

American Mood is a stunning album of lyrical and nostalgic photographs by the award-winning photographer Robert Farber. Taking the idea of one artist's personal journey, both physical and spiritual, as a starting point, Farber has produced a collection that reflects the rich diversity of the life and landscape of America. From rural Montana to the Manhattan skyline at dawn; from a New Mexico cowboy to the abandoned lobby of a small-town mainstreet hotel; from an old-fashioned boxing ring to an old De Soto automobile in Maine—these textured and painterly images allow us a glimpse into the very heart and soul of America.

In addition to Farber's evocative images, a special section offers unique insights into Farber's working methods and techniques.

Robert Farber is one of the world's foremost photographers of landscape, fashion, and nudes. His work has been exhibited in the United States, Europe, and Japan, and he has lectured worldwide. *American Mood* is Farber's ninth book. His previous title, *Natural Beauty: Farber Nudes* (also published by Merrell), is an international bestseller.

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Robert Farber
American Mood

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Robert Farber American Mood

A Photographic Journey by Robert Farber



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GARAGE



American Mood

Introduction by Lee Sheridan

Photographic collections of America and Americana have been in widespread publication for decades. Most take a photojournalistic perspective, documenting life as it happens, at its most real. Variations on the theme exist, some going so far as to present a simultaneous aspect to its documentation. The reman in Des Moines rescues the child while the elderly woman in Tuskegee waters her plants and the truck driver in Austin heads out along the endless lonesome highway. In these instances the journey is coast to coast.

Robert Farber has spent his professional career as a very different kind of photographic scribe. Rather than recount in images, Farber paints in dreams. Be it the dying sun of a beachfront horizon or the elegant curve of a human form, the mood is frozen, and the emotion is made to endure.

What makes these captured moments all the more captivating is that they are not dreams but, in fact, reality.

We just didn't see it. Robert Farber did. So what then is Farber's variation on the theme of America? Like others before him, he has made the American journey. But here the journey is not in miles but in moods. It is entirely personal, entirely unique to his own experiences. The images, the dreams captured within these pages represent one person's voyage, almost entirely in solitude, not just across the fields of American landscapes but across the gamut of American experience.

There is no spatial organization within these pages. Our photographer, our storyteller, has chosen to provide us with an adventure that is more internal than external. This is a personal adventure, but it is, no less, a journey.

And what is a journey? Here we must look to the master of journey and myth, the late Joseph Campbell, who spent his life bringing to light the importance of story (or, in his terms, the Power of Myth) to human experience. To paraphrase Campbell's most essential teachings, the archetypal journey, be it spiritual or artistic, collective or individual, can be distilled to its four basic elements: Departing, Passing Through, Arriving, and Returning Home. The journey is made by a central being through whom all experience and emotions are channeled: the protagonist.

Farber has chosen to tell his tale using these ideas.

American Mood presents itself in four stages, representing our protagonist's journey of images and, consequently, a journey of moods:

Departure

These images reflect a restlessness, an overwhelming desire to escape the confines of what we know and to venture headfirst into the yet-to-be-known. The pages herein have the outward appearance of normalcy. The photographs are by no means unpleasant, just intrinsically familiar to our protagonist. These are moments of comfort, the kind that makes one, for lack of a better word, uncomfortable.

The Passage Through

Here our protagonist discovers all that goes on around him as he ventures toward his destination. There is an innocence to these pages. A feeling of what was and what might have been. Some of these images find our protagonist as an impartial observer, making visual notations but always maintaining his distance. Others reveal him as a willing participant, one who not only captures a moment but directly influences it, and in doing so, forever alters it.

Arrival

Our protagonist has found what he was looking for. Or has he? In this section, perhaps the most aggressive and breathtaking, we come to the realization that what awaits at the destination both exceeds and falls short of our expectations, but never meets them precisely. The world is new here, and the moments surreal. There is discovery in these images. There is fascination in these moments. This is the farthest from home our protagonist has been, once again not in miles but in moods. These are feelings never before felt; dreams never before dreamed.

Return

Our protagonist has come to a realization that lies at the heart of all human existence: that the journey is within, not without. The restlessness felt at the beginning of our journey was symptomatic not of something lacking in our surroundings, but rather in ourselves. This was a restlessness that, in truth, could only have been assuaged by self-discovery. By the realization that moods dictate the world around us, not the other way around. There is a wisdom to these images, a self-assuredness that did not exist before. There is both promise for the future and acceptance of the past. Our protagonist has finally, and truly, arrived. These images tell a great many stories, each picture offering far more than the requisite one thousand words. But there is something that will not be told in these pages; a question that will remain unanswered. Who, exactly, is the protagonist? Is it Robert Farber, our storyteller who has captured these moods and transformed them into images? Is it each of us, as individuals, who have discovered these images and will transform them back into moods in our own unique way?

That is your own journey to make.



Departure

A longing

A desire to take flight

A rebellion against the status quo

Leaving behind the staid the familiar

bartering for the future with only the past as compensation

The images here represent the beginning the starting point from which the
journey of *American Mood* commences

From this point forth,

only one thing is certain:

uncertainty.

Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7





Plate 9





Plate 10

Plate 11





Plate 12

Plate 13



Plate 14





Plate 15

Plate 16



Plate 17



Plate 18



Plate 19





Plate 21





Plate 22

Plate 23



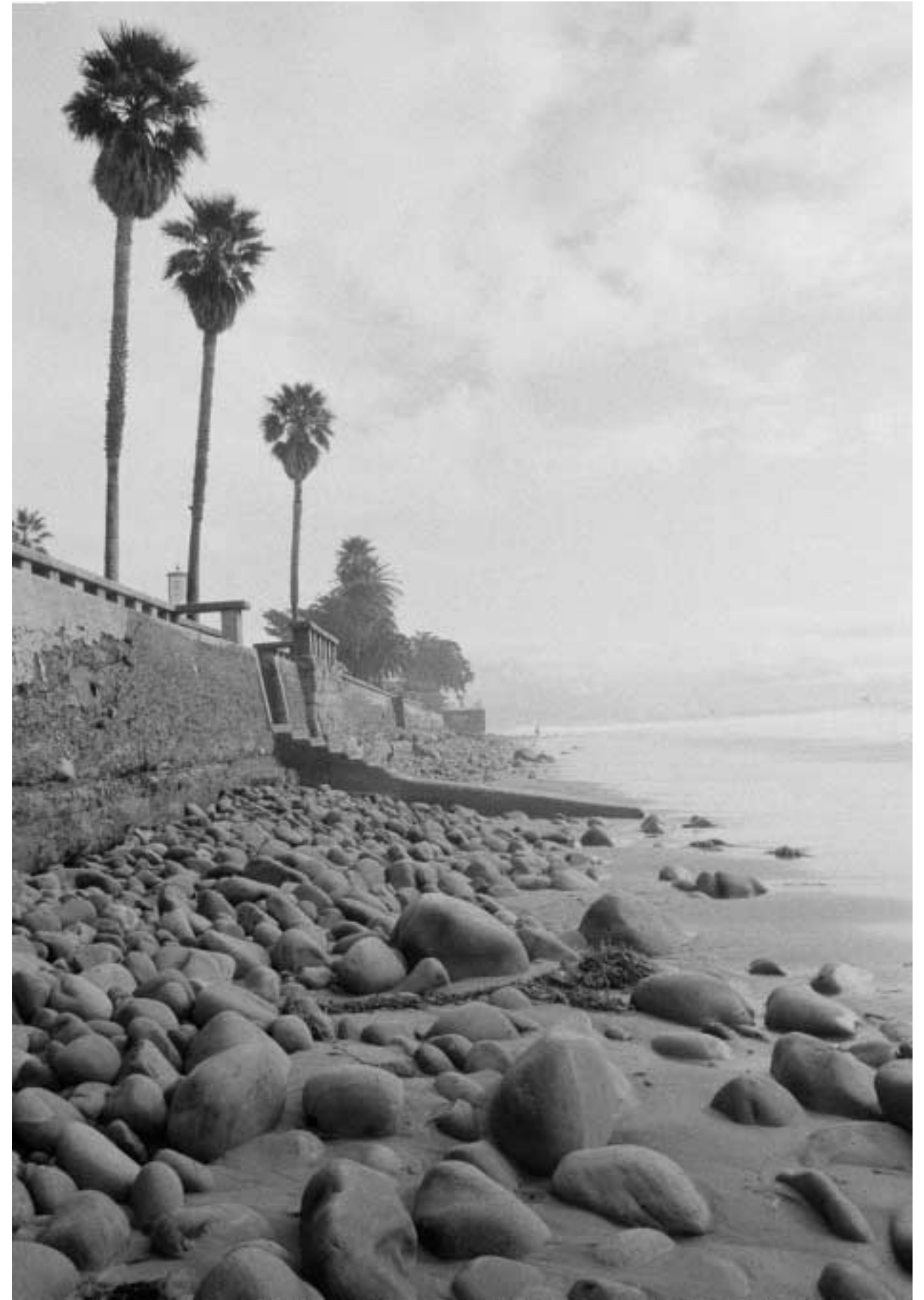
Plate 24







Plate 27



The Passage Through

Children at play

A gentleman and his plow A horizon in transition

Our journey is well under way There is experience in every shadow
significance in every rainfall mystery in every disappearing roadway

Colors have new implications Shapes have new meaning

The lens looks farther ahead

and deeper within

but never, ever looks back.

