



The Only Open Doors

Photographs by Joe Lipka

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Bodie, California is a real ghost town of the Old West. Gold discovered in 1876 was the source of the town's growth and as the gold played out, the people left. After decades of neglect and looting by visitors, the State of California made the town a State Park. This change preserved an important part of California history by protecting what was left of the city from looters and vandals.

The preservation of the town came with a price. Bodie, California is a town where all the doors, save two, are locked. One of the doors in the community church opens to the vestibule, though entry into the sanctuary is blocked by heavy wire mesh. The other door opens into the front room of a house. There, more heavy wire mesh keeps you in the front room. The irony is that preservation of the contents can only happen if visitors are not permitted inside the buildings.

The closed doors cut us off from seeing the past and from connecting to the story of this town. We cannot see nor can we touch the past because of the locked doors. We can only use our imagination to take us through the locked doors to ponder what life might have been like a hundred and forty years ago in Bodie, California.

















COLOPHON

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*The images in this portfolio
were made September 2015,
in Bodie, California*

Myriad Pro and Myriad Pro Italic fonts were used for the text.

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