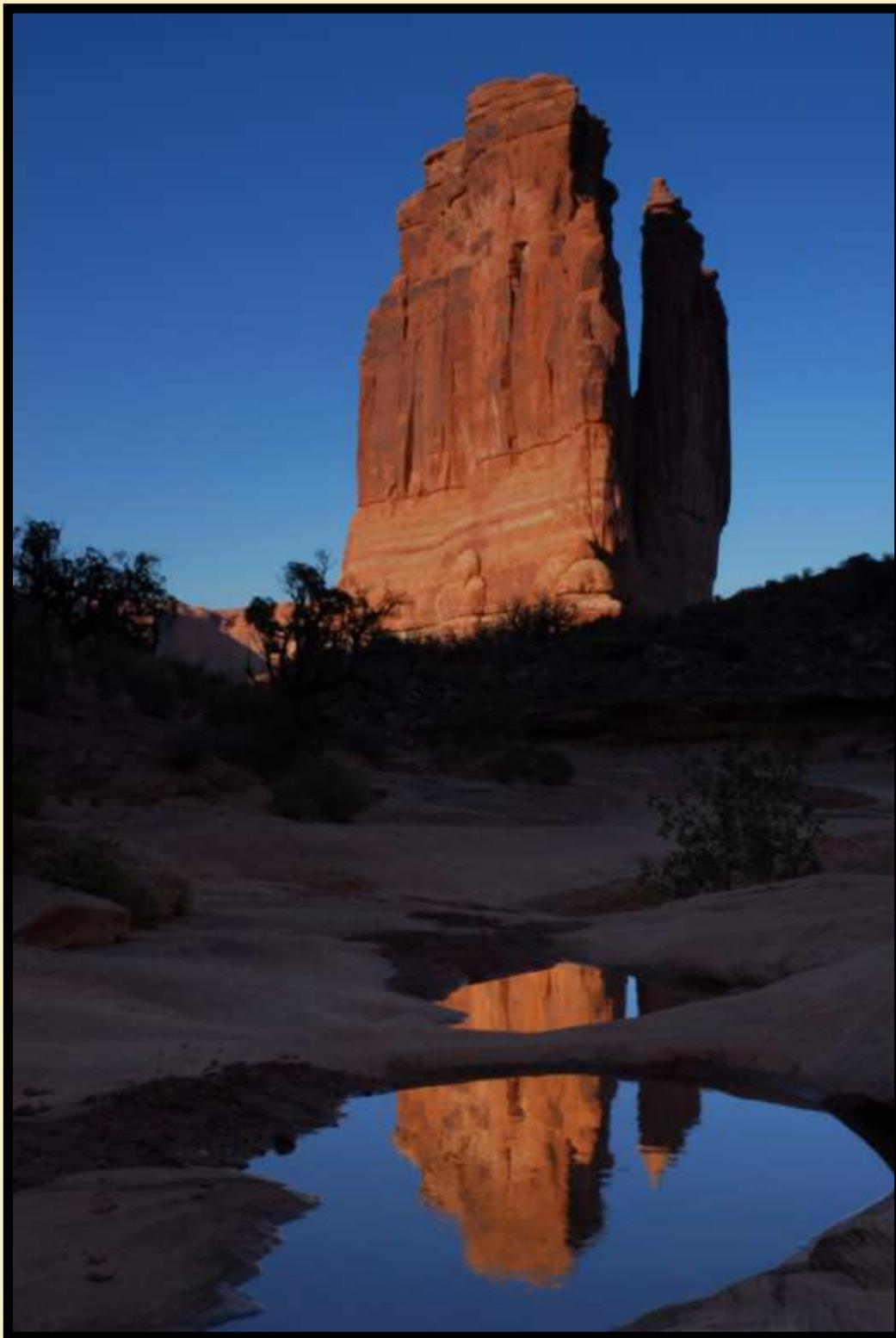


Light Journeys II

Norman Nokleby





Light Journeys II



“ . . . walk in the light . . . ”

I John 1:7 NIV

LIGHT JOURNEYS II

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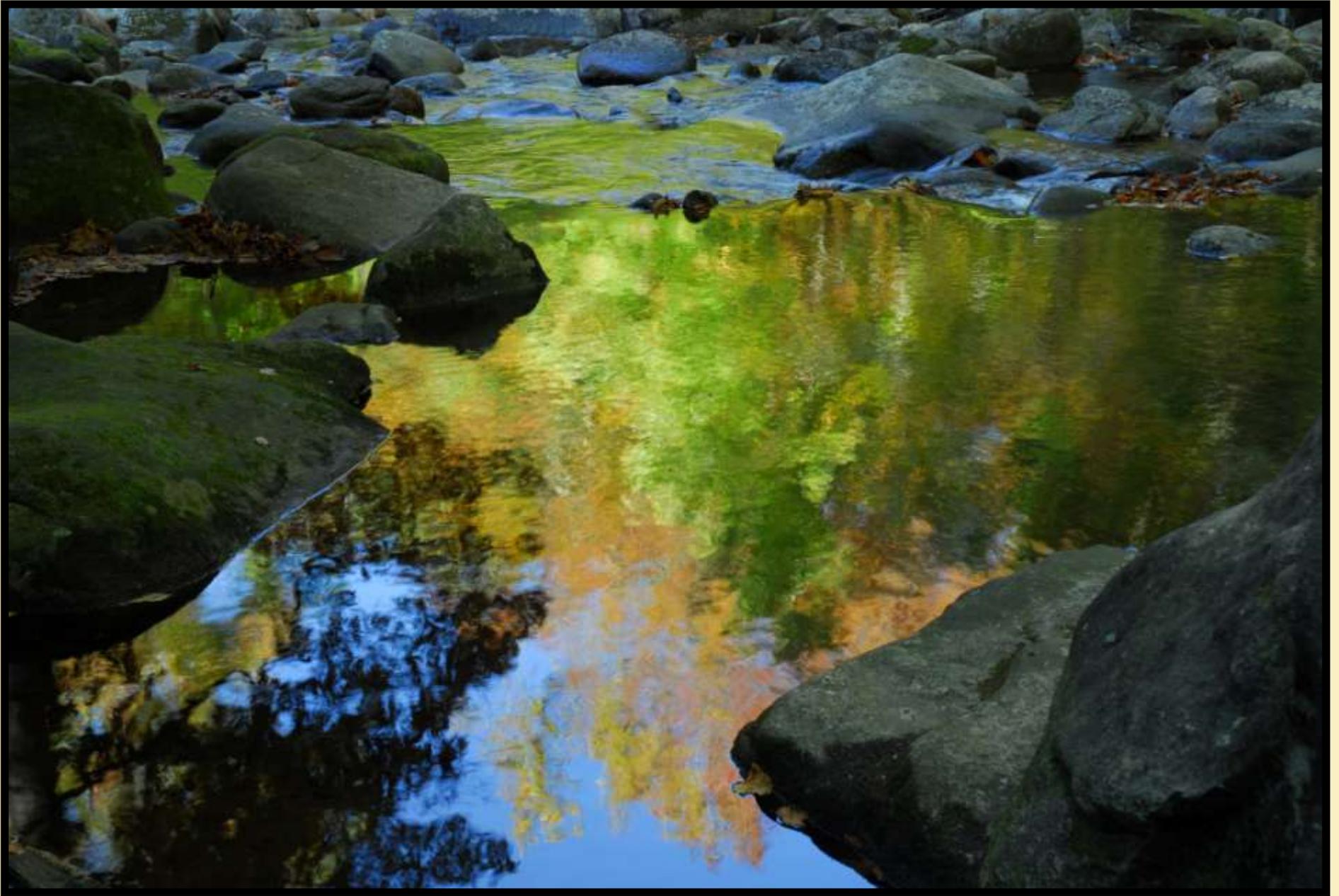
Front Cover: Canyonlands National Park UTAH

Frontispiece: Arches National Park UTAH

Title Page: Uncompahgre National Forest COLORADO

Above: Burnet County TEXAS

Back Cover: Big Cypress National Preserve FLORIDA



Jones Gap State Park SOUTH CAROLINA

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Table Rock State Park
SOUTH CAROLINA

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Furman University SOUTH CAROLINA



Blue Ridge Parkway
NORTH CAROLINA

eBook Edition Notes

I wanted this to be more than just an electronic version of the 2009 paperback. Consequently, a number of new photographs have been added (the image above, for example) and the length has been expanded beyond the original eighty pages.

N²

Introduction

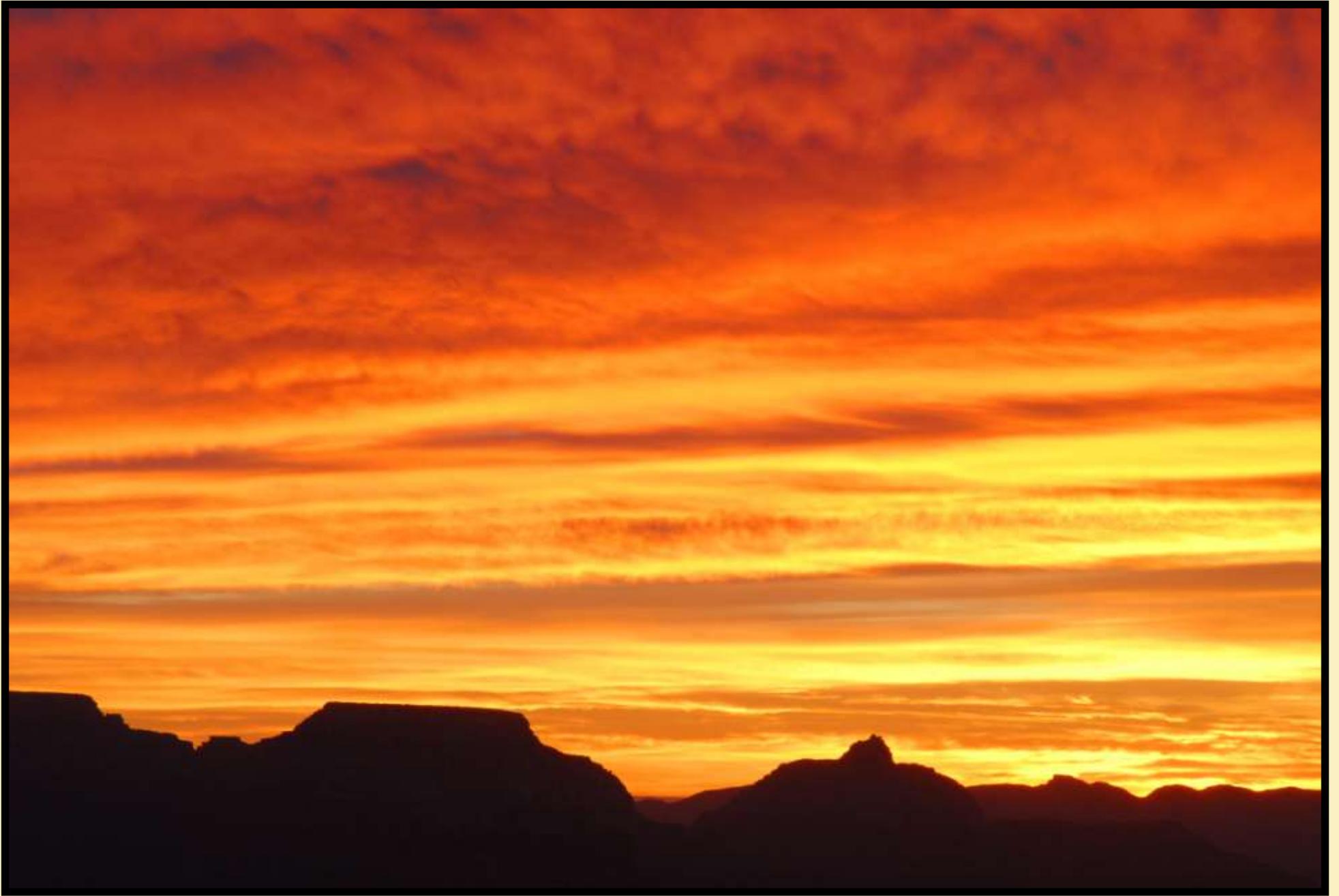
I've been working outdoors with a camera for more than forty years and have been blessed to see some of the extraordinary beauty of God's creation. I've been a Christian for more than fifty years and have been blessed through salvation to have a wonderful relationship with God through Jesus Christ. During my years as a Christian and a nature photographer, I've noticed some parallels between the life of faith and photography.

Light is certainly a requirement for both - the light of the sun for nature photography and the Son's light for the Christian walk. And both are a journey in terms of experience as well as growth. The images I have taken recently are consistently better compositions than when I began pressing a shutter button years ago. Similarly, my relationship with God, my prayer life, Bible study, and how I interact with people have matured from when I first became a Christian.

In my work as a photographer, I've encountered many different types of light. These differences may be due to the time of year, the time of day, or the weather. For me to be regarded as a photographer, how I respond to different *light* situations is critical. As a Believer, I've had lots of different life experiences. I've encountered a variety of people, circumstances, and events. For me to be identified as a Christian, how I respond to different *life* situations is crucial. I've discovered that, in a number of ways, how I respond to different experiences with light can serve as a reminder to how I should respond to different experiences in the life of faith.

For me, there is one other similarity between the life of faith and photography - my journey as a Christian and a photographer are not yet complete. And through the pages that follow, I hope and pray that you will find some light that will help illuminate your journey along the paths of faith and life.

