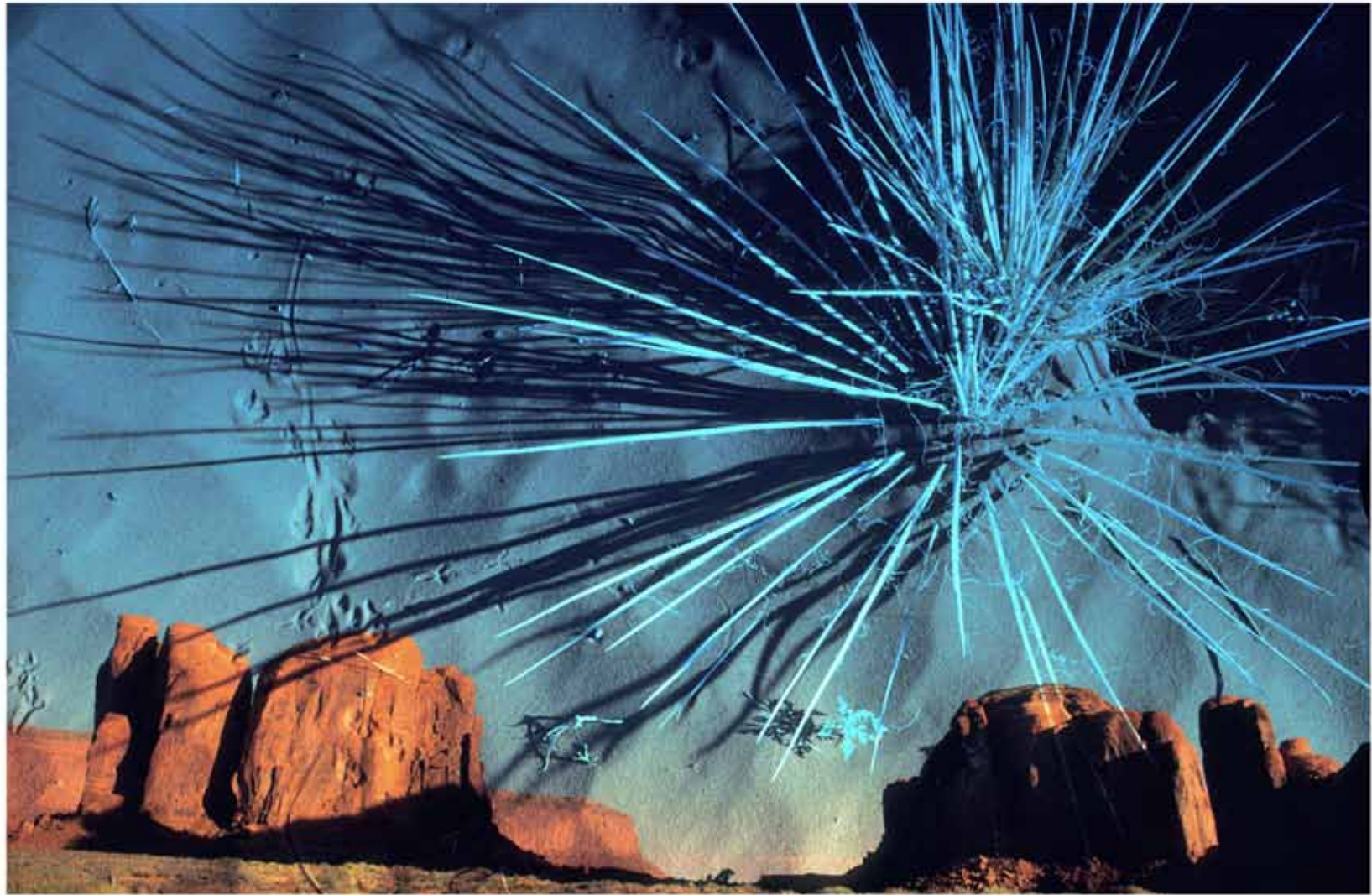




ROCK ART

Petroglyph





SAND PAINTING

Yucca and buttes





DESERT ALTAR

Steer skull





PRIMEVAL

Swamp



THE HEAVENS



We are nature  
The body makes this quite apparent  
We are composed and formed by the Earth around us.  
Our bones are stone our flesh the sea.

I am the sea upright.  
I with my life  
have taken the sea inland,  
have become a wandering shore,  
an Island of ocean.

Our salted tears swell up from our inner surf.  
Our heated bodies splash out in waves,  
the sea drips from us. The taste is distinct.  
The evidence is clear. We are nature.

