



THE JOURNAL
PHOTOGRAPHS / STORIES / OBSERVATIONS
JOE LIPKA

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WELCOME TO THE JOURNAL NOVEMBER 2020

It's time to play some games. Visual games, that is. As a photographer there is always the motivation to create images because that's what we do. If we're in a place where the "pickins' are slim" we search for something to photograph.

Accept the challenge of finding something where others think there is nothing. Turn photography into a game where you have to make a photograph about circles, or to find patterns in shadows that become music. If the images "turn out" that's great, but the major goal is to continue to photograph even though others might tell you, "there's nothing to photograph here."

Wind Sculpture, by Yinka Shonibare
at the North Carolina Museum of Art





When the Water is Gone

When the Water is Gone

When I was very young my Aunt O'Tillia told me, "Still water runs deep." I didn't really understand what that meant. But she was my Aunt, and I minded what she said.

When I photographed the Greenhead and Teal Sloughs, my aunt's advice came back. I could see the still water at high tide. At low tide I could see the still water was not deep.

Another childhood lesson was lost. Still water can also be shallow. In the face of that loss, something better appeared.

How the water flowed through the sloughs back to Willapa Bay fascinated me. When the water is gone there is another type of beauty.























Sometimes traditions end because there is no one left to carry them on. Sometimes a dramatic event ends them. The devout used to leave mementos of loved ones at the shrine and light a candle to their memory. There were years of memories at the shrine.

They said the fire started because one of the candles ignited waxy build up at the back of the shrine. It spread quickly through the dried flowers, cards and messages left by loved ones of the deceased. The damage was significant. After repairs were completed, mementos were no longer permitted at the shrine.

This may not be completely true, but the folio "[...despise not my petitions...](#)" still seems unfinished to me.

A black and white photograph of a complex mechanical assembly. The image features several large, dark, metallic gears with prominent teeth. A large, curved metal plate, possibly a flywheel or a protective cover, is positioned in the upper left quadrant. The plate has several small circular holes and a central circular opening. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a workshop or industrial setting. The overall composition is industrial and mechanical.

Circular Logic

Circular Logic

After spending the day photographing the creative well might just be about dry. We can be tempted to give up and go home. If we succumb to that temptation, it can be the start of the destructive circle. Giving up before you are completely sure there is nothing left to photograph makes it easy to give up a little bit sooner the next time. It's the start of a decreasing circle. Next time you will want to quit a little bit sooner. Eventually, you won't want to photograph at all because "I can't find anything to photograph."