Plate 28



Plate 29

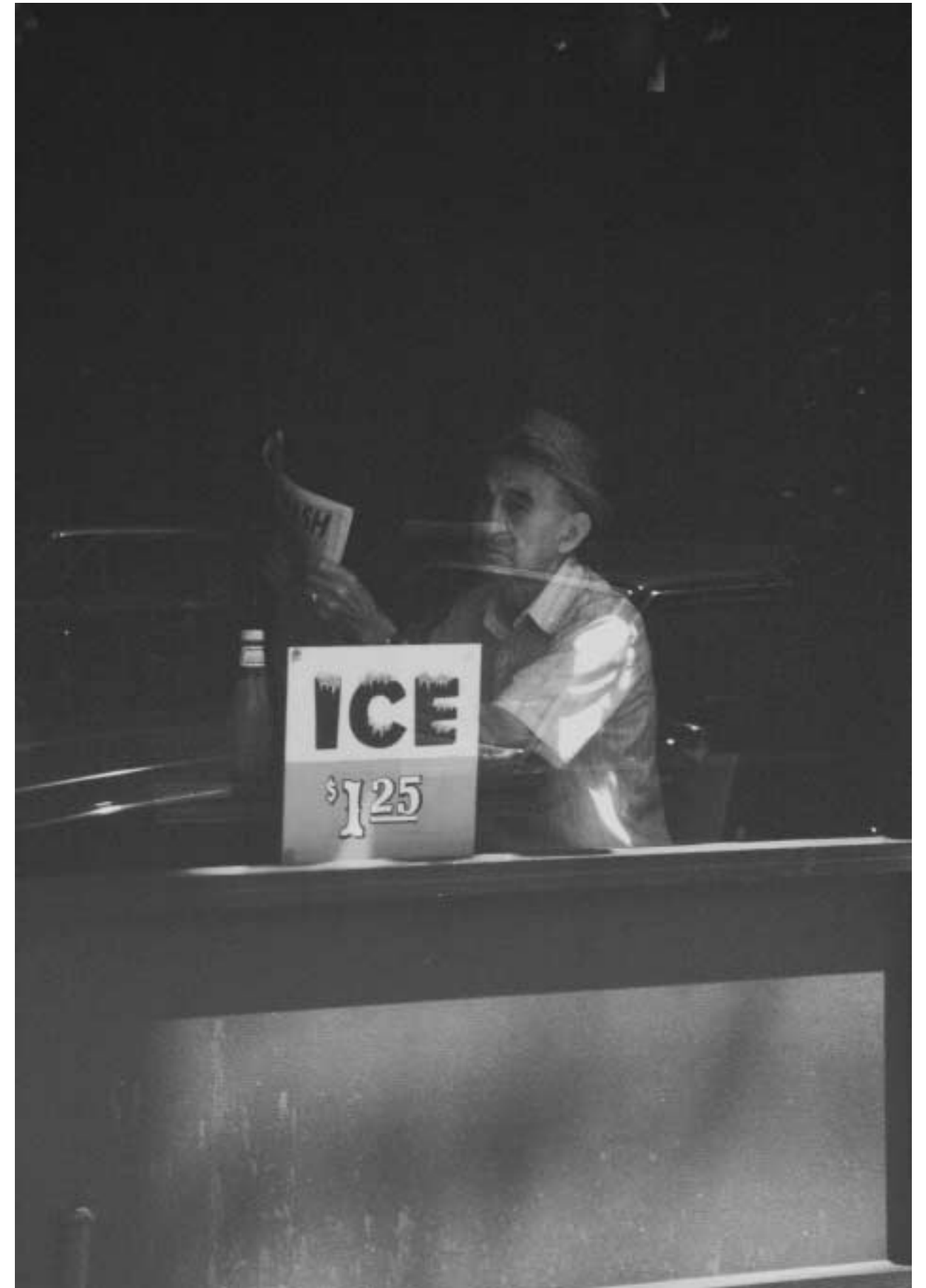


Plate 30



Plate 31



Plate 32



Plate 33



Plate 34



Plate 35





Plate 37



Plate 38



Plate 39



Plate 40



Plate 41





Plate 42

Plate 43



Plate 44



Plate 45





Plate 46

Plate 47





Plate 48

Plate 49



Plate 50





Plate 51

Arrival

The end of things

where answers are far outweighed by greater questions

Foreign is the mood that awaits here

a path never before traversed a sense of wonder before a new world

The lens is now a stranger capturing images that betray its own fascination

And yet the fulfillment that was sought is not to be found here

Only the realization that this so-called arrival is little more

than the beginning of a far greater journey

yet to come.



