



# THE LIPKA JOURNAL

PHOTOGRAPHS / STORIES / OBSERVATIONS

JOE LIPKA

NOVEMBER 2025



# WELCOME TO THE JOURNAL NOVEMBER 2025



We're working with interiors this month. We look for the hidden complexity inside the root system of trees, we revel in the window light illuminating the inside of an old building and finally we ponder our own mortality represented by the ruins of an old plantation as its materials return to the earth.

The Light Through a Window project is part of the More Memories than Dreams, a long-term retrospective project. It's a long-term project because I have been photographing for more than fifty years and I'm reaching the point where I evolved from single images to complete projects. It's fun to see the old film negatives reworked into the digital images we see on computer screens.



A black and white photograph of a forest floor. The ground is covered with a dense network of exposed tree roots, some thick and gnarled, others thin and delicate. The roots are intertwined with a layer of dry leaves, pine needles, and small twigs. The lighting creates strong shadows, highlighting the textures of the wood and the forest floor. The overall scene conveys a sense of hidden complexity and natural growth.

Hidden Complexity

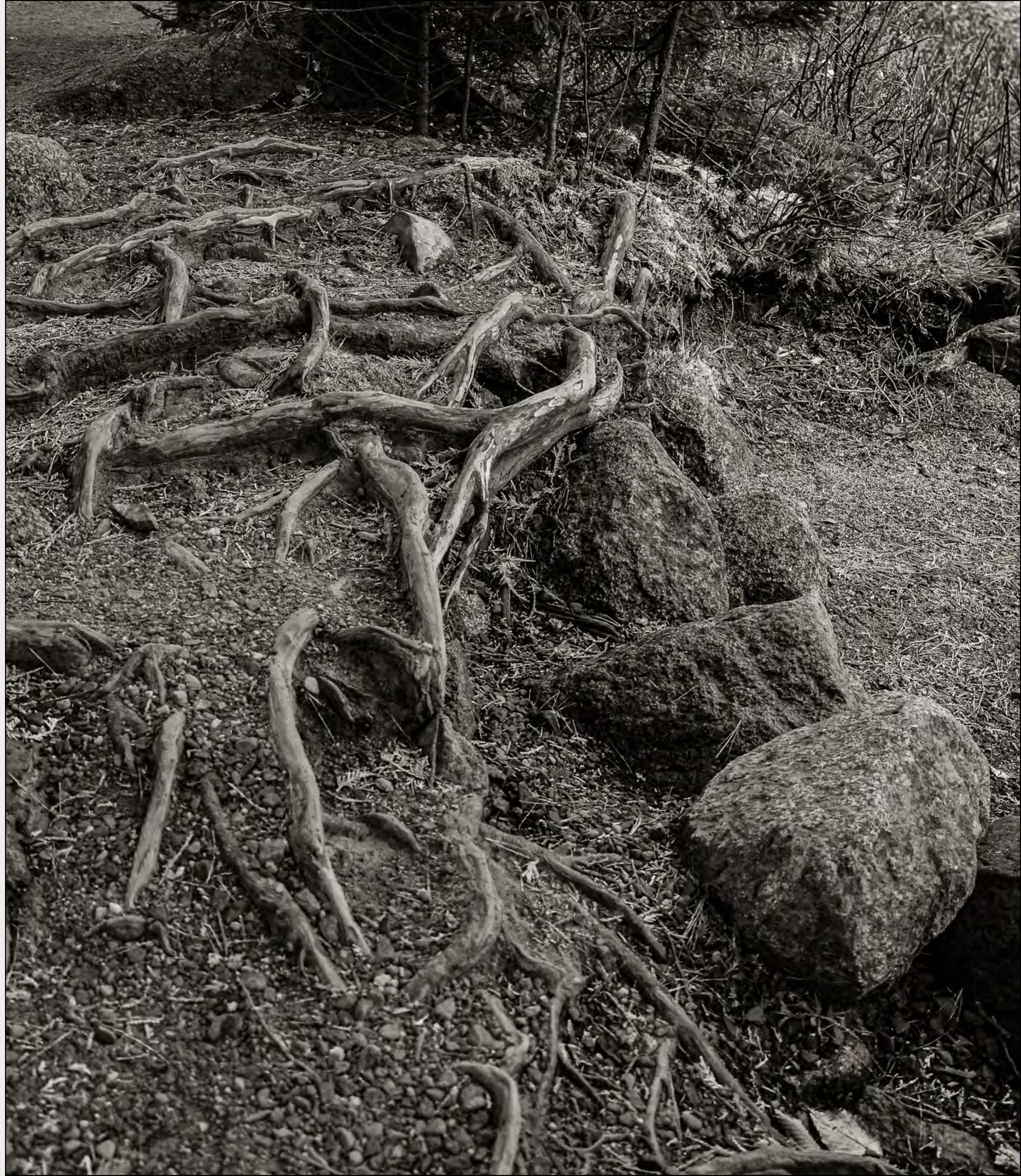


## Hidden Complexity

Everyone loves tree photographs. There is something noble about such large living things. We are amazed at the size of the sequoias, marvel at the age of the bristlecone pines and bring the symmetry of the Christmas Tree into our homes each year.