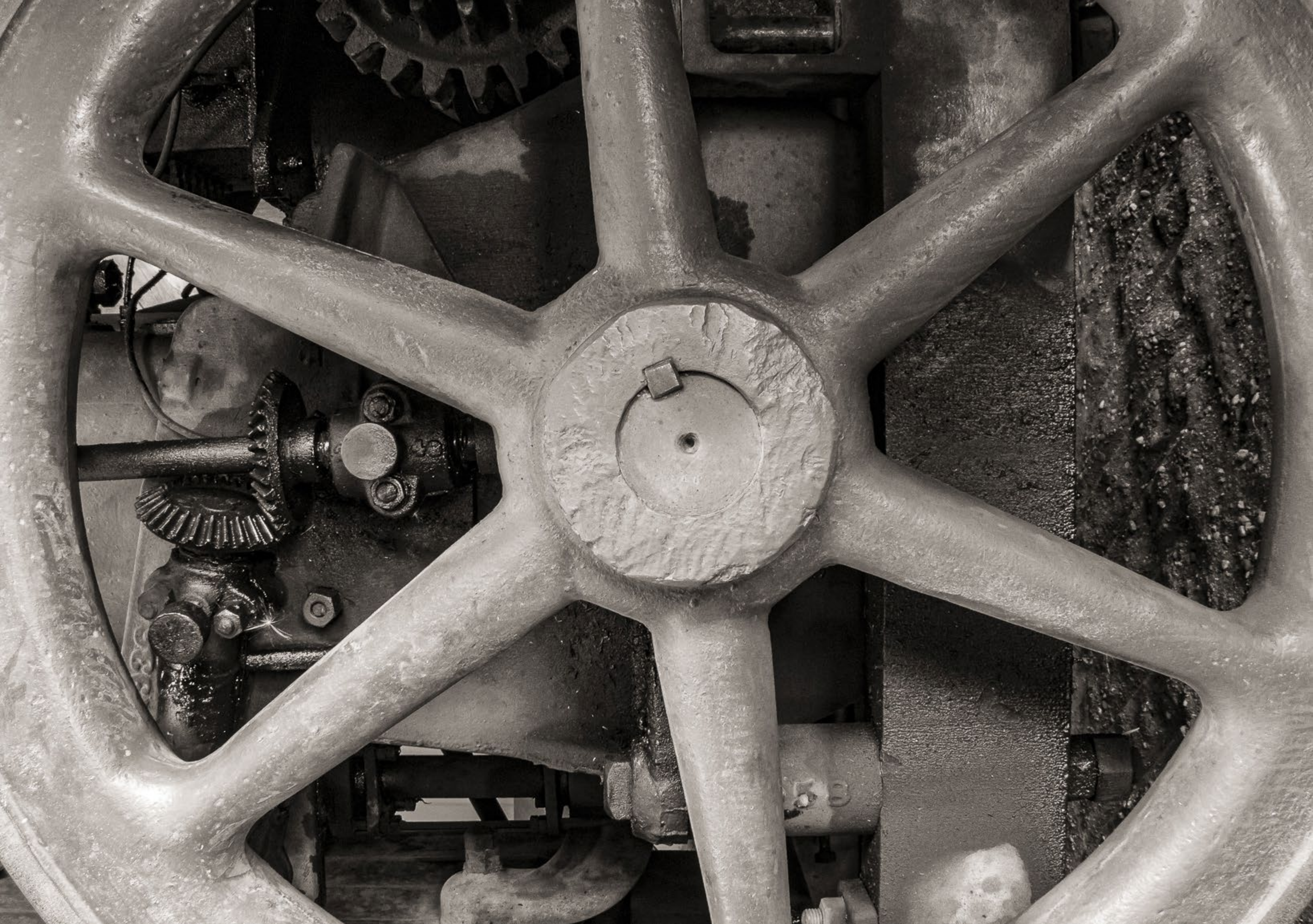
Resist the temptation to quit early and play a visual game. Instead of giving in to the circle of failure, I found the circular forms in the tractor barn.