Plate 53





Plate 54

Plate 55



Plate 56

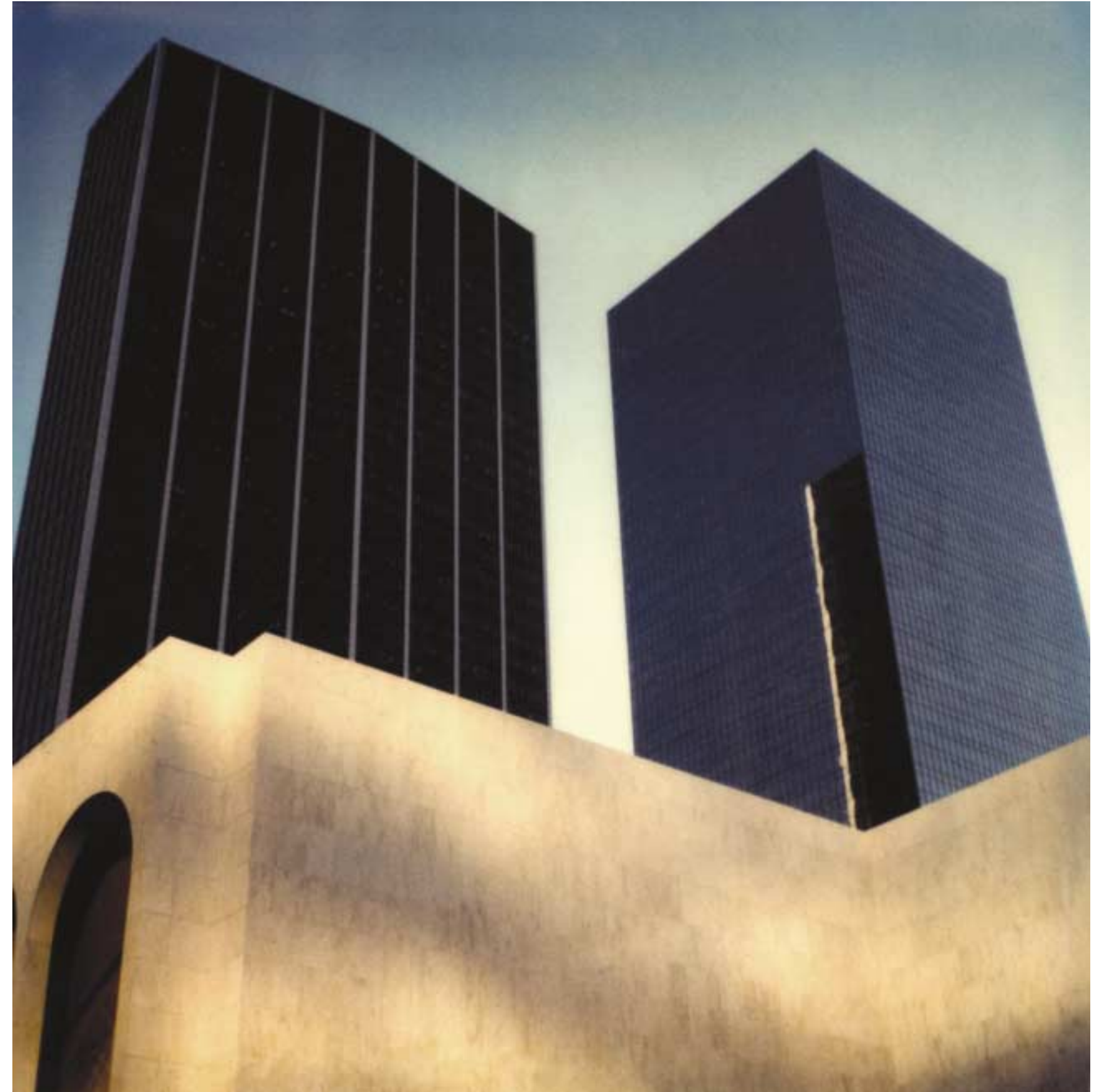
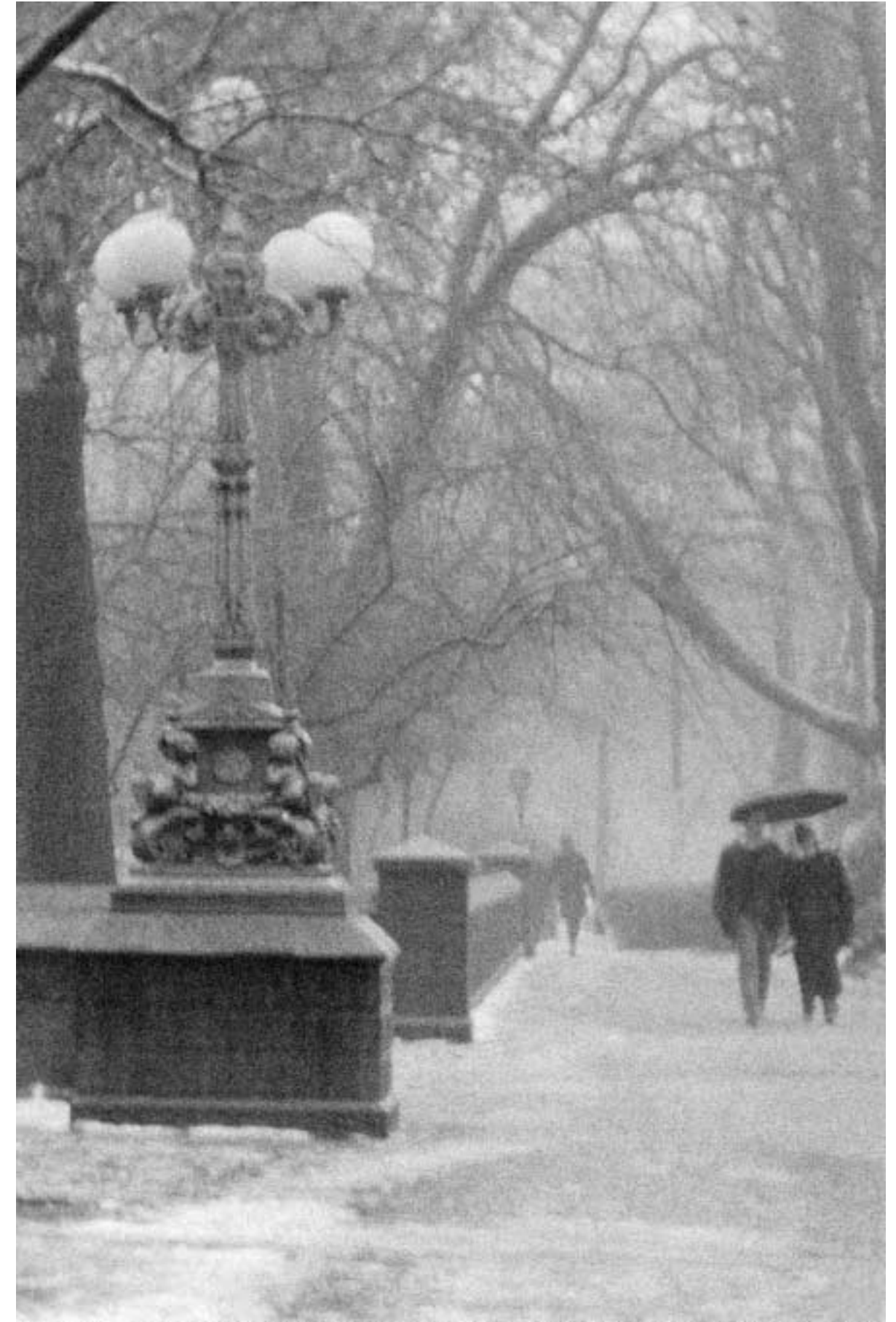