We look at the part of the trees above the ground as being the symmetric design of nature. Brush away the surface dirt and go below ground to look at the roots of the beautiful symmetric tree and we see the convoluted, messy, and complex system of roots needed to keep the tree alive. There are two lives here. The beauty and symmetry of the tree above ground and the hidden complexity of the roots.

We are not alone in this duality of inner and outer appearances. Our calm exterior demeanor often hides the complex, convoluted truths of our inner self.







































## A Mostly True Story

Is that Willam's boat entering the bay? I can't quite make it out yet, my eyes can't see as well as they used to. I worry so much when he goes out to sea. He tells me, "Momma, don't worry, I know how to handle my boat." But I still worry about him. It's what Momma's do.





Light Through a Window



## Light Through a Window

Photography in the Ark has been made possible because of unlocked doors and the kindness of dancers who could understand why someone would want to make photographs of an empty space. One time a dancer asked me why I wanted to photograph in the Ark. In attempting to answer their question in a manner better grasped, I answered with a question, "Have you ever heard some music that made you want to dance? Well, the light coming through the windows in this building is my music." He understood and let me into the building.















































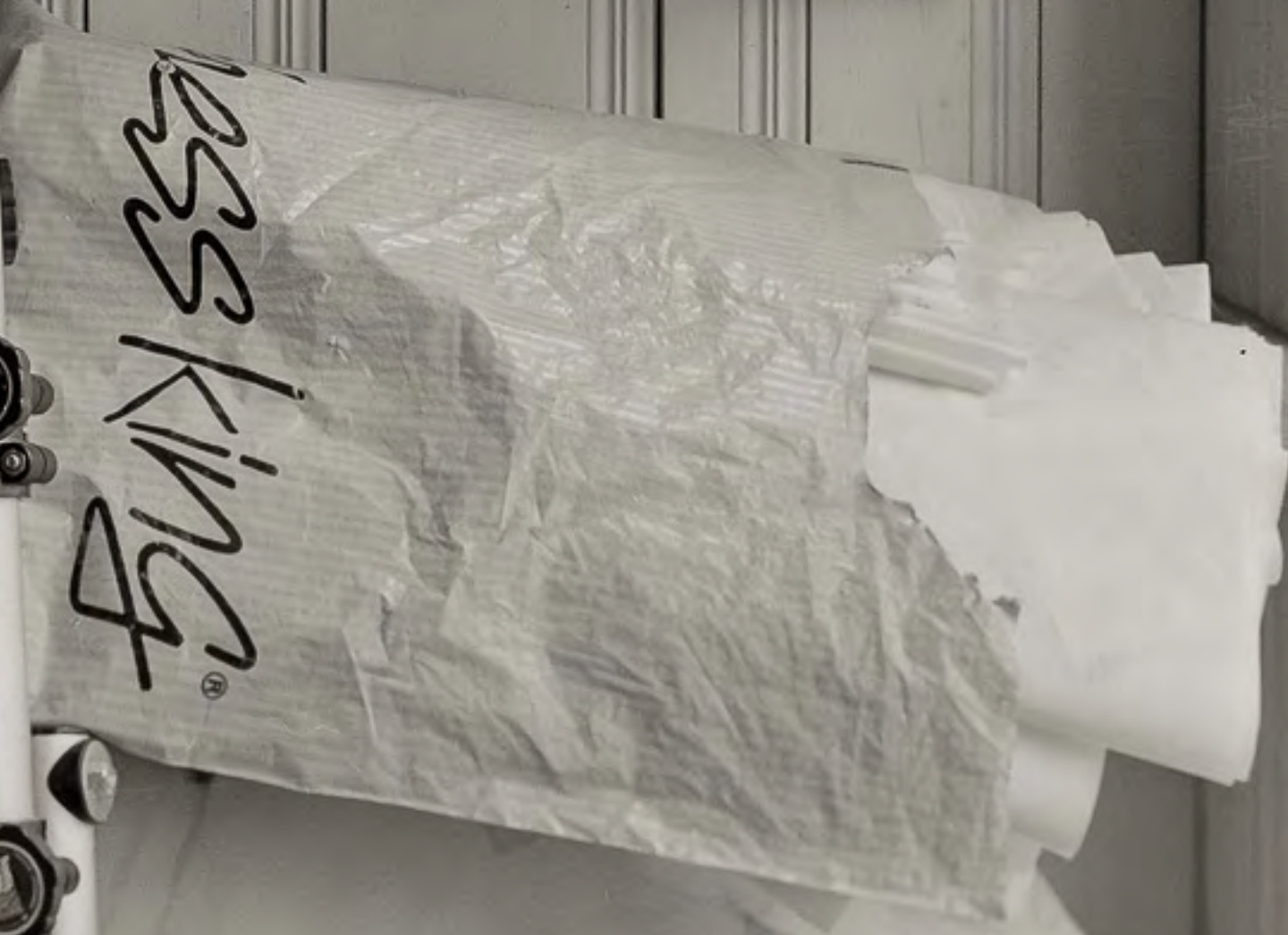
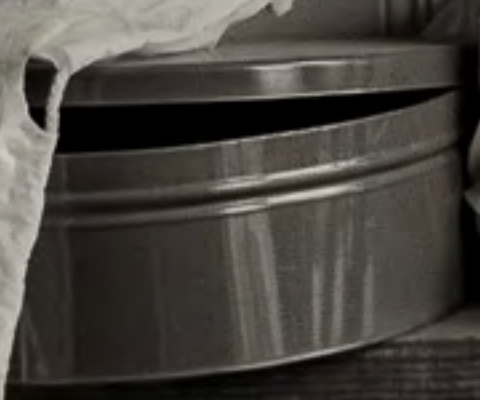




