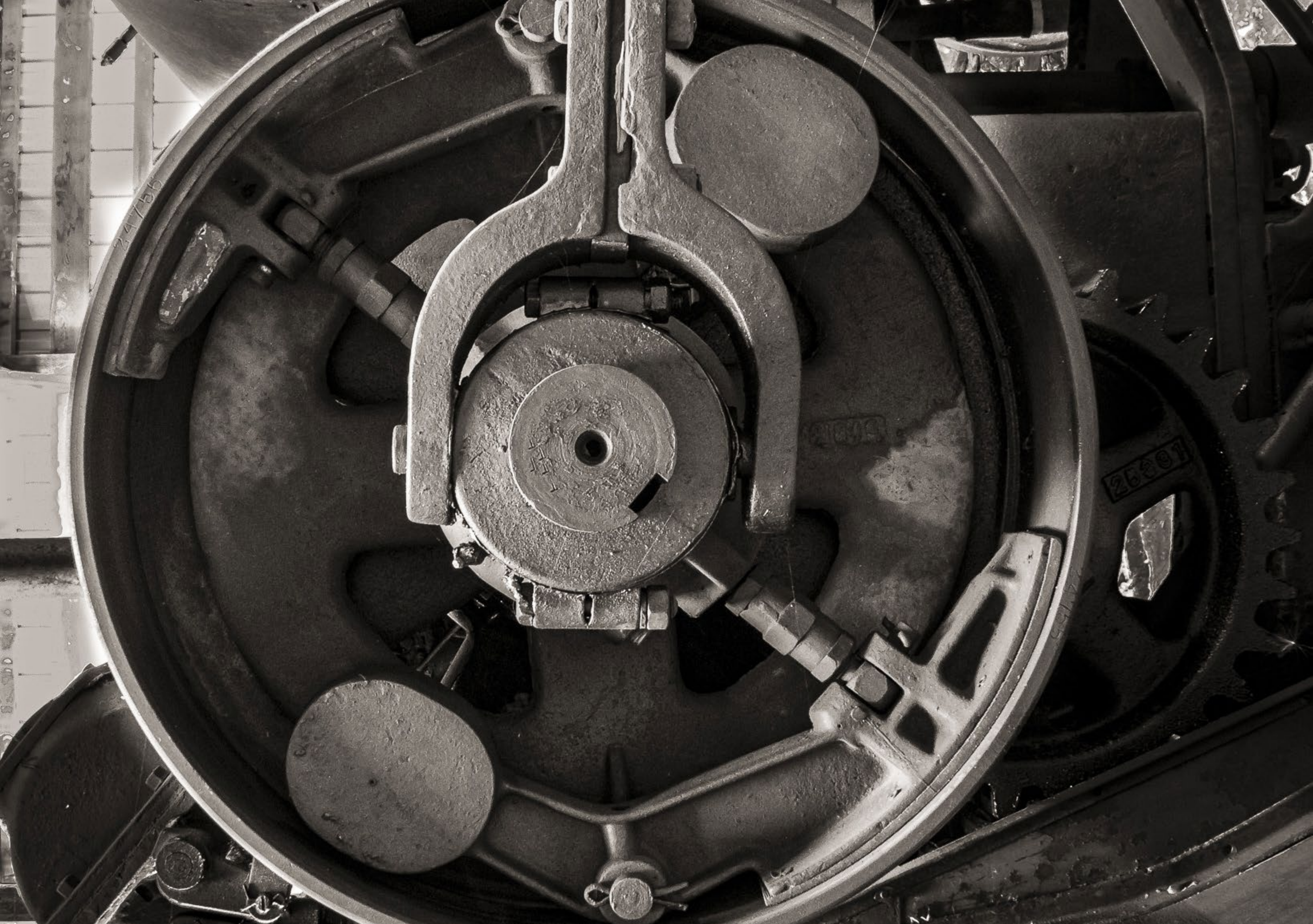