Plate 57

Plate 58



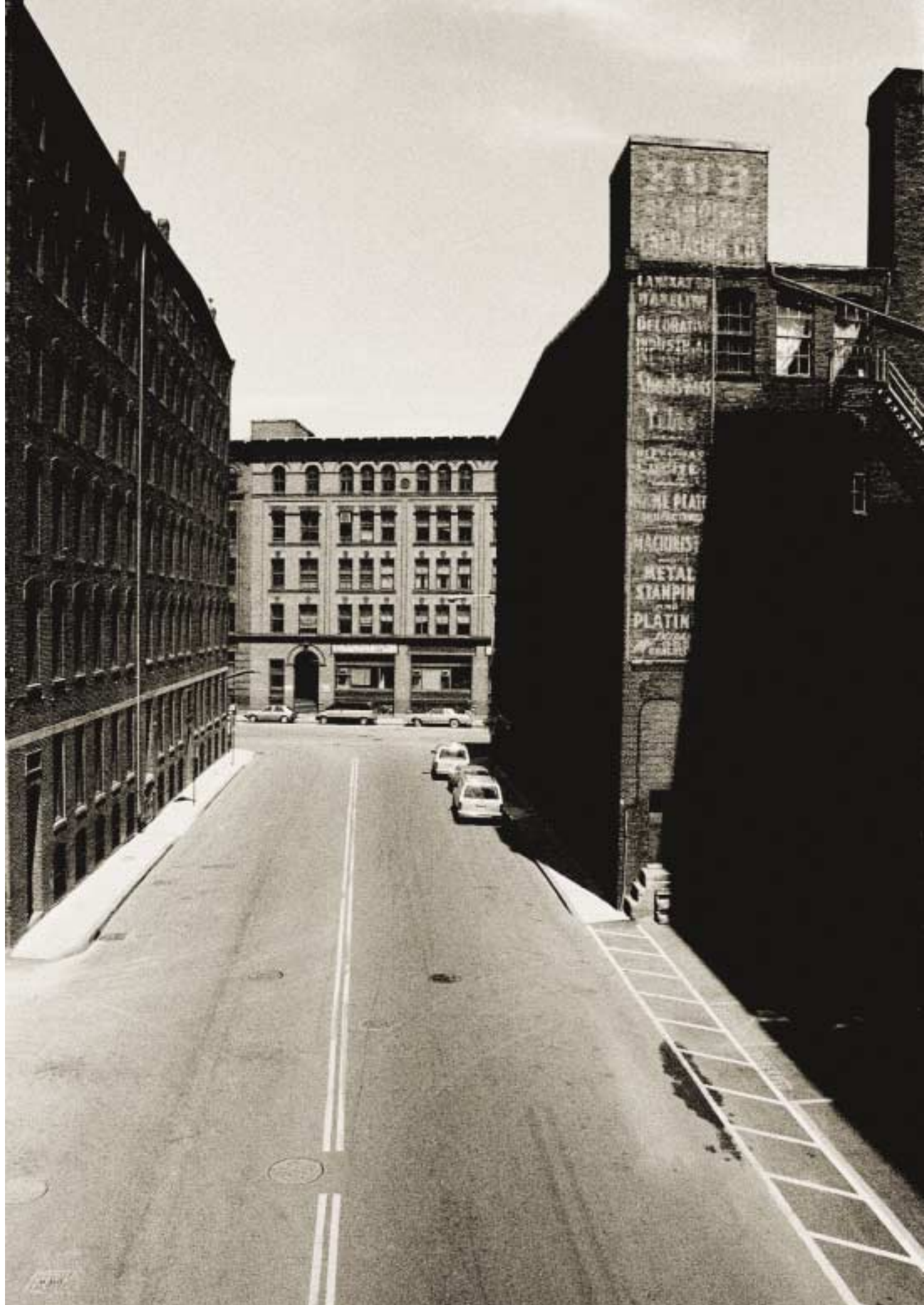


Plate 59

Plate 60

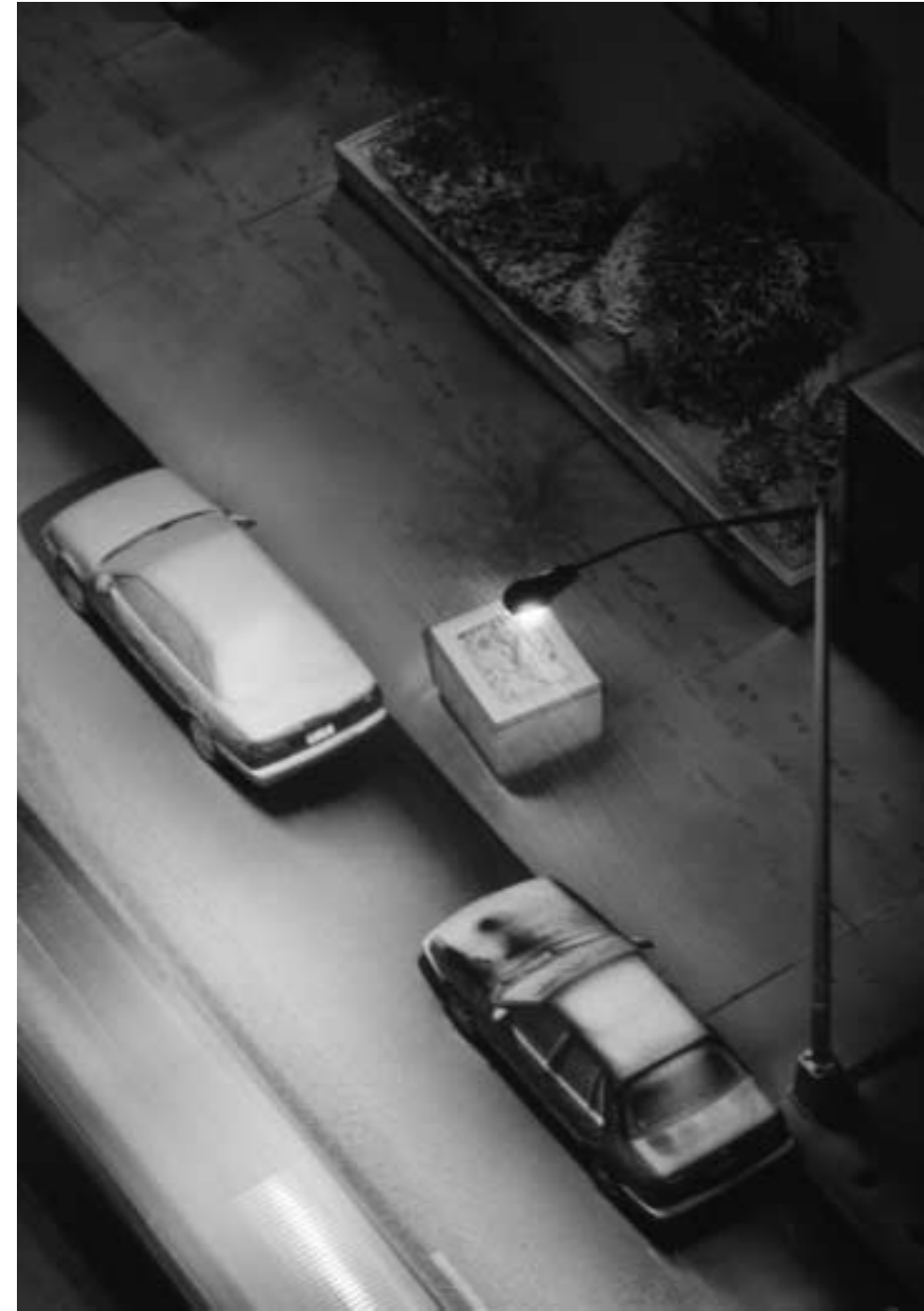


Plate 61



Plate 62



Plate 63



Plate 64





Plate 66



Plate 67



Plate 68





Plate 69

Plate 70



Plate 71



Plate 72





Plate 74



Return

And finally
the images of true discovery
not of new surroundings, but of new emotions
The sights may be familiar, but the vantage point has changed
infused with both a reinvigoration and a newfound serenity
The journey, like life itself, has come full circle
Back to the starting point, but light years from the beginning
The road less traveled and the never-ending highway have merged
and created a route to the
American Mood.