Norman Nokleby



Grand Canyon National Park (South Rim) ARIZONA

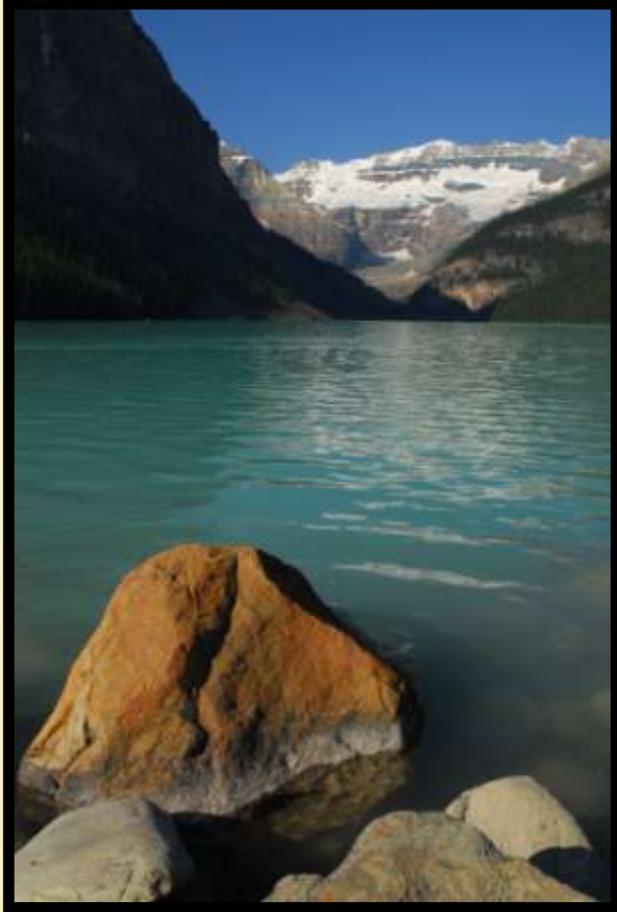
Sunrise and Early Morning Light

Hope. Freshness. A new beginning. Another opportunity. A different perspective. These feelings are often associated with the dawning of a new day, even by people who are not early risers. In my work outdoors with a camera, I've often been to the same location multiple times. But I've never taken the same photograph. That's because something is always new or different. Sometimes it's the time of year. Sometimes it's the weather. Sometimes it's the light. Sometimes it's the surroundings. And sometimes it's me.

Jesus Christ brings hope, freshness, and a new beginning to those who acknowledge Him as Savior and Lord. In John 10:10, Jesus said, "My purpose is to give life in all its fullness." [TLB] And Paul wrote in his second letter to the church at Corinth, "When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun!"

[II Corinthians 5:17; TLB]

Some time ago I was in a restaurant and saw someone I had not seen in a while. When I went over to speak to him, knowing of my interest in photography, he asked, "Been any place special?" To which I replied, "Every place I go is special." And I believe that's how God wants me to approach each new day with Him - as something special.



Lake Louise ALBERTA



St. Augustine Beach FLORIDA



Great Smoky Mountains National Park TENNESSEE



Grand Canyon National Park (South Rim) ARIZONA



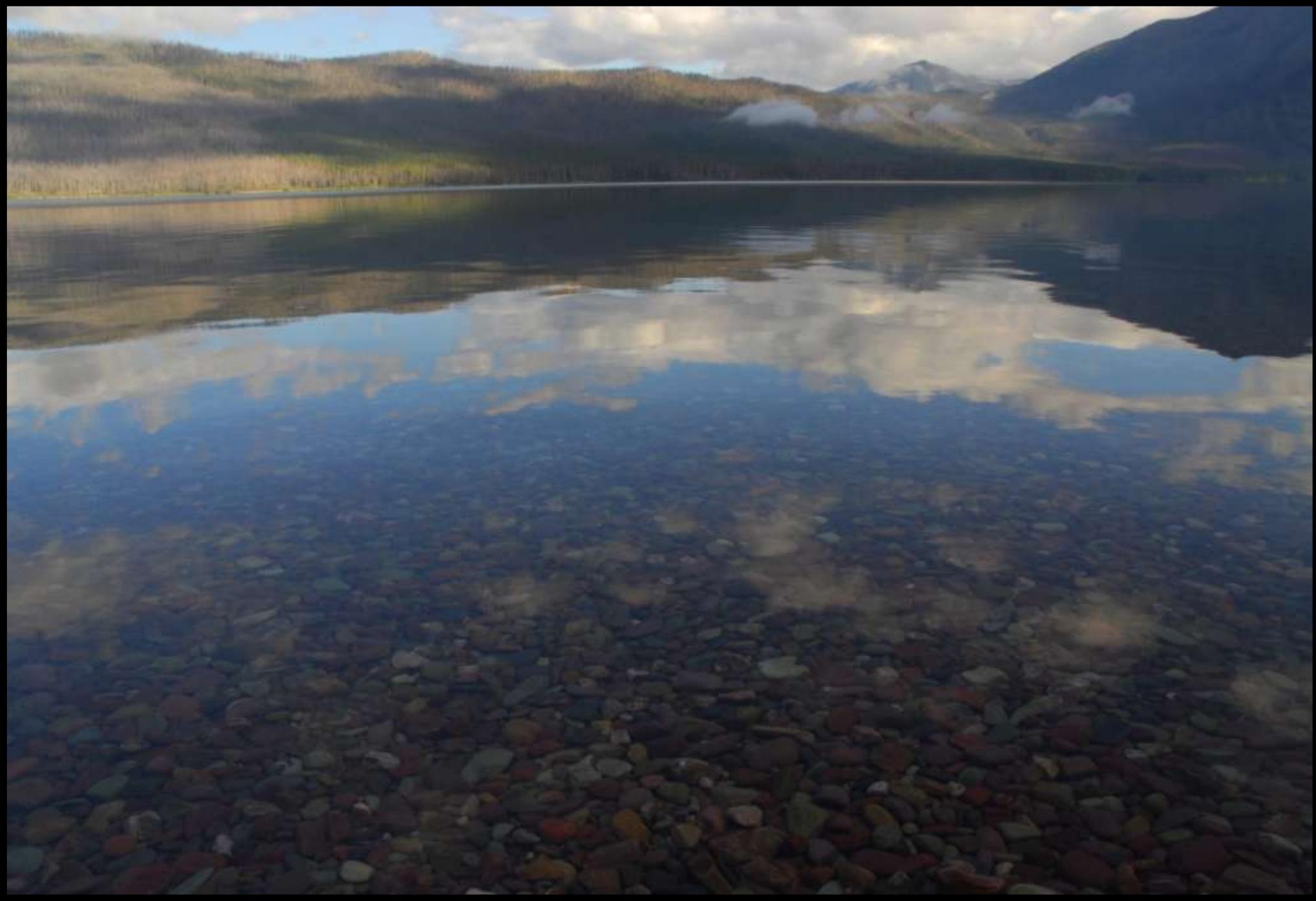
Blue Ridge Parkway
NORTH CAROLINA



Greenville County SOUTH CAROLINA



Grand Teton National Park WYOMING



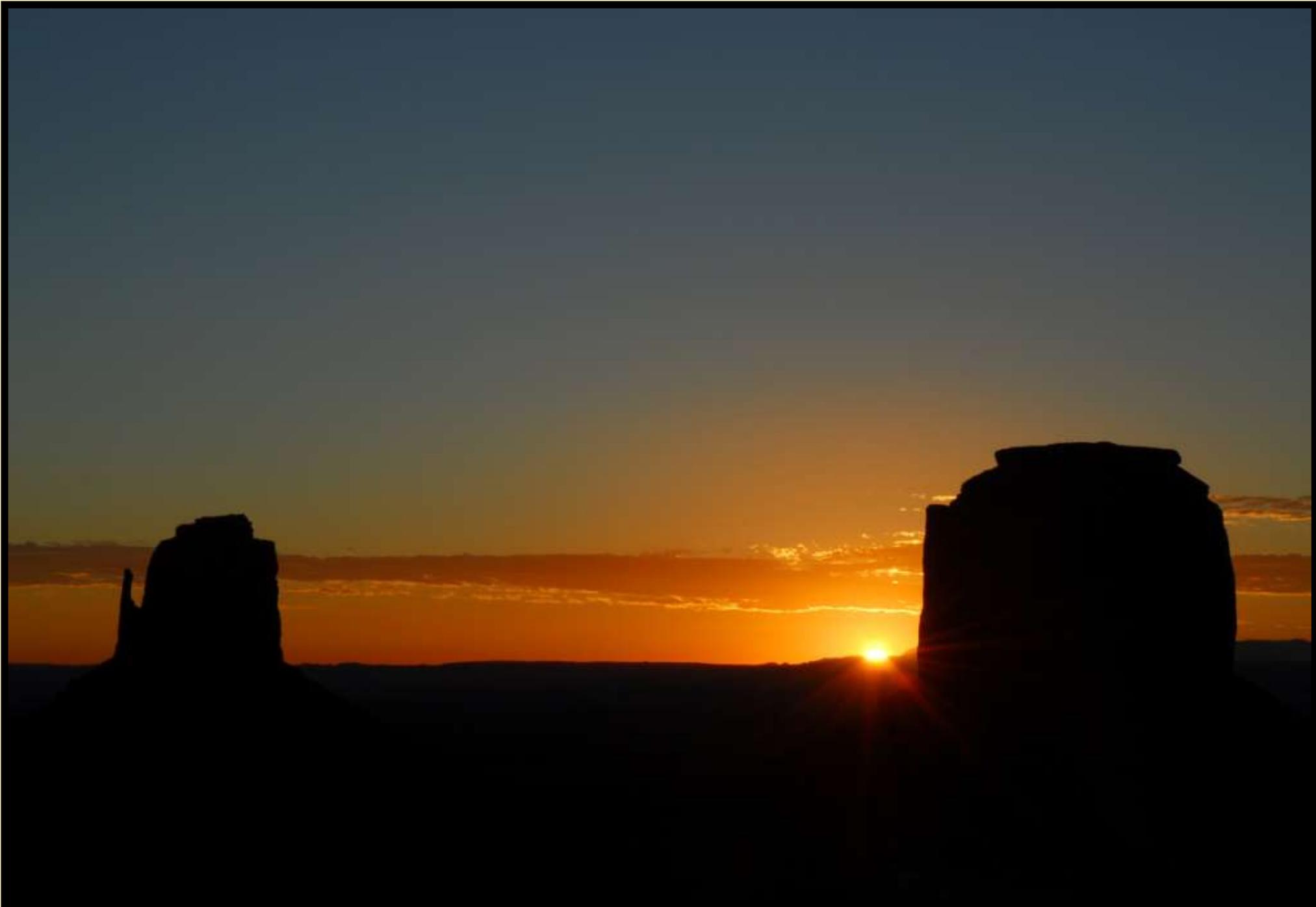
Glacier National Park MONTANA

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
FLORIDA



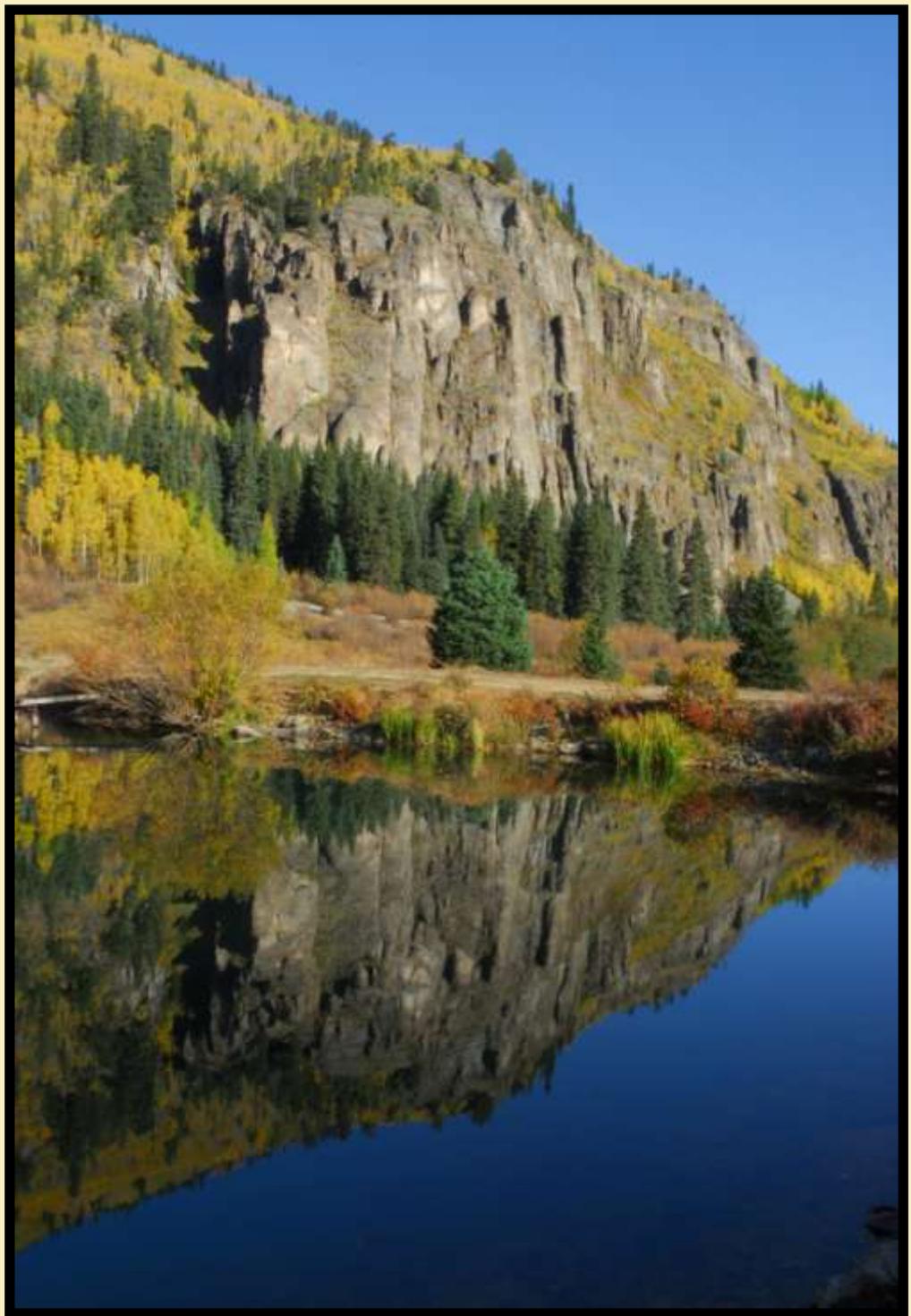


Greenville County SOUTH CAROLINA



Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park ARIZONA

Uncompahgre National Forest
COLORADO





Arches National Park UTAH

Full Sun



Table Rock State Park
SOUTH CAROLINA

The light from the sun allows us to see the wonders of creation. Not surprisingly, a large percentage of outdoor photographs are taken in bright sunlight. The sun's rays illuminate everything in their path. And full sun is ideal for creating images of animals and landscapes that include the sky.