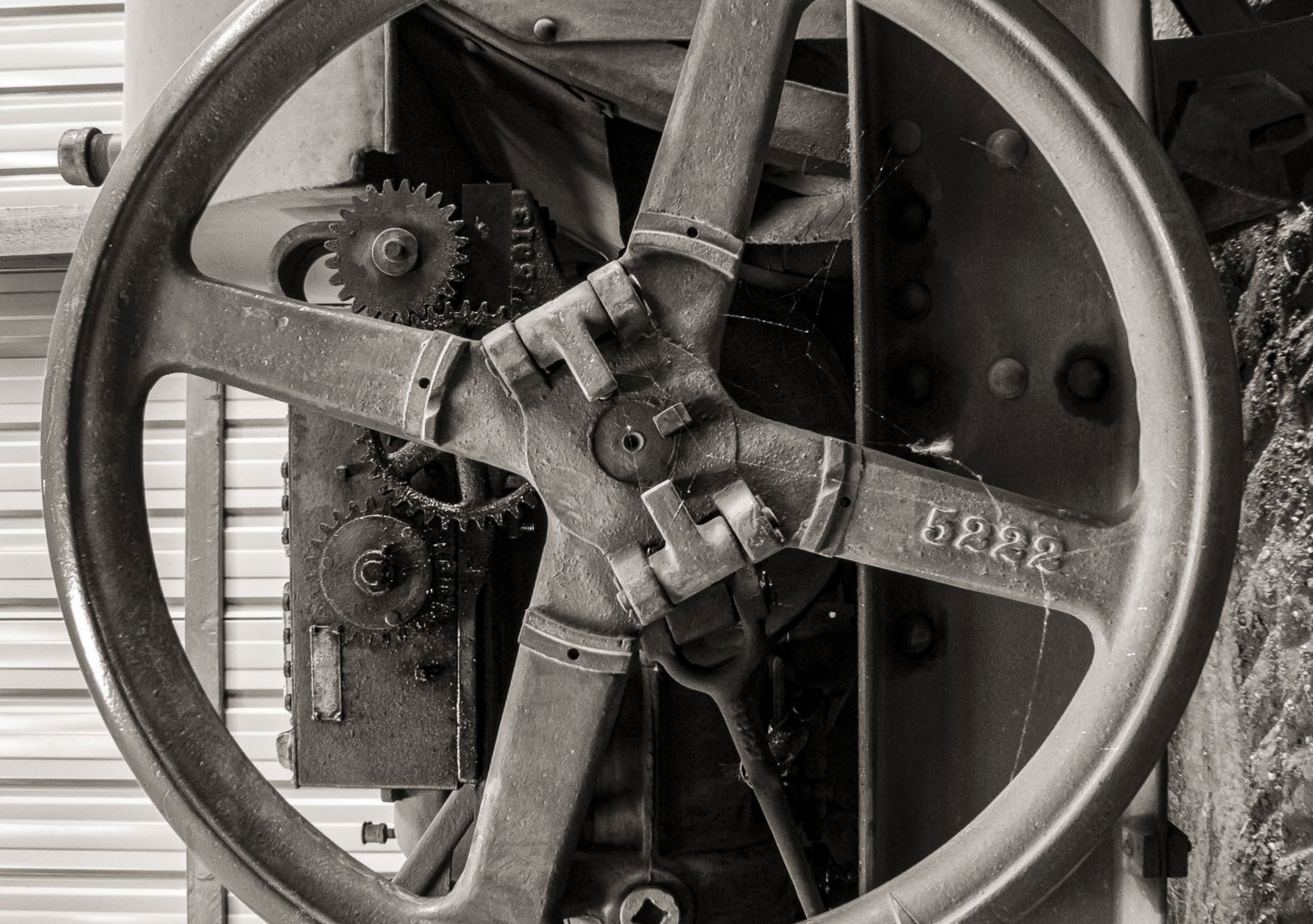


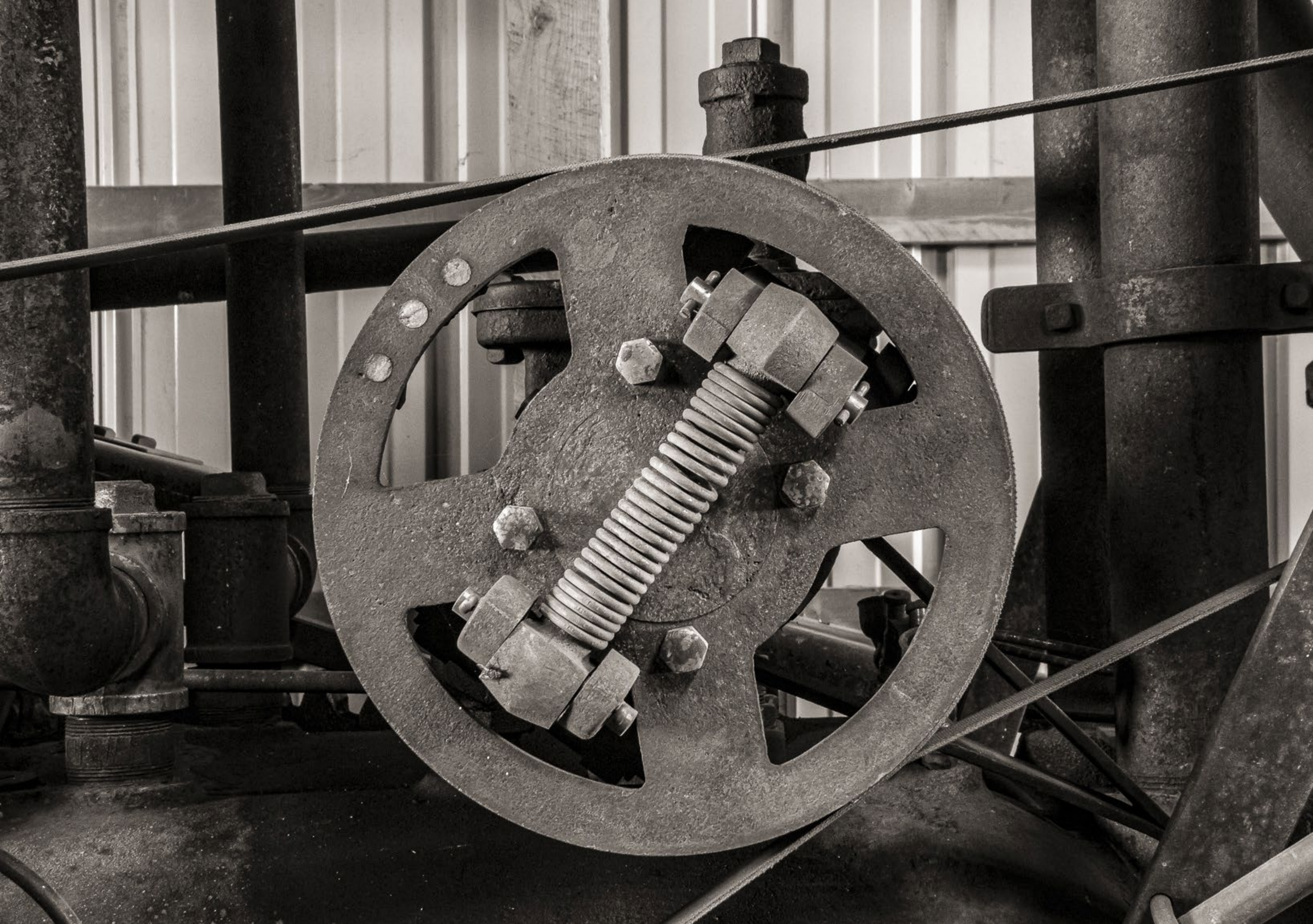