This wasn't going to end well.

Prologue: A photo and six words.





Thou Shalt Return



## Thou Shalt Return

It takes energy to maintain man made objects. Nature wants to return everything to its lowest energy state. Iron rusts, Ice melts and natural materials are worn down, decay and eventually return to the earth. What's left of this plantation home is returning to the elements of sand and calcium with the help of rain and wind.

On Ash Wednesday the words "to dust thou shalt return" are a reminder that we also will be returning to our elemental form as we pass from this life.



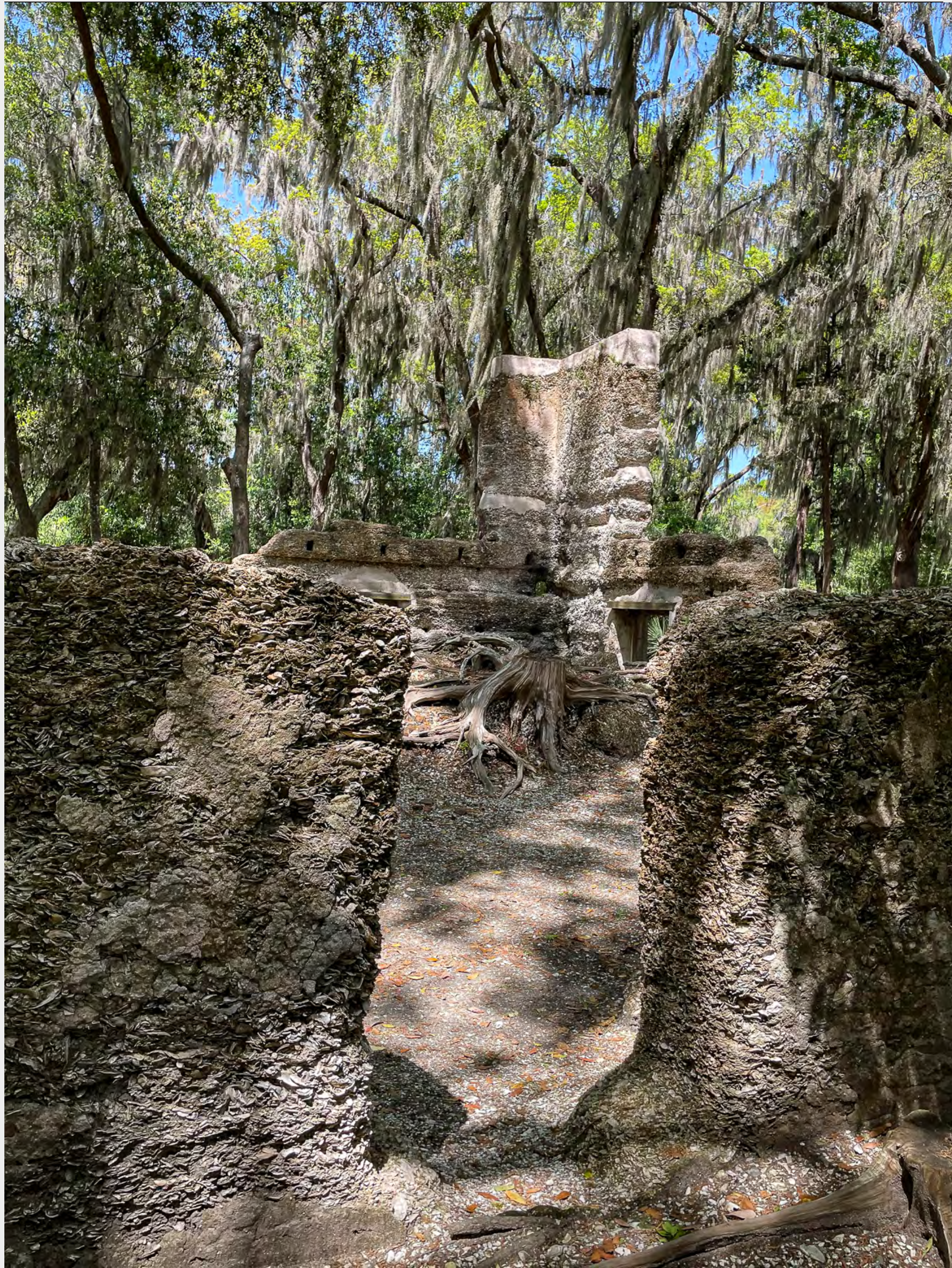
































## Postcard from the Creative Journey

Bruce,

"No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man," so said Heraclitus.

Well Bruce, I did more than step in that river, I jumped in and splashed around and loved every minute of it. I "digitally remastered" a bunch of 5x7 film negatives for the More Memories Than Dreams Project and the improvement was astounding. I was able to digitally repair damaged negatives (the bane of large format photographers) to increase the number and quality of images in this on-line presentation.

Don't be afraid to jump in that river again. Come on in, the water's fine.

**JOE**



Bruce Wayne

1007 Mountain Drive

Gotham, USA



# A FEW WORDS AT THE END OF THE JOURNAL



## Hidden Complexity

I was out exploring one of the lakes in Acadia National Park and very nearly tripped several times because I was looking for landscape photographs. When I looked down to see what was doing its best to try and kill me, I noticed these complex roots. Lots of people hiking the lakeside trails had worn away the dirt to expose the roots of the trees. I decided I had enough landscape photographs and went to work on these fascinating root structures.