So why are we behaving so badly with nature?  
Why are we in such disunity with what we are?  
Man knows his body is nature.  
What he does not know  
is that his mind is nature.

What he does not know  
is that his consciousness is nature.  
What he does not know  
is that his nature is the universe.  
The universe is his nature,  
is his link between mind and spirit  
his synapse of truth, from which  
he may hear the language of the stars.

Poetry is a script for  
our inner sense,  
a history of mankind's mind,  
our planet's dossier,  
an aliens guide to our souls  
for a linked verse of worlds.

We are not only people of this Earth,  
we are people of the Universe.  
We must behave humbly in this awesome force.  
The laws of nature are the laws of being.  
Respect the creation  
or be relegated to the ....Extinct.

- William Rain





SIGNATURE

Nature

My photographic eye began to open through the images poets use to make verse; these were my visual teachers. I naturally began to photograph in nature the poetry I had learned. The composition of a haiku, clear and concise, taught me graphic and exact composition. The limitless array of poetic subject translated into a limitless array of visual subjects. The sense of prayer and worship of our natural world by the American Indian imbued my work with a devotion for the Great Spirit. Being a poet and a photographer created a sensitivity to two worlds, which I have synthesized into images of Spiritual and Earthly beauty.

My approach to photography is to keep it simple. I do not want to become the tool of my tools. I observe a great deal and photograph a wide range of patterns and forms. Building up my image library, I work only with natural light. My camera is an early model, a basic manual Leicaflex with an assortment of lenses: 28mm, 50mm, 135mm, 280mm, plus an inexpensive close-up lens. I prefer working with slides, a wise early choice that allows multiple uses: 1. They're positives. I can see the results of my montages immediately. 2. I'm able to make a print. 3. They're projectable for slide shows.

Kodachrome 25 or 64 and Fujichrome 50 are my choices of film. My studio equipment consist of a light box and tabletop slide projectors. My working studio is outside, under the sky.

-1988



The images in this book were created long before the arrival of the home computer with its magical photoshop abilities. I now support my photography with a computer, film scanner and printer, all capable of creating quality photographic prints. The benefits of turning my film images to digital files is to remove them from the world of dust and scratches, to rejuvenate 30 year old slide images to their original pristine condition, plus having a portfolio on the web. A true gift to the film photographer. These tools have made this self published book possible.

-2008

PRIMEVAL LIGHT PUBLISHING

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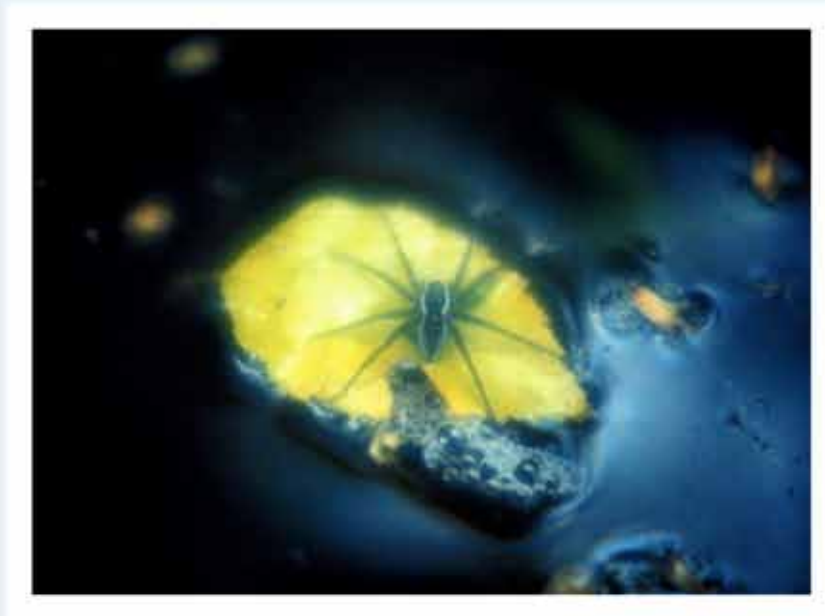


## Listening

Around the candle  
I heard fire speaking to itself  
asking...how best  
to describe itself to a man.  
It said:

Fire illuminates space  
Mind illuminates eternity  
flame and thought  
are the same  
both ignite  
the Universe.

-Rain



## Primeval Light

OBSERVATIONS ON NATURE  
WILLIAM RAIN