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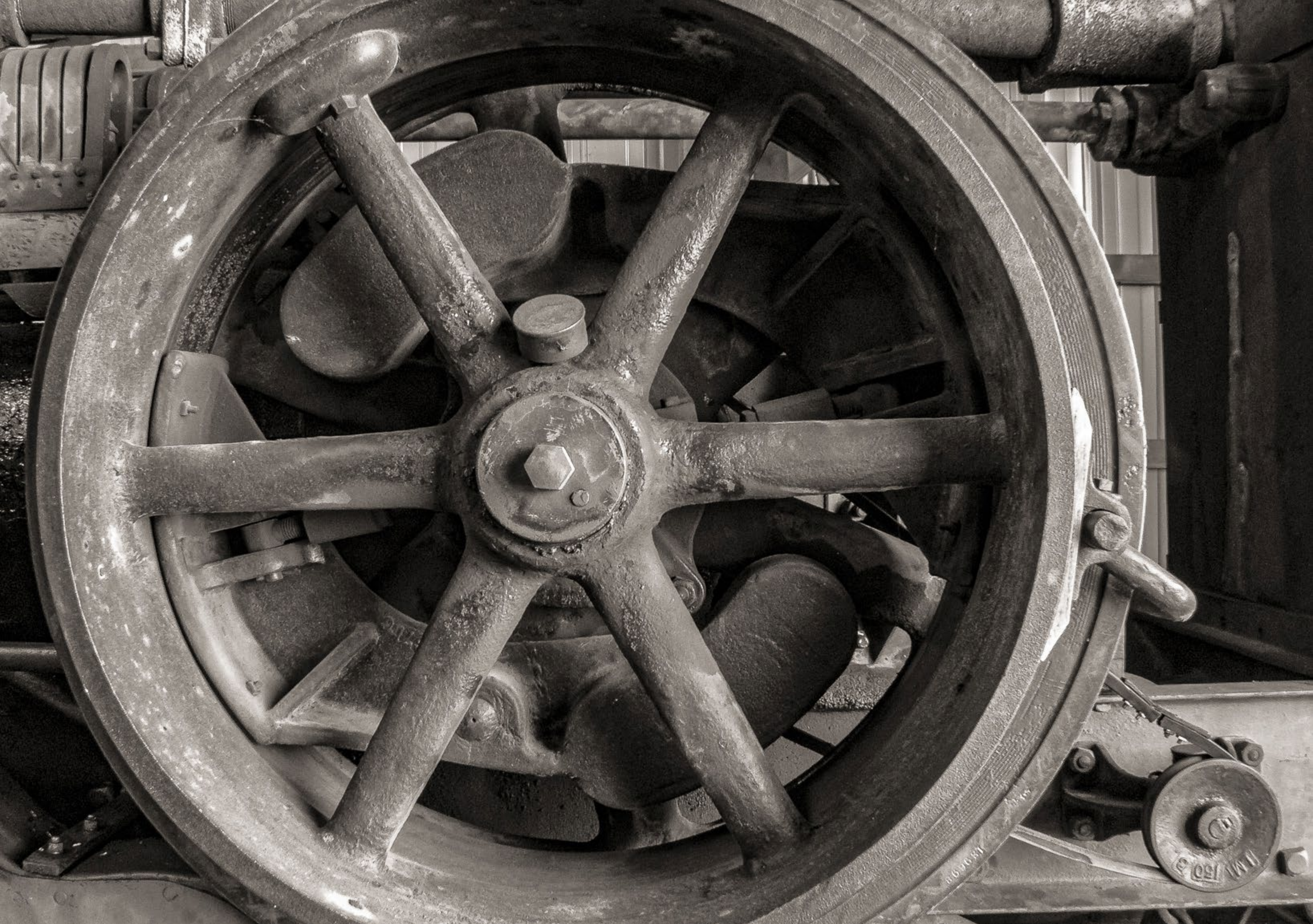