Just as the sun's rays illuminate everything in their path, God intended for His Son to illuminate our paths in a dark world. In speaking about Jesus, the apostle John wrote that He was "the true Light" and that He came to "shine on everyone coming into the world." [John 1:9; TLB] And Jesus himself said, "I am the Light of the world." [John 8:12; TLB]

Photography would not be possible without light. In fact, the word photography comes from two Greek words that mean *write with light*. And just as light is necessary for photography, God's Light, which is His Son Jesus, is necessary for life, real life.



Blue Ridge Parkway NORTH CAROLINA



Above:
Alligator Farm Zoological Park
FLORIDA

Right:
Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary
FLORIDA





Both:
Burnet County
TEXAS



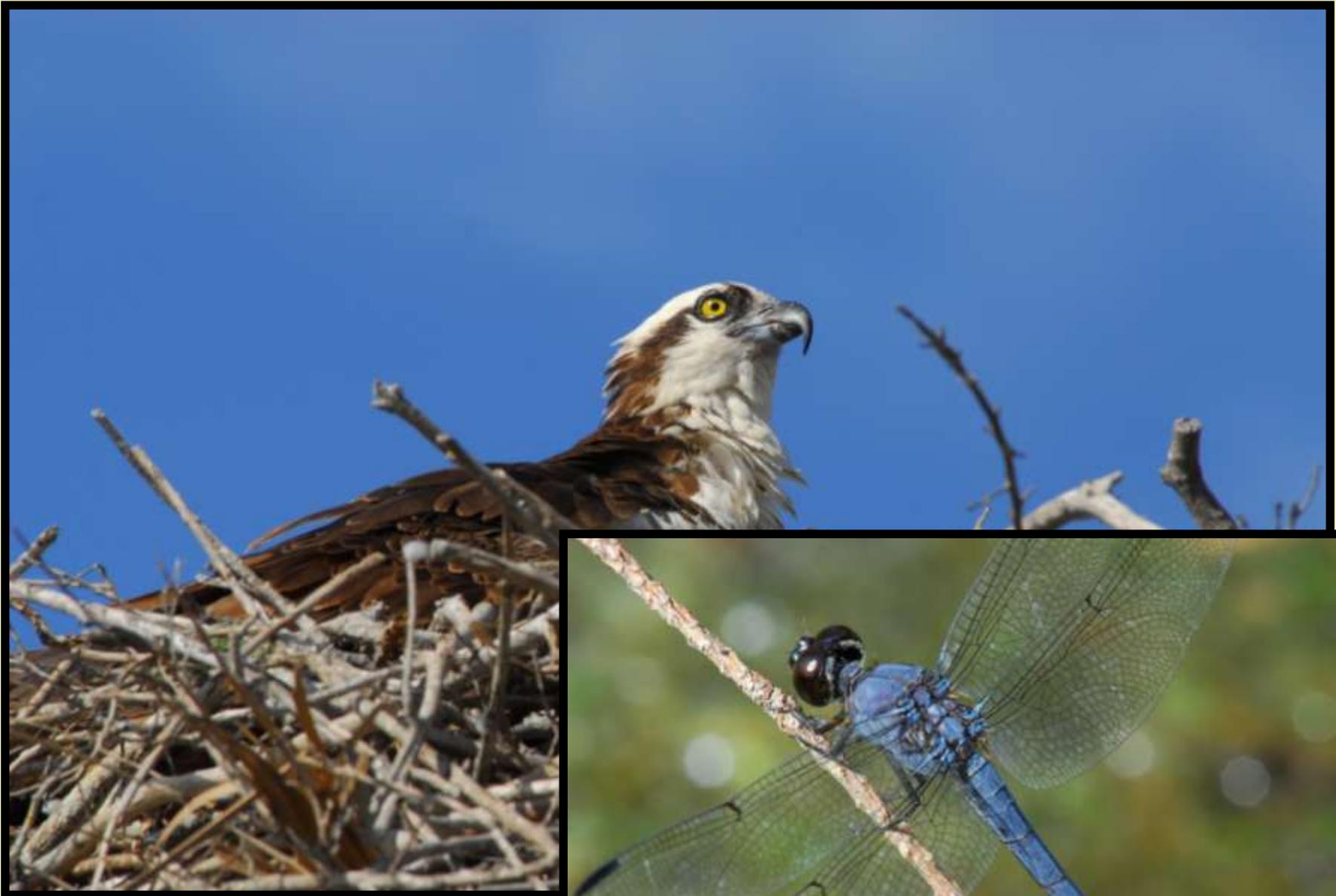
Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park
ARIZONA



Venice Audubon Sanctuary FLORIDA



Uncompahgre National Forest COLORADO



Above:
Everglades National Park FLORIDA

Right:
Furman University SOUTH CAROLINA

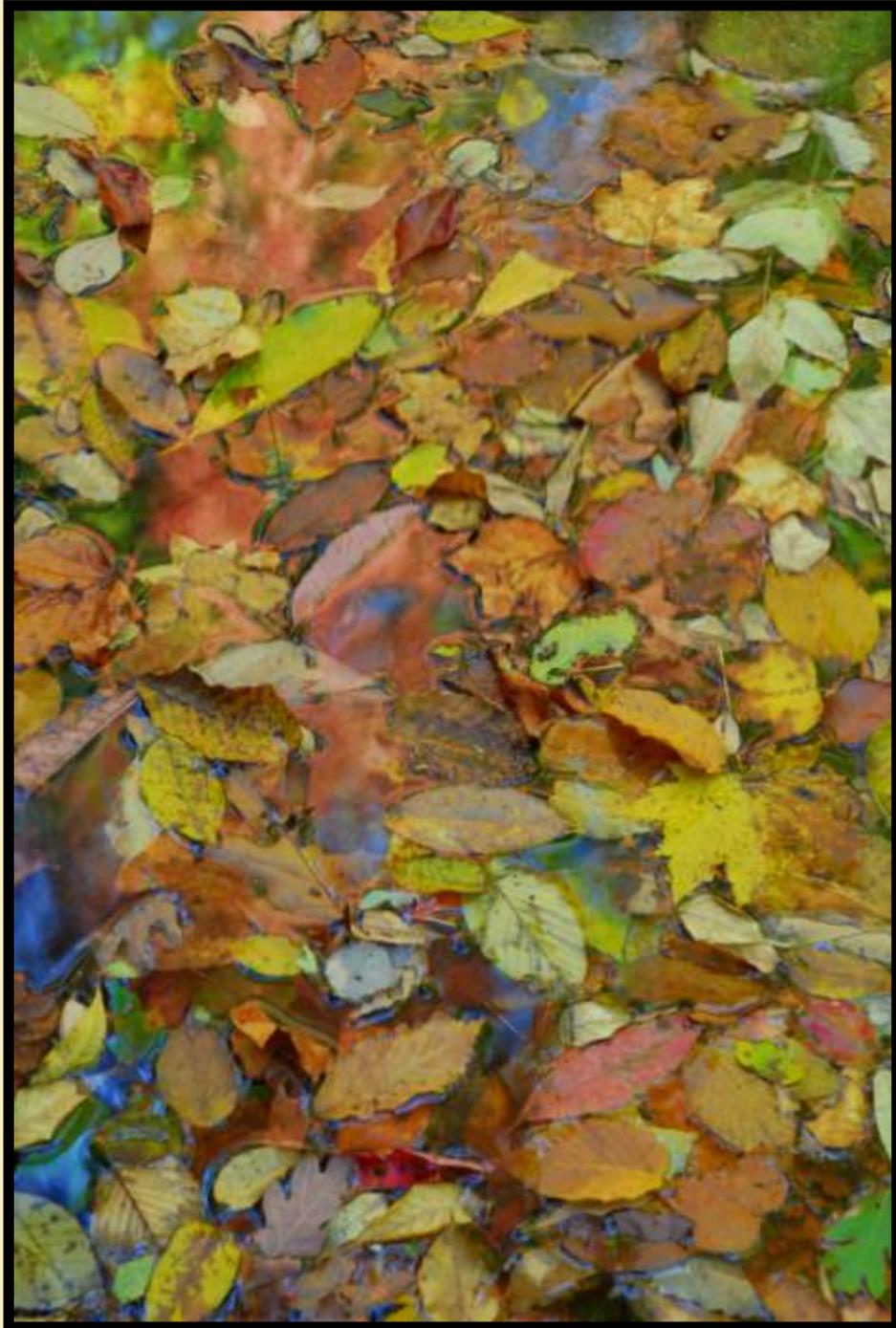




Everglades National Park FLORIDA

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve
COLORADO





Jones Gap State Park
SOUTH CAROLINA

Reflections and Reflected Light



Broyhill Park, Blowing Rock
NORTH CAROLINA

Most of what we can see is due to reflected light. Leaves, flowers, rocks, and animals are not light sources themselves. They reflect the light that is falling on them. One of my favorite subjects for reflections is water. Over the years, I've discovered that the clearer the water is, the better a reflector it will be. Water that is dark or has a lot of pollutants or sediment in it will not provide a good reflection.

So it is with the life of faith. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus commanded us, His followers, to let our “light shine before men.” [NIV] In reality, though, it is not our light but God’s light that we are to reflect and transmit to other people that we encounter.

In his insightful book *Just Like Jesus*, Max Lucado tells how and why Jesus wants to change us to be more like Him - getting rid of deceit, envy, pride, and other “pollutants” will help us be optimal reflectors of His love and mercy.