## Light Through a Window

When I moved to North Carolina I found a photography group that met on The Duke University Campus. It was there I fell in love with "The Ark," the original University gymnasium. It earned its nickname by having a mezzanine track that was wide enough for just two people. The huge windows lit the interior space in the most wonderful way. I visited the Ark many times over a few years, always hoping that someone forgot to lock the door so I could photograph.

The More Memories Than Dreams Retrospective continues with the first project made for this website.



## Thou Shalt Return

Set way back among the pines and live oaks of Hilton Head Island is what's left of an early plantation home. Lime, from burnt oyster shells was combined with water, sand, ash and more broken oyster shells to make a house. Without sufficient energy and maintenance, the walls would eventually decompose and return to their component parts. This visit and photography happened in the spring, and the words of Ash Wednesday were still in my mind.





Joe Lipka has shared his vision since he began photographing.

In the last forty years, his photographs have appeared in over one hundred and twenty juried exhibitions, and twenty five solo exhibitions. His images have been published in *LensWork*, *Black & White Photography* (UK) and *F-Stop Magazines*. His recent book project, *Mostly True Stories*, was featured as a LensWork Bonus Edition Publication in February 2024.

His website [www.joelipkaphoto.com](http://www.joelipkaphoto.com) has continuously evolved since it was launched in 2004. His blog *Postcards from the Creative Journey*, published weekly since 2010, is now part of *The Lipka Journal*.

His newest blog, *The Daily Photograph*, has migrated to Instagram. Don't forget to follow him on this new platform.

## The Lipka Journal, November, 2025

*Joe Lipka*

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Web site: [www.joelipkaphoto.com](http://www.joelipkaphoto.com)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/dailyphoto7375](https://www.instagram.com/dailyphoto7375)

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