Plate 75

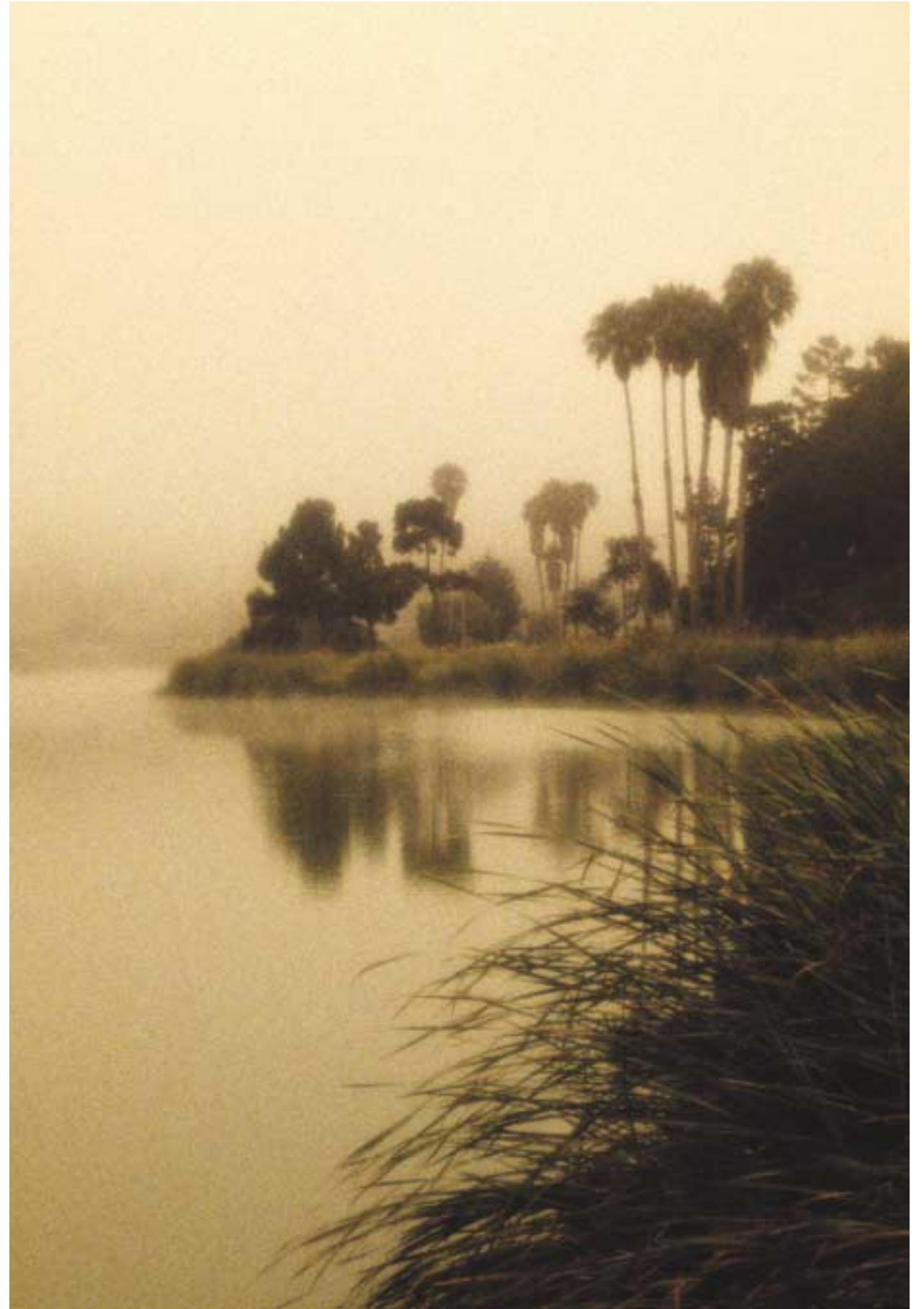


Plate 76



Plate 77



Plate 78



Plate 79



Plate 80





Plate 82



Plate 83





Plate 84



Plate 86



Plate 87









Plate 90

Technical Notes

In the technical notes that accompany the thumbnail of each image, I have been keen to avoid repetition, so please refer to the Working Methods on page 207 for an overview of the film and equipment I use.



1. White Farm +pickup
New England, 1984.
The feeling I get from this white clapboard farm, with a typical American Chevy pickup truck peeking, out says it all for me. I shot it on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



2. Garage
Greenwich Village, New York City, 1985.
Early morning in NYC. A neon sign that feels so American. Shot on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film.



3. Montana Road,
Prey, Montana, 1998.
I was traveling through Montana, heading I didn't know where, when I found myself on this road, under a dramatic sky. Shot on 35 mm 1000 ISO chrome film with a sepia and diffusion filter.



4. Montana farm
Kalispell, Montana, 1995.
This road on a Montana farm was shot using a short focal length on a 28-135 mm zoom lens.



5. The Plains
Kansas, 2001.
Traveling from LA to Dodge City, Kansas, I saw this light across the Kansas plains. Shot on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film.



6. Cowboy NM
New Mexico, 1998.
A cowboy's time of thought. Shot on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film.



7. Small town
Arizona 2001.
In Arizona I found this small village. Combining the dramatic sky and the architecture, I was able to capture the feeling I was after by using the shortest focal length on the 28-135 mm zoom lens, along with 1000 ISO chrome film.



8. railingX
Pennsylvania, 2001.
I shot this old train using a Minox 8 x 11 mm miniature camera and 100 ISO film. I sepia-toned the image in Photoshop CS.



9. De Soto Rockport Maine
Rockport, Maine, 1981.
It was the summer of 1981 when I woke up early on a foggy morning to see this old De Soto sitting there. Shot on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film and sepia-toned in Photoshop CS.



10. Coke
Texas, 2003.
In a small Texas town I found this weathered classic Coca-Cola sign painted on the side of a building. I shot it digitally, as a raw file, on a Canon IDS.



11. 99900-19 (café table)
New York City, 2002.
Even though this was shot in New York City, the feeling is of the Midwest in the 1950s. I used a Minox 8x11 mm camera and 400 ISO black-and-white film.



12. Red chair Gleason
Brooklyn, New York City, 2000.
I was looking for old boxing rings in New York and was excited by what I was able to capture at Gleason's in Brooklyn, a famous old gym. This red chair was sitting so beautifully in the natural daylight.



13. Rays and Billiards
New York City, 1984.
This great old billiard hall, on East 14th Street in Manhattan, has since been torn down. Here it is complemented by a famous New York pizza parlor's delivery bike. What a nostalgic combination. Shot on 35 mm 1000 ISO chrome film.