Rocky Mountain National Park COLORADO

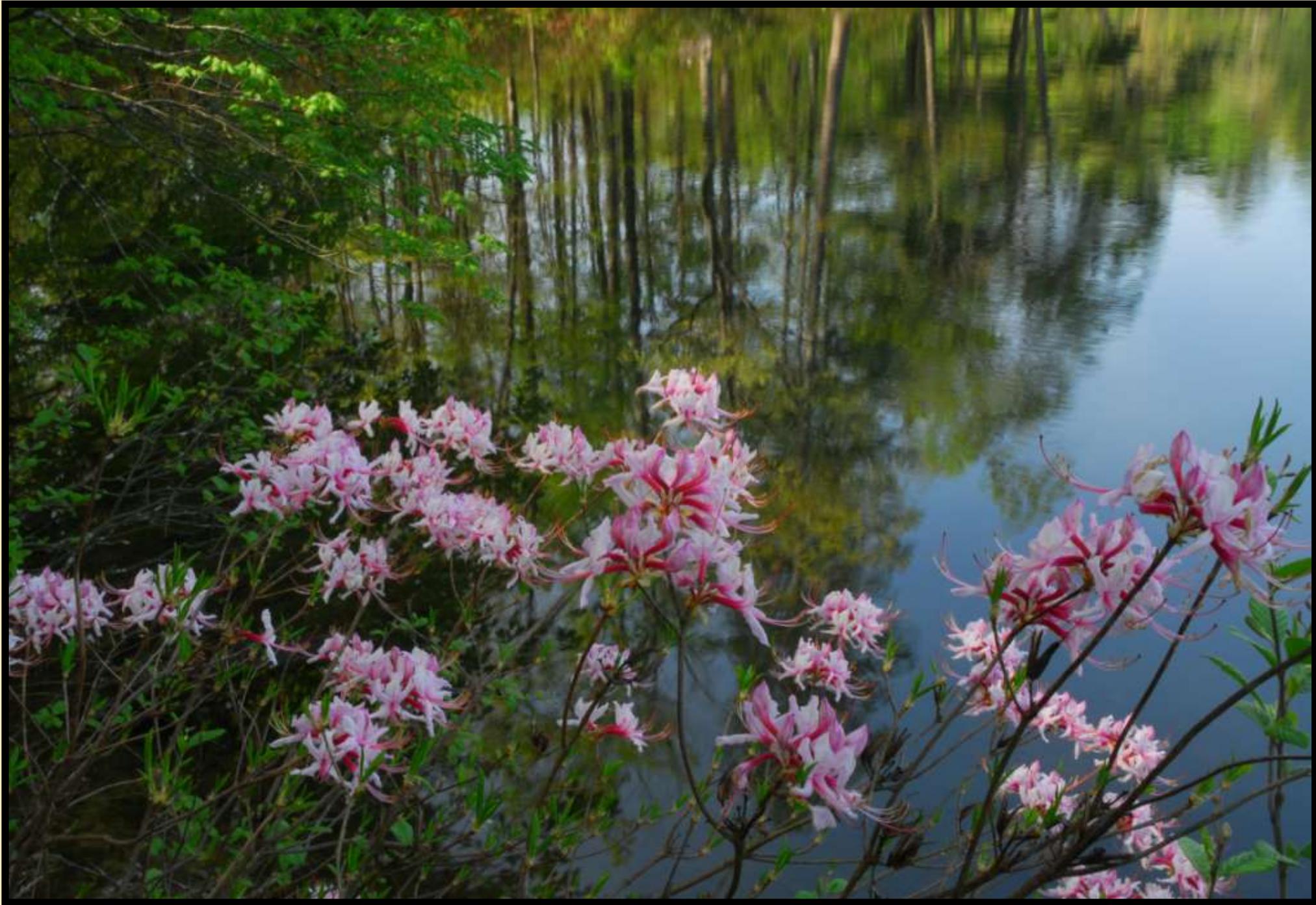
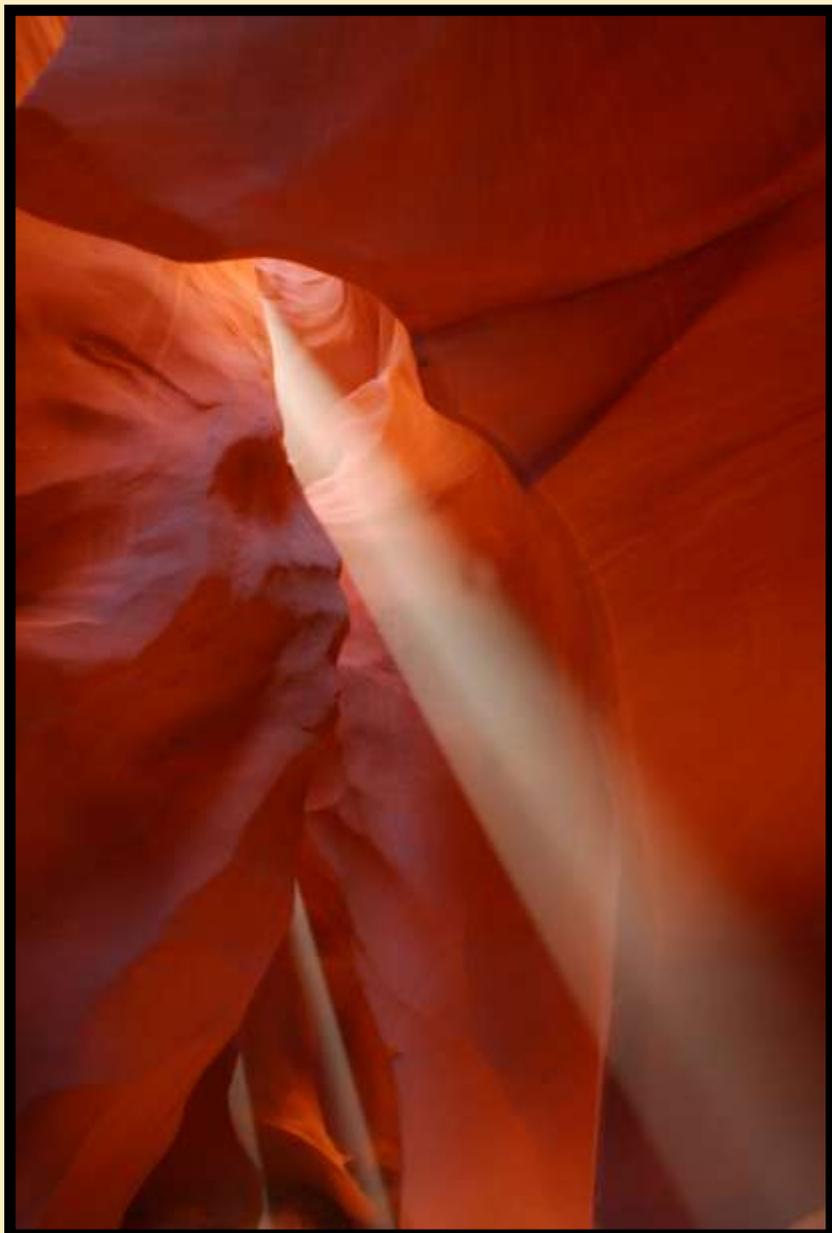
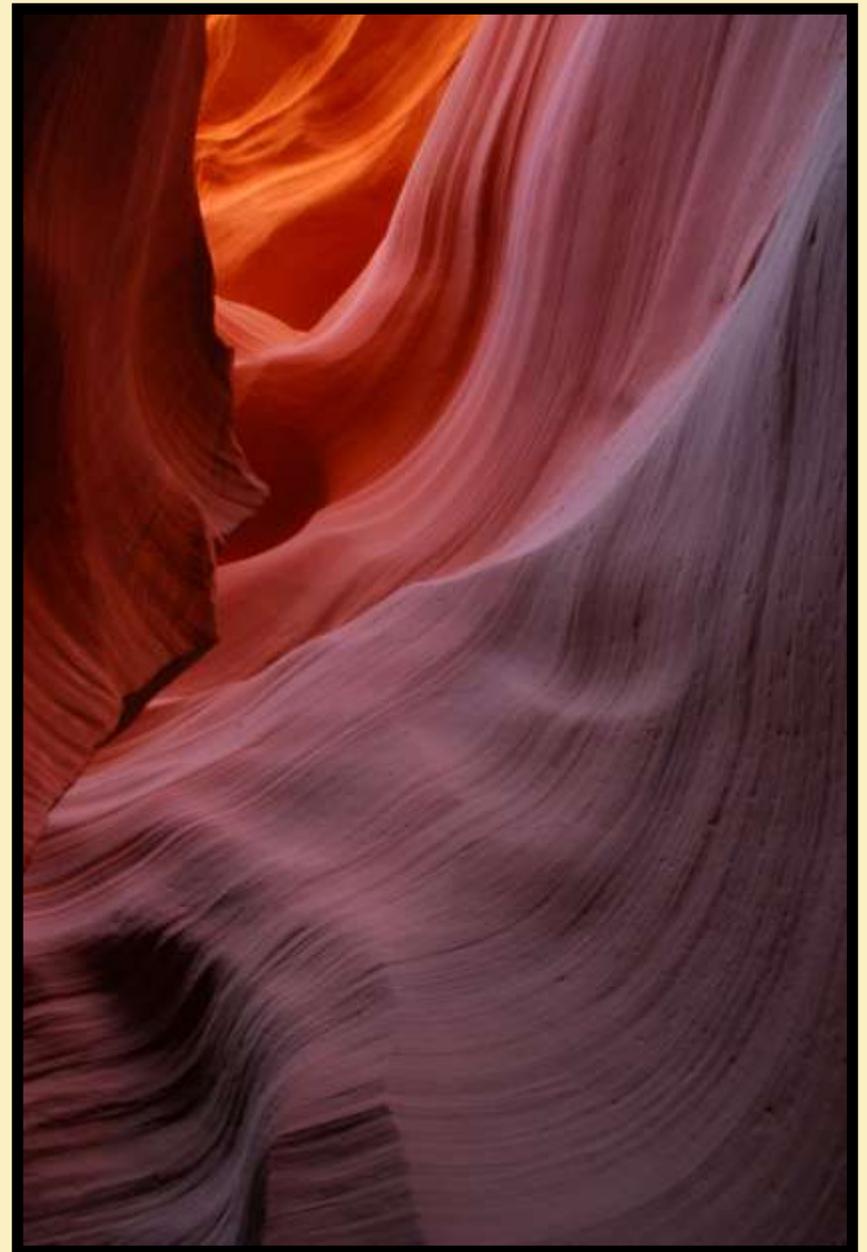


Table Rock State Park SOUTH CAROLINA

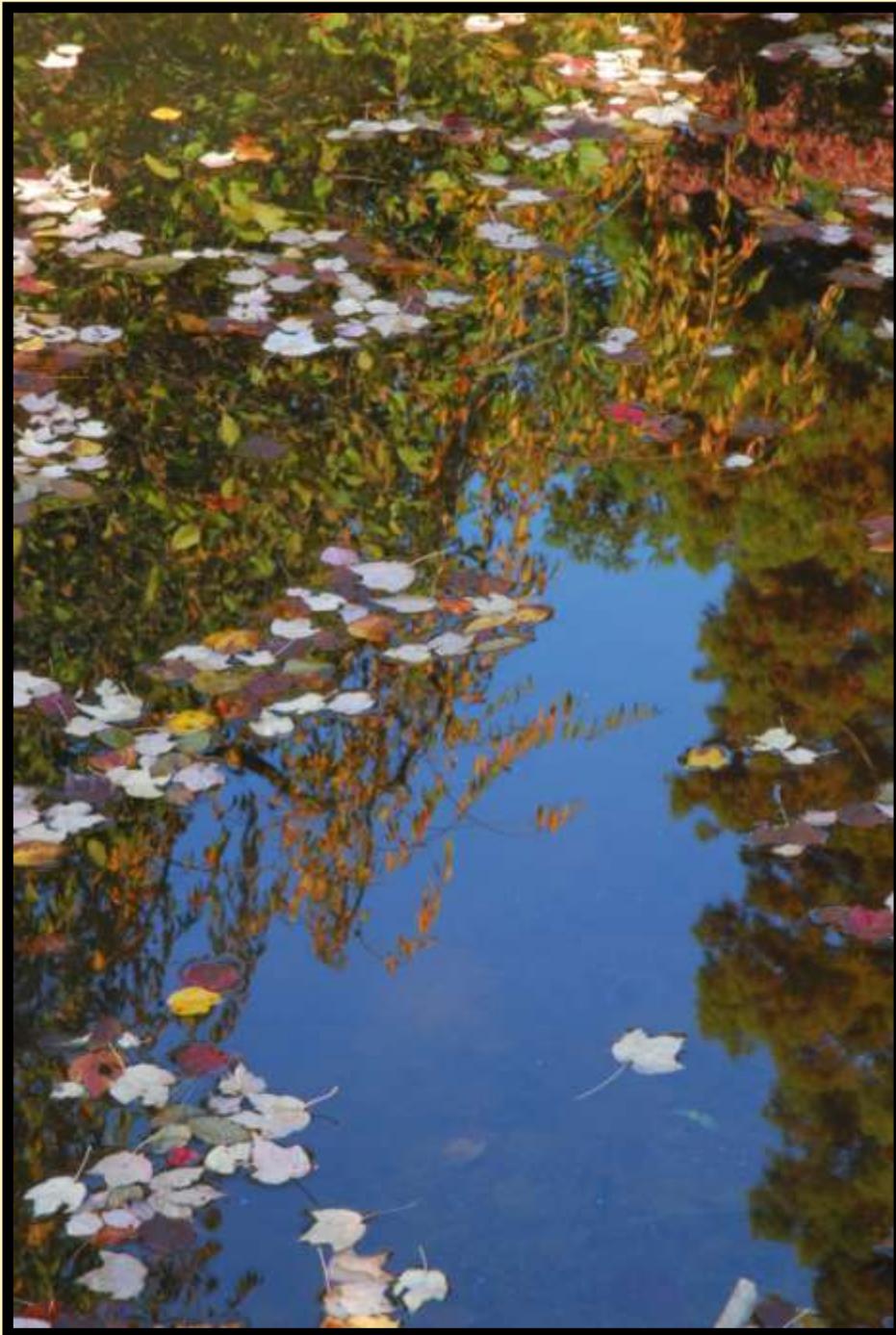


Both:
Antelope Canyon Navajo Tribal Park
ARIZONA





Pisgah National Forest NORTH CAROLINA



Furman University
SOUTH CAROLINA



Uncompahgre National Forest COLORADO



Rocky Mountain National Park COLORADO

Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge
FLORIDA





Blue Ridge Parkway
NORTH CAROLINA

Clouds

Clouds are a common sight in the sky in most parts of the United States. Often they are visual elements that are included in a landscape image. Even a few cotton ball clouds can provide points of interest on the palette of a clear blue sky. Although all clouds have basically the same components, each one is different. And they are constantly changing.