HARRIS - PARRER







That was a good car

Jack's Grandpa was from the generation where nothing was ever thrown away. Use it up, wear it out, save it for spare parts and with the parts that are left after that, you can repair something else. Uncle Fred got the rear axle for a firewood trailer, the windshield went into a cold frame greenhouse for Aunt Sally, and Jack put the door windows on the barn wall behind the work bench.

Jack's Grandpa never lived long enough to use up all the parts on that old coupe, so it's still sitting out behind the barn waiting to donate some parts to another repair.



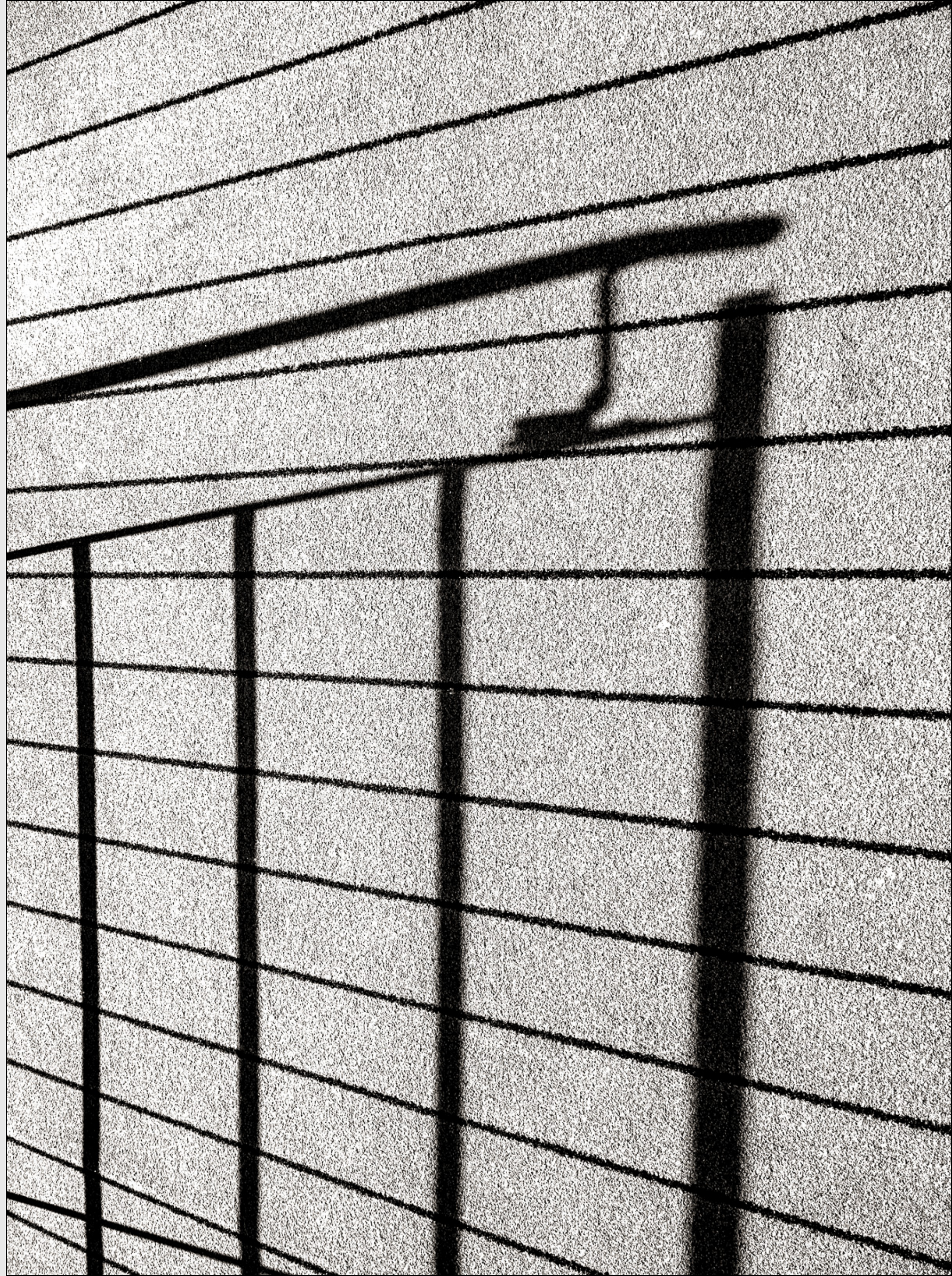
A black and white photograph of a textured surface, possibly a wall or a piece of fabric, with strong, dark shadows cast across it. The shadows create a grid-like pattern, with some lines being straight and others slightly curved. The overall effect is one of depth and contrast.