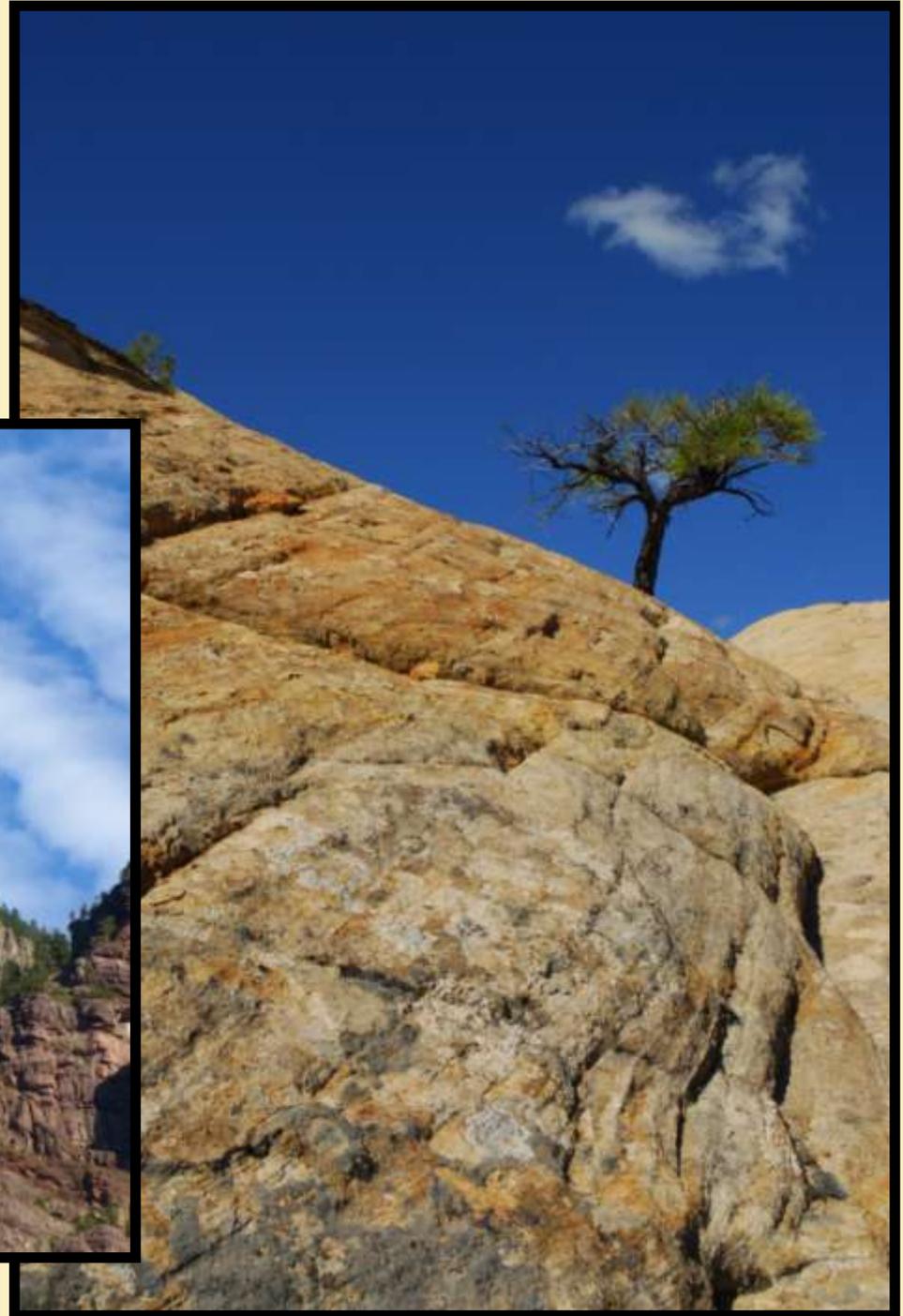
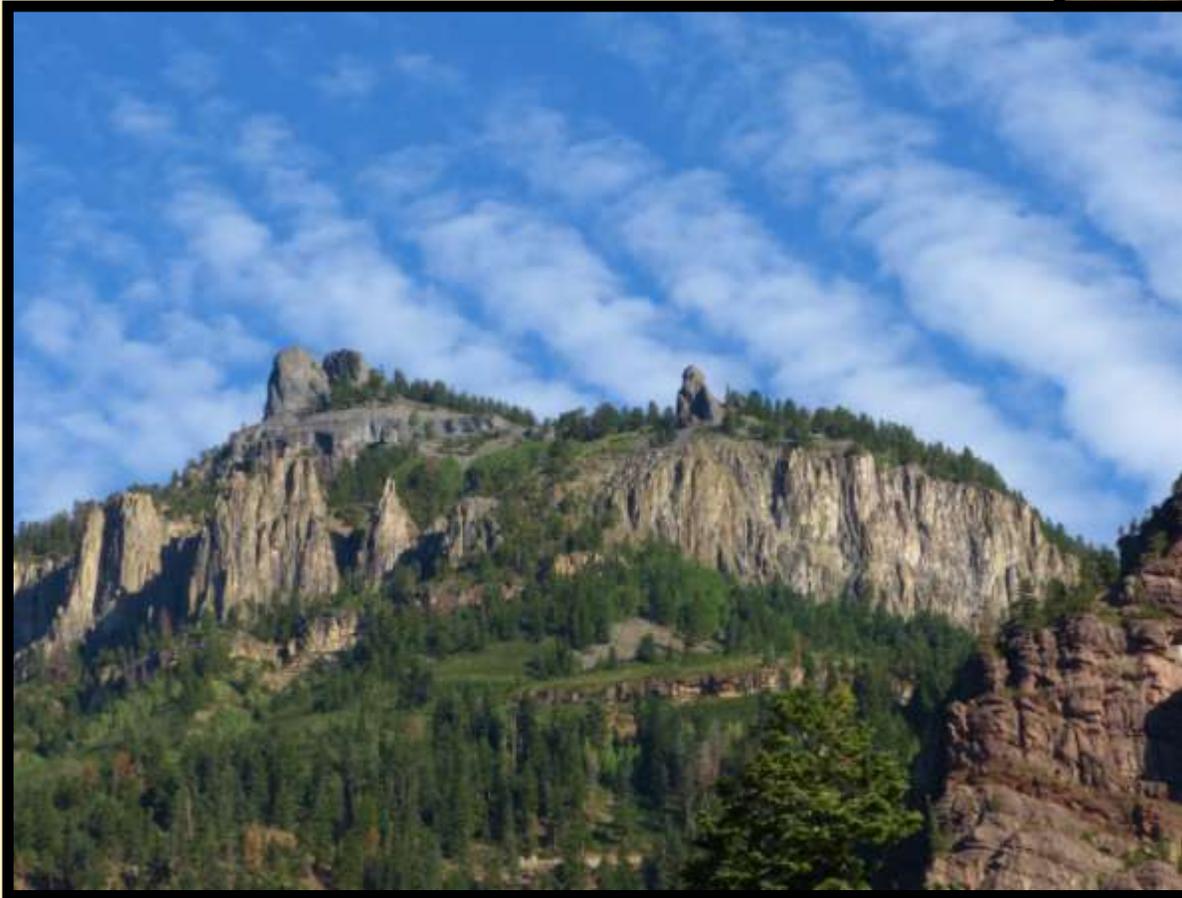
Fundamentally alike, yet unique. Always on the move and changing. These descriptors could also apply to people. There is one more similarity between clouds and people that comes to mind: limited time on this earth. The changeable, temporary nature of clouds and people reminds me that I need to have in my life Someone who does not change. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” [Hebrews 13:8; TLB] “I the Lord do not change.” [Malachi 3:6; NIV]



Dead Horse Point State Park
UTAH

Right:
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument UTAH

Below:
Ouray COLORADO





Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park ARIZONA



Dallas Divide, San Juan Skyway
COLORADO



Appalachian Trail NORTH CAROLINA – TENNESSEE LINE

Curecanti National Recreation Area
COLORADO



Shadows and Silhouettes



Grand Staircase-Escalante
National Monument
UTAH

Outdoors (and indoors too, for that matter), shadows are a pretty normal occurrence. But their presence in a photograph can be a confusing element, distracting the viewer from what is important.

In a nature photograph, a small number of elements can be more dramatic than trying to include everything your eyes see. So rather than trying to shy away from or avoid shadows, I will sometimes include them in my images to help guide one's attention to what is important: the primary subject or point of interest. Whether shadows are distracting or helpful all depends on how they are used.

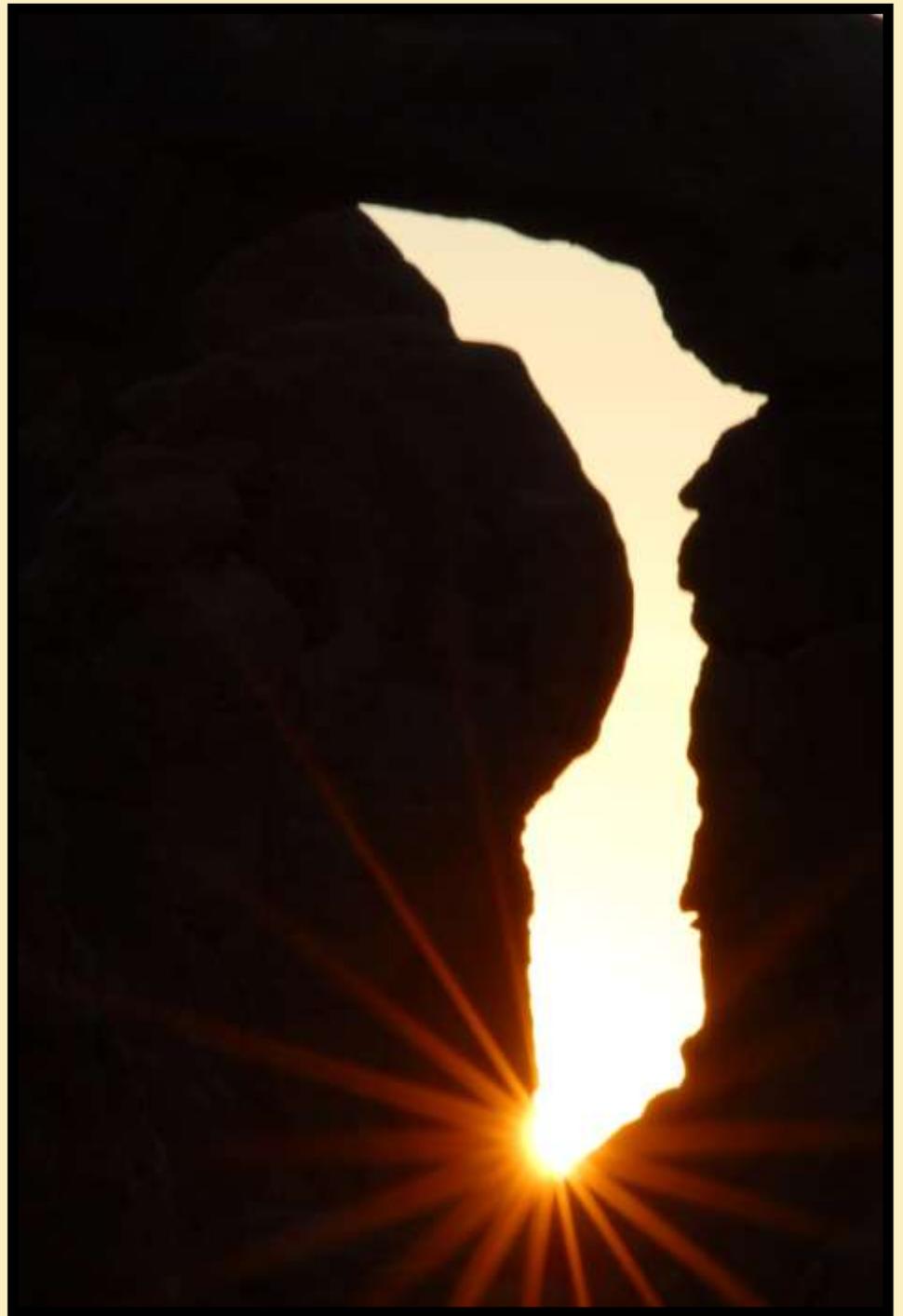
In life, there are many shadows or things that we don't know, especially concerning the future. The unknown, and the anxiety it sometimes brings on, can be distracting, even debilitating. Paul advised believers in the church at Philippi, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." [Philippians 4:6-7; NIV] I believe that Paul's counsel for first-century Christians also applies to us today. Rather than worrying about what lies ahead and other unknowns, we can choose to use these shadows in our lives to help us focus on what is most important – our faith in God and our relationship with Him.



Arches National Park UTAH



Antelope Canyon Navajo Tribal Park ARIZONA



Arches National Park UTAH

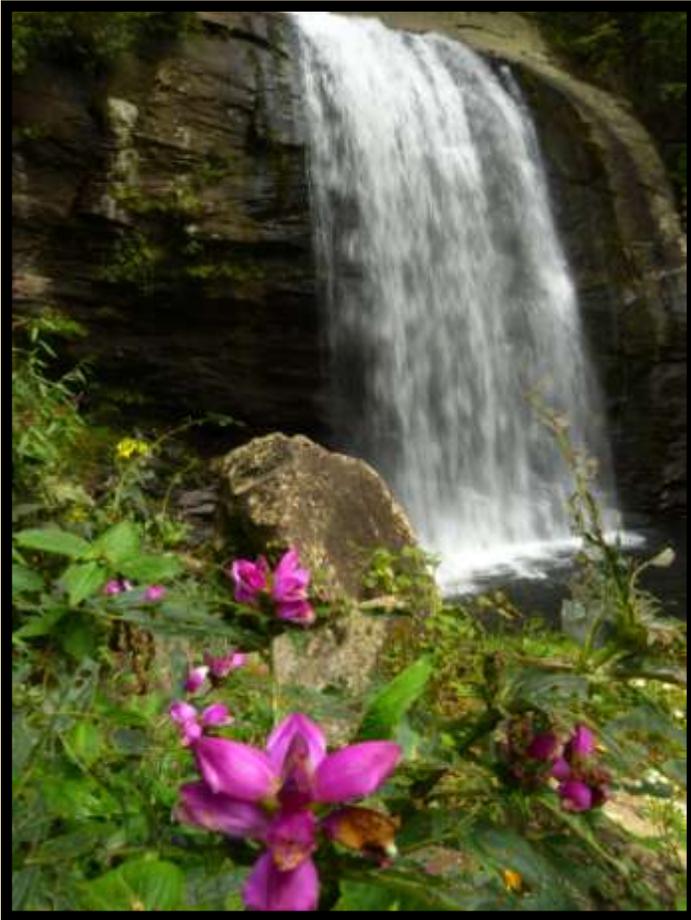


Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument UTAH

Overcast Skies

Overcast skies are sometimes regarded as dreary and depressing. But in photography, I regard overcast skies as an opportunity for creating images of moving water, close-up subjects such as wildflowers, and landscapes that don't involve the sky. And, although you may not realize it, overcast skies also provide the diffused, even light that is ideal for taking pictures of people.

Just because I don't see the sun or feel its warmth, it doesn't mean the sun's not there. And it doesn't stop me from photographing. In our spiritual lives, there may be times when we don't feel God's presence as much as we would like. But this shouldn't stop us from living for God. These occasions should be a call for faith which demonstrates that not seeing or feeling is not the same as not knowing.



Pisgah National Forest
NORTH CAROLINA

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalm 139:7-10; NIV



Great Smoky Mountains National Park NORTH CAROLINA

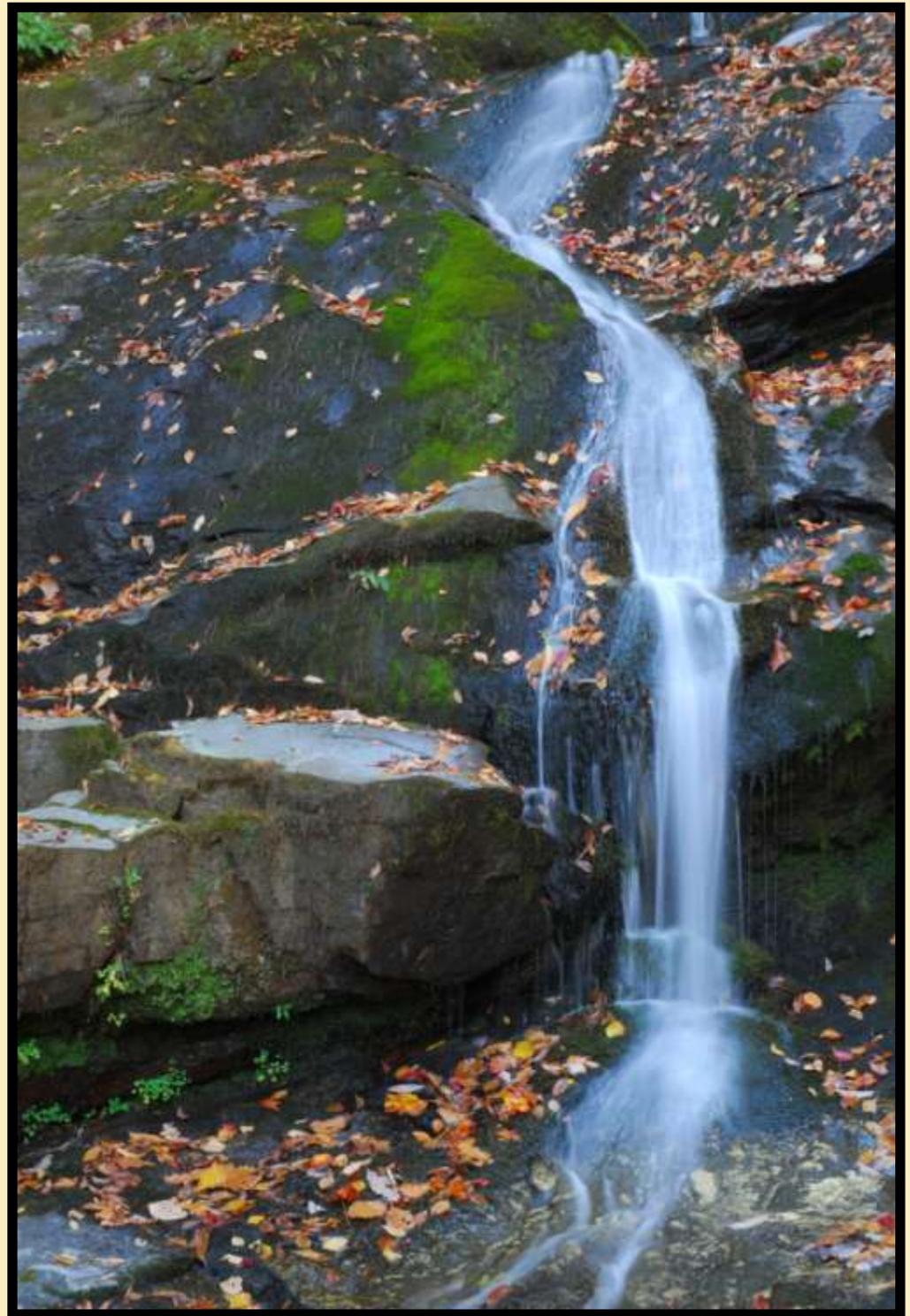


Great Smoky Mountains National Park
TENNESSEE



Greenville County SOUTH CAROLINA

Chattahoochee National Forest
GEORGIA





Left:
Blue Ridge Parkway
NORTH CAROLINA

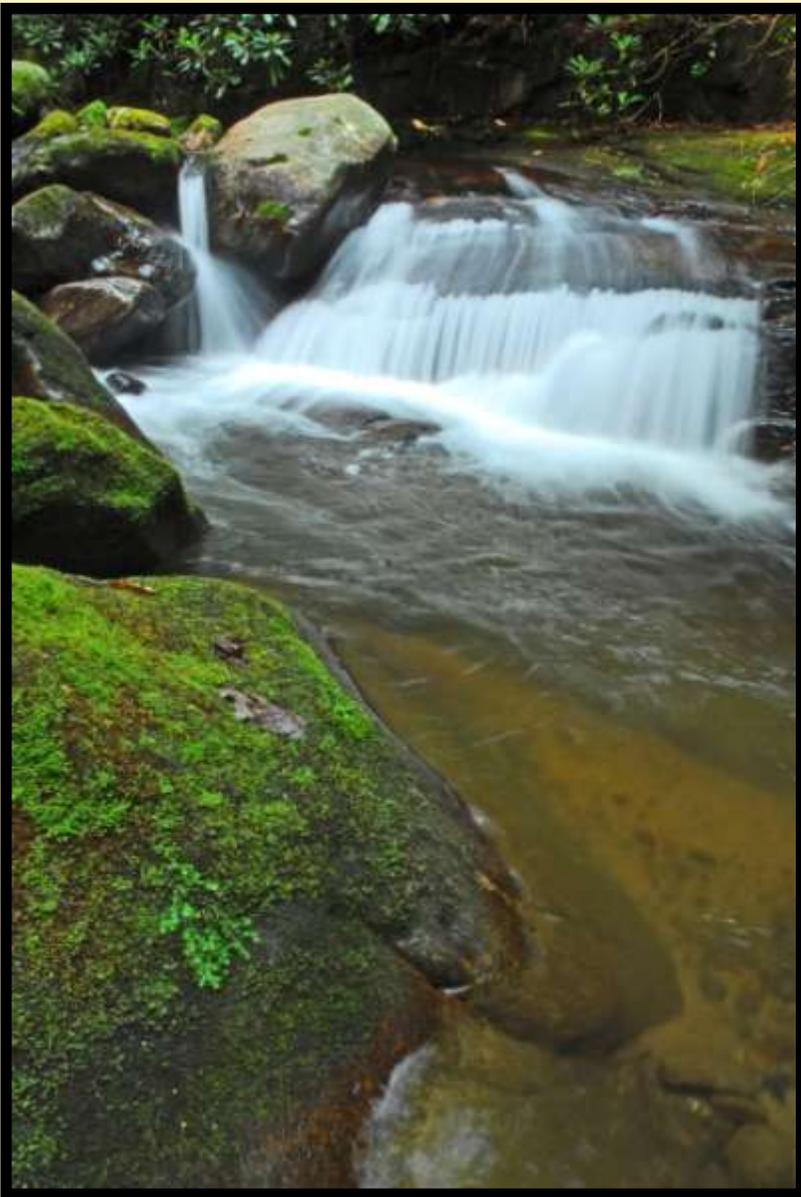


Right:
Ashmore Heritage Preserve
SOUTH CAROLINA

Right:
Bruce Peninsula National Park ONTARIO

Below:
Rocky Mountain National Park COLORADO





Above:
Jones Gap State Park SOUTH CAROLINA

Right:
Pisgah National Forest NORTH CAROLINA





Above:
San Miguel County COLORADO

Right:
Blue Ridge Parkway NORTH CAROLINA



Right:
Callaway Gardens GEORGIA

Below:
Pisgah National Forest NORTH CAROLINA





Great Smoky Mountains National Park TENNESSEE

Storms and Bad Weather



Great Smoky Mountains
National Park
TENNESSEE

Photographing outdoors sometimes means being in wonderful locations in idyllic conditions. But not always. In pursuit of images of nature, I have been soaked from being caught in the rain. More times than I care to remember, I've provided meals for hordes of mosquitoes. Once in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, I left my wife Jean in the van while I went out to take some images during an unexpected spring snow storm. All I had to put on at the time was a dark brown leather jacket with a similarly-colored nylon hood. When I came back to the van, Jean observed, "You look just like a Fudgecicle!" And at that moment, I felt like one.

As Christians, God does not guarantee us that our lives will be level, obstacle-free paths that we can leisurely stroll in sunny, 75-degree weather. Instead, God promises that He will be with us to see us through the storms of life. In one of the most well-known passages in the Old Testament, David expressed it this way; "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." [Psalm 23:4; NIV]

If I venture outside with my camera only when conditions are perfect, my photographs would suffer from a lack of completeness and credibility. Similarly, if I acknowledge God only during the good times, my witness and credibility as a follower of Christ will suffer.



Capitol Reef National Park UTAH



Great Smoky Mountains National Park TENNESSEE



Uncompahgre National Forest COLORADO



Above:
Pisgah National Forest NORTH CAROLINA

Right:
Blue Ridge Parkway NORTH CAROLINA





Left:
Uncompahgre National Forest
COLORADO



Right:
Box Canyon Park, Ouray
COLORADO



Great Smoky Mountains National Park TENNESSEE



Blue Ridge Parkway NORTH CAROLINA

Rainbows



Grand Junction COLORADO

I don't know of anyone who does not regard a rainbow as a special sight. And capturing a rainbow with a camera can result in a powerful, emotive image. But rainbows are very temporary events that don't occur every day. Understanding the science behind these light displays can help in sighting them.

Rainbows may be seen wherever there are water drops in the air and sunlight is shining from behind the observer. Sunlight is first refracted as it enters the surface of the water drop, then reflected off the back of the drop, and again refracted as it exits the drop. Sunlight is refracted into the visible colors red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. An easy way to remember these colors and the order in which they appear is with the acrostic ROY G BIV.

Science can explain how a rainbow occurs, but not why. The Bible provides this explanation: "It will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life." [Genesis 9:13,15; NIV] For me, rainbows are a reminder of all of God's promises and of His faithfulness. God is truth. He cannot lie. He never has and He never will break any of His promises. And unlike rainbows, God's promises last forever.



Capitol Reef National Park UTAH



Niagara Falls ONTARIO



Capitol Reef National Park UTAH

Backlight



Pisgah National Forest
NORTH CAROLINA

Most photographs are images of front-lit subjects. In other words, a light source (for example, the sun in nature photography) comes over the shoulders of the photographer and illuminates one or more surfaces that face the camera.