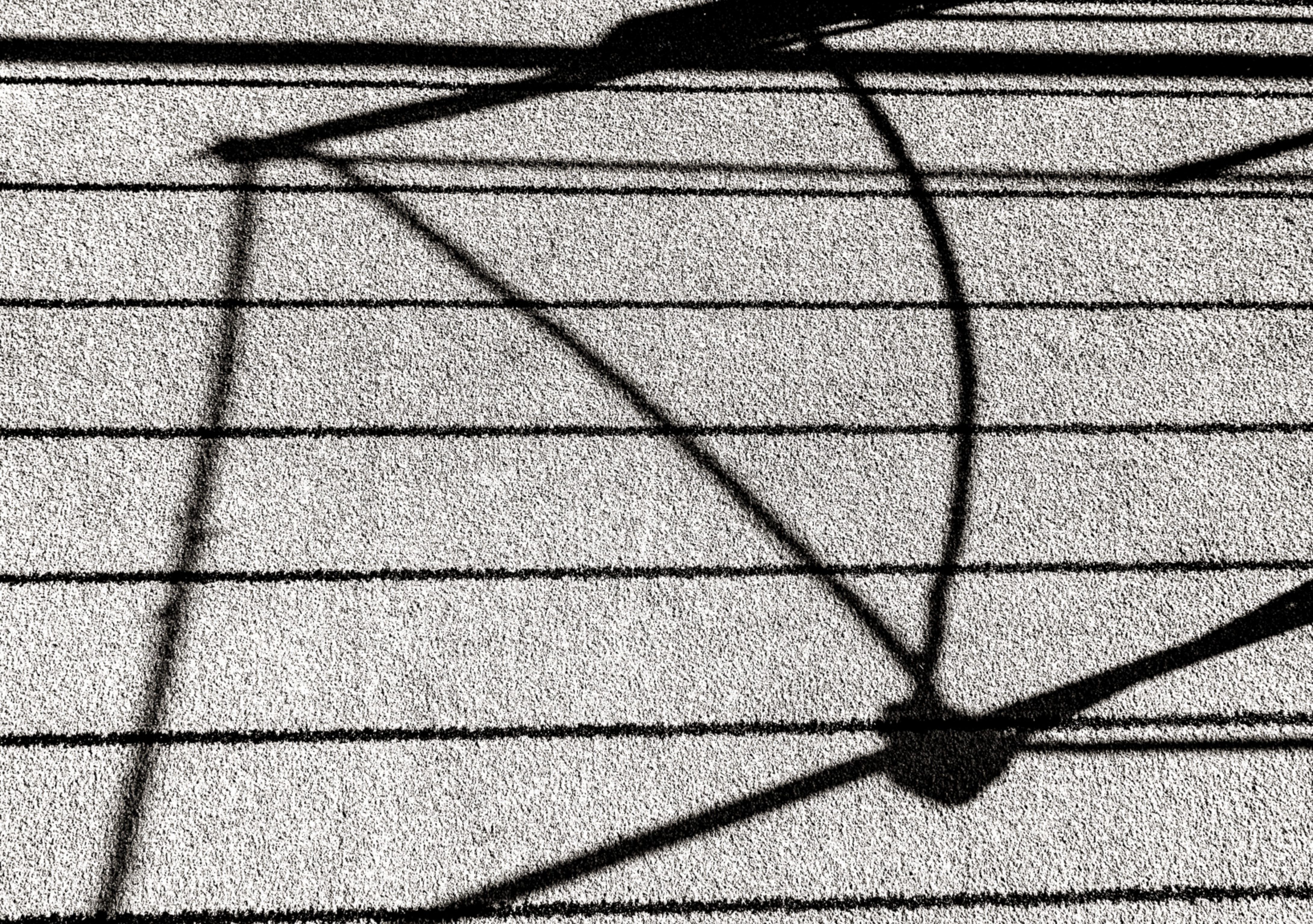
Music of the Shadows

Music of the Shadows

“One should not only photograph things for what they are but for what else they are.” – Minor White

Music and photography are very closely intertwined. Most photographers I have met love music of all types. Some are quite accomplished as musicians. We often describe photographs with musical analogies. These shadows reminded me of sheet music and my attempts to learn the piano. I was excused from elementary school on Thursday mornings for a half hour so I could receive a piano lesson from Sister Philomena and her wooden ruler.















The citizens of Divide County got together and created a typical small farming town by moving buildings (yes, buildings) and old farm equipment to a single location just outside of town. There is an entire building devoted to storing workable steam powered tractors. I'm standing next to a Hart Parr thirty horsepower steam driven tractor. Old steam tractors are really, really big.

If you want to see what a farm town of the early twentieth century looked like, Pioneer Village in Crosby, North Dakota is the place to go.

A Few Closing Words

When the Water is Gone

The Tidal Flats of Willapa Bay are really two worlds. At high tide the sloughs are filled and it looks one way. At low tide the sloughs look much different. It's a photographic twofer. For me, the obvious photographs came with high tide in the folio [Time and Tide](#). This year I went back to the original files and found beauty when the water is gone.

Circular Logic

Near the end of the day we came up with the idea to create photographs with nothing but circles. Nature's perfect shape is difficult to photograph in a rectangular format. It was an end of the day challenge that made photography fun. Given a simple premise and a rule to use, creativity was given a boost. Once you establish some ground rules, photography becomes a game to play.

Music of the Shadows

The quote from Minor White is one of my favorites. The shadows were photographed on a River Cruise of the Danube. I saw these great shadows played out against the walking deck and began to play a visual game making some "design" photos. A couple of months ago I revisited these images and in a bout of over enthusiasm I rotated one of the images 90 degrees too far. I thought the lines looked like a musical staff. I started to play with the images to see what would happen. I thought of music and photography and the whole little project came together.

Thanks, Minor.



Joe Lipka has shared his vision since he began photographing.

In the last thirty years, his photographs have appeared in over one hundred juried exhibitions, more than twenty solo exhibitions and have been printed in both *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.

COLOPHON

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Joe Lipka

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