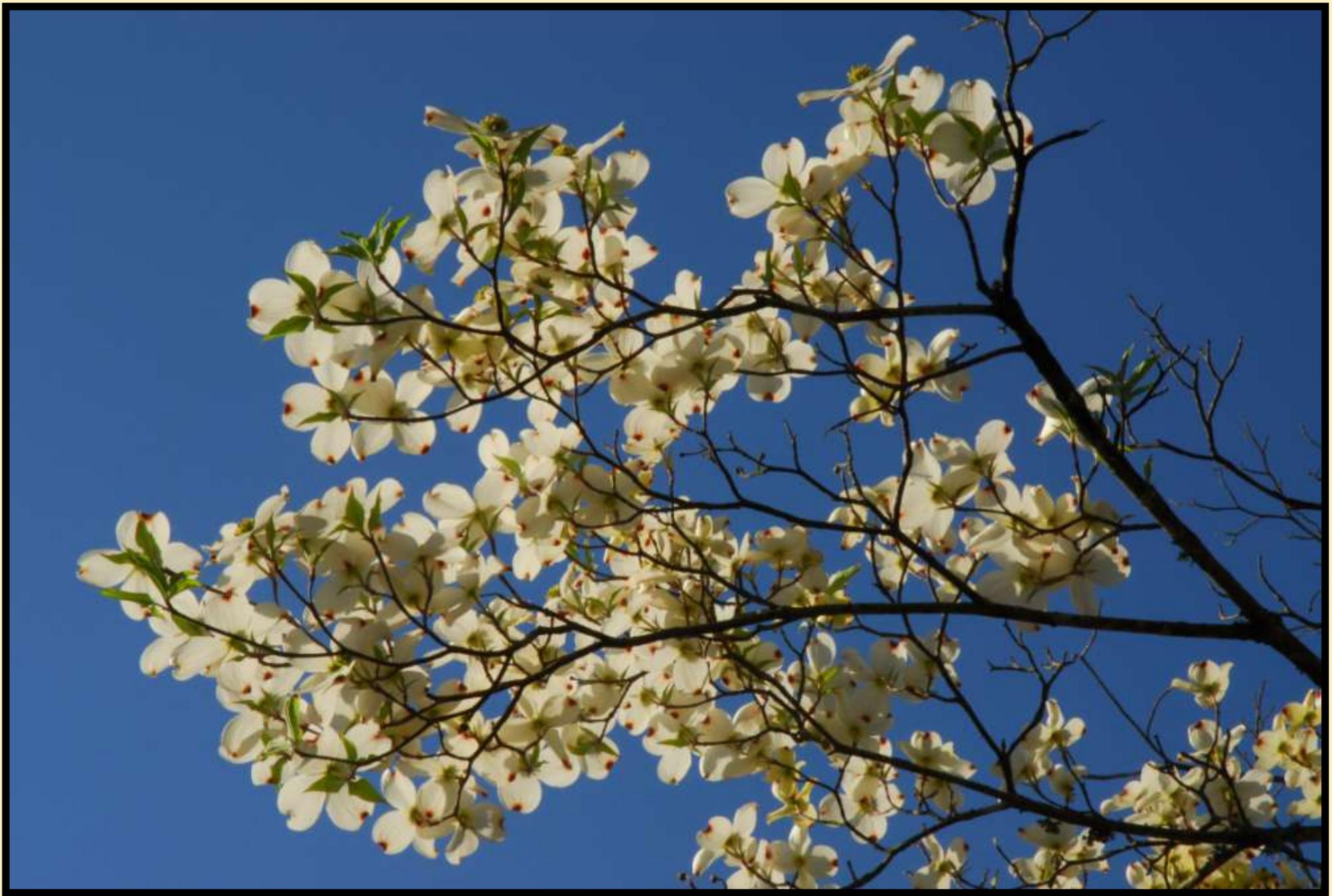
The sun (or other light source) behind a subject creates a backlit image. Front-lighting is so standard that a well-composed and well-exposed backlit photograph can be very dramatic. As a photographer, I try to be aware of these types of situations and am very thankful when they yield a worthwhile photo.

It occurred to me that backlighting can also serve to remind me of one aspect of my relationship with God that is easy to overlook: being thankful for other Christians who are behind me and support me as I walk the path of faith. On more than one occasion Paul expressed his gratitude to fellow believers who had helped and encouraged him. In Ephesians 1:16, he wrote, “I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.” [NIV] And to the church in Philippi, “I thank my God every time I remember you.” [Philippians 1:3; NIV]

Many people have influenced me, provided comfort, insight, or guidance in the past. Some of these people I have never personally met, having only encountered them through written, spoken, or sung words. Some of the people that I have known who have helped me I will never see again “on the front side of Heaven.” Unfortunately, I have not always acknowledged these light sources along my path. Now, however, I try to be more aware of these blessings and express my appreciation as they occur.

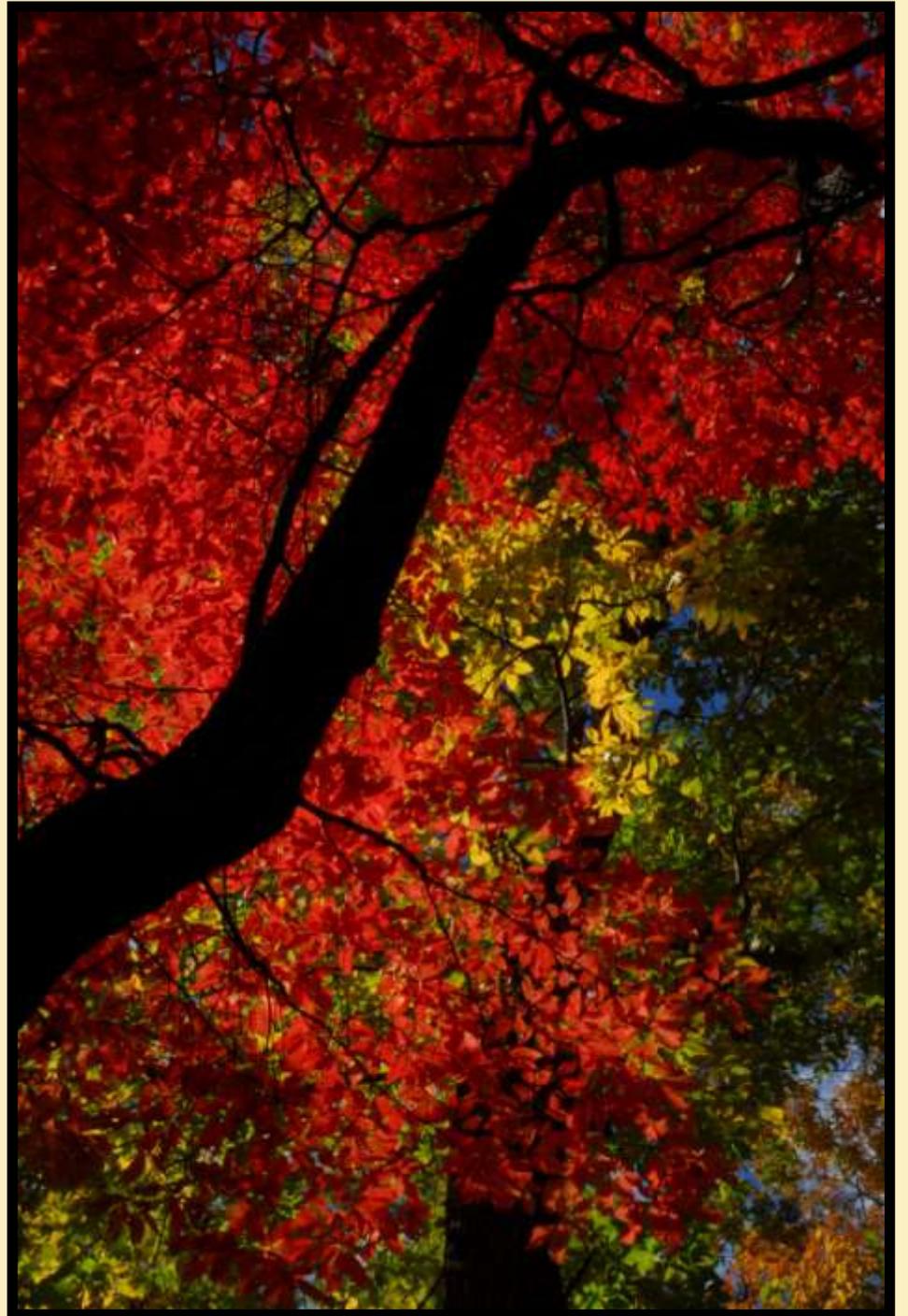


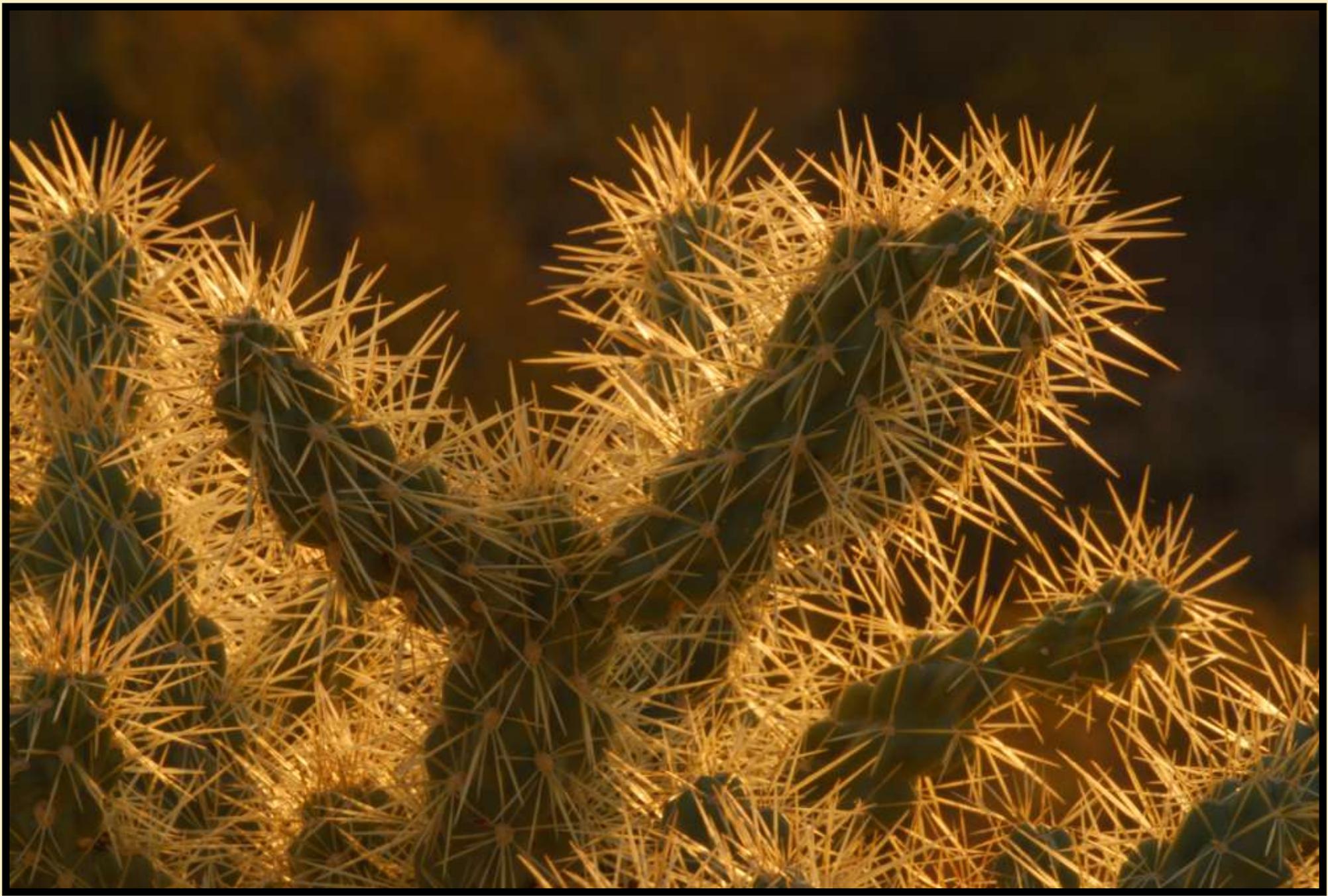
Pisgah National Forest NORTH CAROLINA



Sevier County TENNESSEE

Table Rock State Park
SOUTH CAROLINA





Tucson Mountain Park ARIZONA



Uncompahgre National Forest COLORADO

Both:
Burnet County TEXAS





Uncompahgre National Forest
COLORADO



Colorado National Monument COLORADO

Late Day Light and Sunset



Point Pelee National Park
ONTARIO

As the sun approaches the western horizon, many people regard the day as finished. It's time to head home or at least go indoors. This is not usually the case for me when I'm out photographing. As the sun sets, the light goes through more of the earth's atmosphere. The additional atmosphere absorbs much of the cool (blue) portion of the spectrum, which has a shorter wavelength. Thus, the warm (red-yellow) portion of the spectrum becomes more prominent. So it is for good reason that many nature photographers refer to this time of day as "the golden hour."

In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, part of C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, one of the prominent characters is a rapier-wielding mouse named Reepicheep. On a beautiful island where Reepicheep is leading some travelers, the group comes to a spectacular area surrounded by magnificent scenery. The travelers want to stay there, rest, and drink in all that they can see. But their leader refuses to let them think their journey is over. "Further in and further up," Reepicheep calls as he urges the group on to even better destinations.

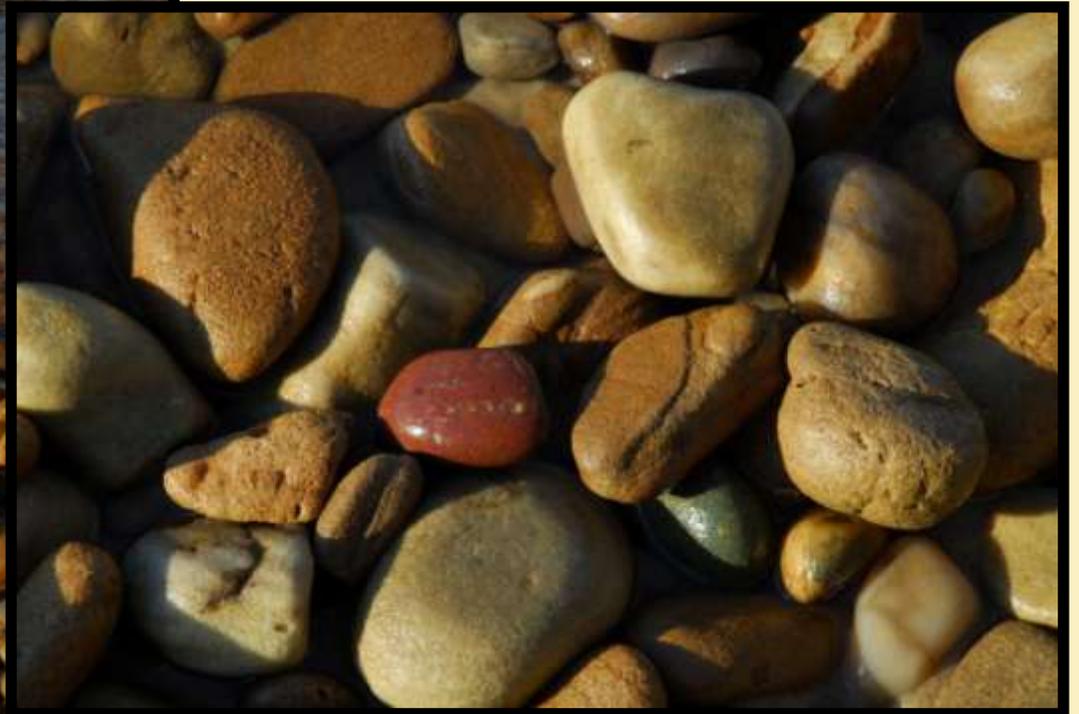
John Shaw is one of the most gifted nature photographers in the world. After he had been a working professional for more than twenty years, I heard John say, "My best photograph is yet to be taken." As a Christian, I know my time on earth is not all there is. Jesus said, "Anyone who believes in me, even though he dies like anyone else, shall live again." [John 11:25; TLB] And that is how I want to approach photography and my life as a Christian - The Best is Yet to Come.

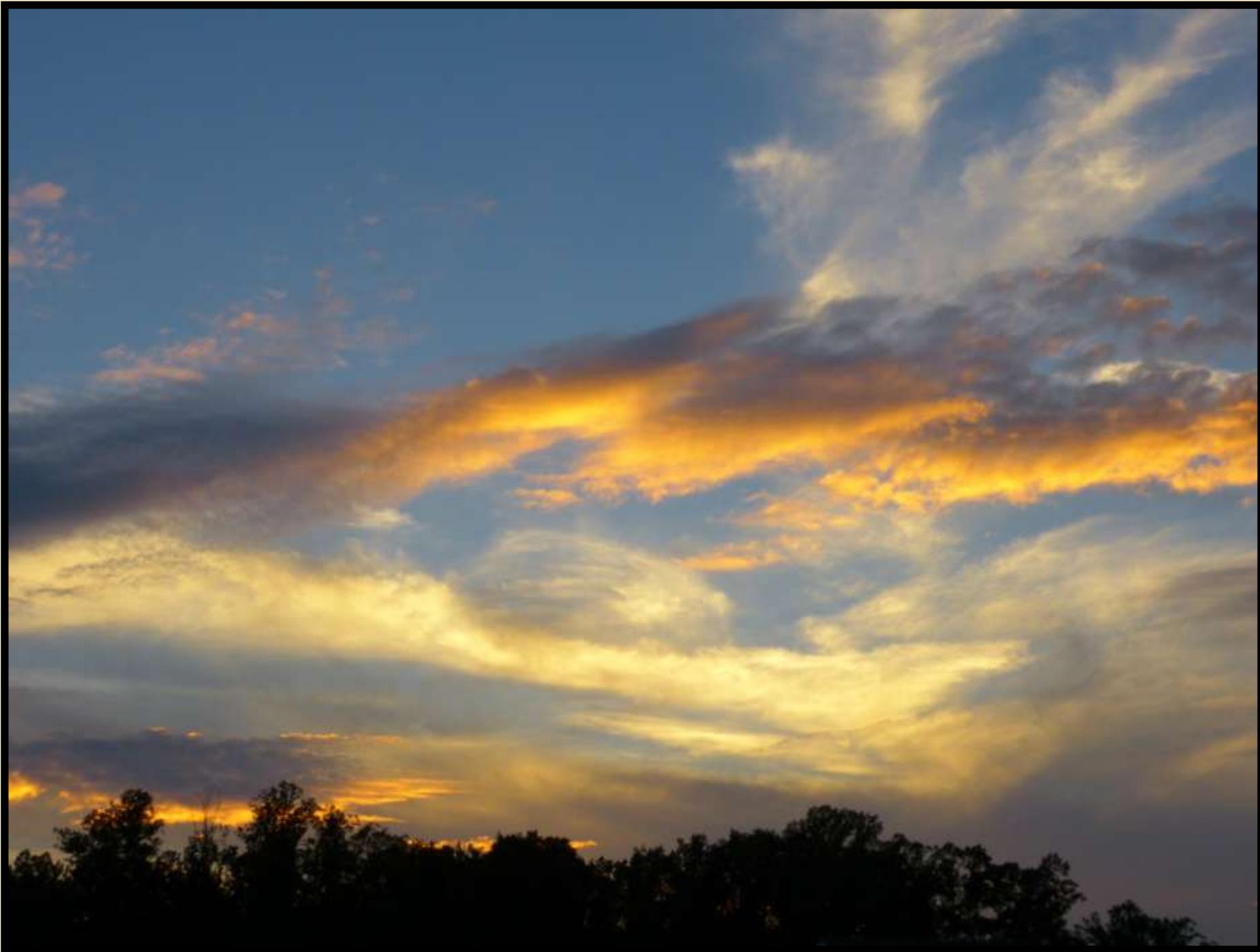


Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park ARIZONA



Both:
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
MICHIGAN





Greenville County SOUTH CAROLINA



Glen Canyon National Recreation Area ARIZONA

Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge
FLORIDA





San Juan Skyway COLORADO



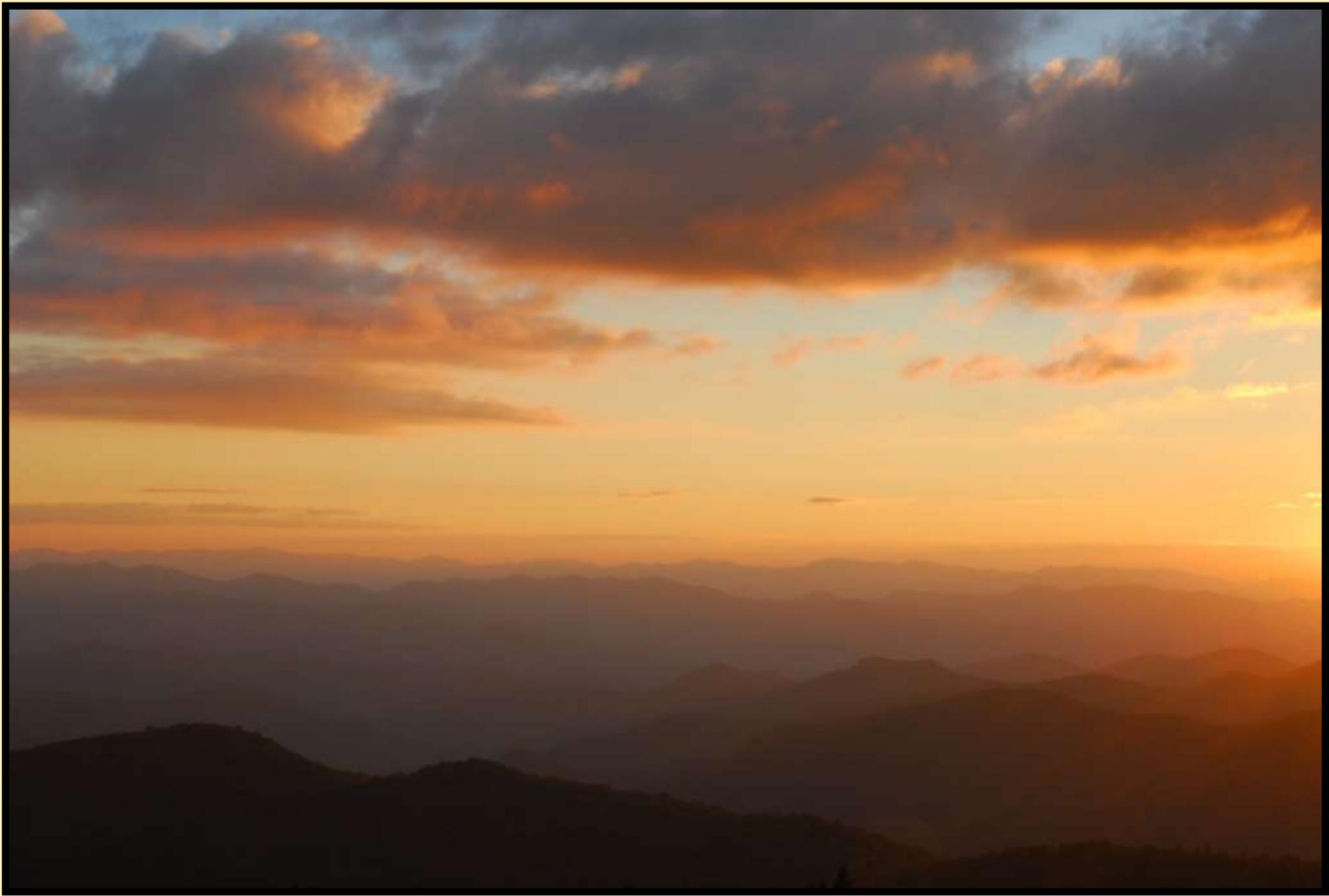
Arches National Park
COLORADO



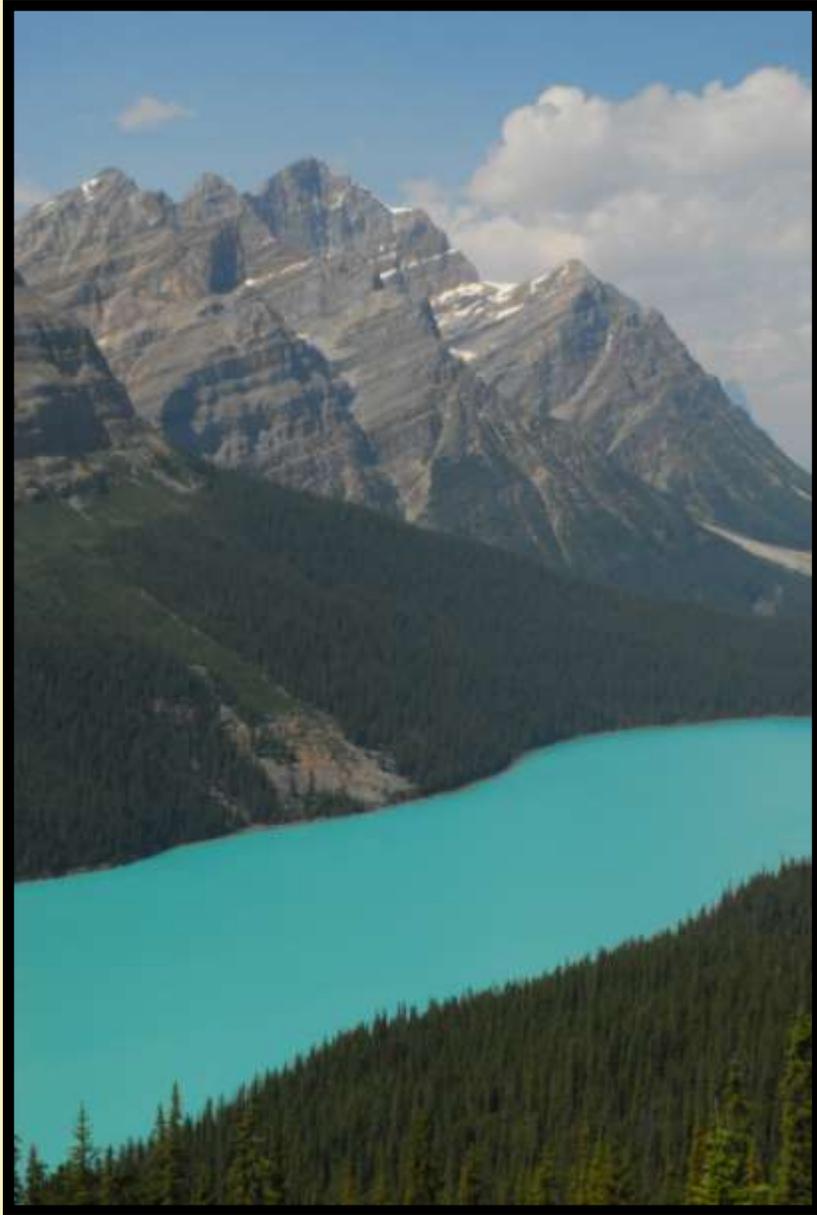
Tucson Mountain Park ARIZONA



Siesta Key FLORIDA



Blue Ridge Parkway NORTH CAROLINA



Jasper National Park
ALBERTA

Acknowledgement

Just as she has shaped my life and made me a better person, my wife Jean helped turn this project into a published book. Even before the project was conceived, she participated in most of the trips where these photographs were taken, sharing many of the same experiences. In addition to her encouragement, her editorial skills and attention to detail truly make this book as much hers as it is mine. I am indeed blessed, Jean, to have you as my wife, my partner, and my light on this journey.

Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,
who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.

Psalm 89:15 NIV