14. Amish School house
Route 741, Pennsylvania, 2001.
Exploring the Amish country is like stepping back into early 1900s America. I tried to capture the mood of this school house in a composition that emphasized the graphic quality of the fence. I used a Minox 8 x 11 camera and 400 ISO film.



15. Railroad yard.
Midwest 1986.
I'm not exactly sure where I was here: sometimes I would just roam, looking for images that grabbed me. These railroad yards meant a lot to me. Shot on 1000 ISO chrome film.



16. Face in the Window

New York City, 2000.
I was walking on the Upper East Side when I shot this, using 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film.



17. Light Fixtures

Chatham, New Jersey, 1973.
In my earlier days of looking to discover America, I explored an old convent, where I found this light fixture sitting in the beautiful soft light. I remembered that exactly the same fixture had hung in my grammar school classroom. Shot on old 35 mm Kodak Ektachrome film rated at 160 ISO and pushed two stops.



18. Chair at Window

Del Rey Beach, Florida, 1994.
The original Colony Hotel was typical of Florida in the early 1900s. Then it was renovated to reflect the look of the 1950s, which is what I have captured here. The place has now been completely updated. Too bad. I shot it on 35 mm Agfa Scala black-and-white transparency film.



19. White light88

Calistoga, California, 1988.
I loved the white-on-white look of the great old spa at Indian Springs. This composition of light and white tries to capture the essence of a bygone America. I used 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



20. NY dogs

New York City, 2001.
A rainy day on the corner of 5th Avenue and 59th Street, shot on 100 ISO black-and-white negative film with a Minox 8 x 11.



21. 99900~25 (walking with Umbrella)

New York City, 2001.
This was shot on 57th Street with a Minox 8 x 11 miniature camera and 400 ISO black-and-white negative film. When people observe you shooting them with a camera they don't take you seriously.



22. NY Ladies

Midtown Manhattan, 2001.
A semi-abstract view of ladies walking briskly past my lens has a feeling of New York of the past, especially because of the outfit of the lady in the foreground. This is a wide-angle shot taken with a 28-135 mm zoom lens.



23. Seated @ Met

New York City, 1988.
This is one of three images in this book shot at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, all inspired by the art or the people. I used 35 mm recording film at 1/6000 second.



24. Rabbi

New York City, 1976.
This rabbi stopped by my loft to solicit a donation for his synagogue. I was happy to contribute, and he was happy that I did. Shot on 35 mm black-and-white negative film in natural light.



25. NY Buildings

New York City, 2001.
The mood I captured here was enhanced by the use of a Minox 8 x 11 camera and 400 ISO film. I sepia-toned the black-and-white image in Photoshop CS.



26. Window shopping

New York City, 2000.
This shot was taken on my walk on the Upper East Side on the same day I photographed the face in the window (Plate 16, page 45). Here also I used 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film.



27. Santa Barbara Sea Wall

Montecito, California, 1995.
I was lucky enough to have a home just yards down the beach from this classic California beach club. The film was 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative.



28. Night Diner

One fall evening I was traveling through western Massachusetts when I saw what I believe is one of the great structures that typify America: the stainless-steel diner. I didn't even leave my car to take this: I just shot through the windshield.



30. 2 Cowboys

Southwest Texas, 1987.
Seated in the row in front of me at a cattle auction in Texas were these two ranchers. I was able to compose the image without leaving my seat. I shot it on 35 mm black-and-white negative film, sepia-toned in Photoshop CS.



31. corr889_9430 (Texas Cinema)

Central Texas, 2003.
Passing through a small Texas town, I found this abandoned cinema, which I shot digitally on a Canon 1DS, creating a raw file.



32. Texas Farm

Texas, 2003.
I took this shot in the Texas plains, using a 28-135 mm zoom lens on a Canon 1DS digital camera.



33. OLD CHURCH,

Idaho, 1992.
Traveling down a back road about fifty miles from Sun Valley, I found this abandoned church. Shot on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film, using a polarizing filter with a slight diffusion effect.



34. Scale

Kingsman, Arizona, 2001.
I walked into an old hotel and saw this old-fashioned scale, which brought back very early memories. The scene was lit by an overhead tungsten room light and shot on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film.



35. 2 Mailboxes

Pennsylvania, 2001.
I feel these two mailboxes speak for themselves. Shot on a Minox 8 x 11 mm camera and 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



36. One Cow,

Texas, 2001.
It was just a long stretch of dirt road that went on forever, with a loneliness you couldn't help but feel. That sense of solitude is emphasized here by the single cow. Shot on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



37. Plowing

Blue Balls, Pennsylvania, 2002.
An Amish farmer and his traditional plowing method suggests a scene that was commonplace 100 years ago in America. By shooting with a slow shutter speed of 1/60 second I was able to convey a slight sense of motion.



38. Sheep meadows

Central Park, New York City, 1992.
It's hard to believe that in such a great city, so full of people and buildings, there is so much open space for solitude. For me this urban scene creates a mood very different from the previous shot. I used Polaroid Polapan 35 mm 125 ISO transparency film.



39. Bath sinks

New York City, 1983.
The white-on-white look of these old sinks was captured in the restroom of a commercial loft in Manhattan.



40. Hotel Lobby

Sea Bright, New Jersey, 1979.
I fell in love, photographically, with this early-nineteenth-century beachfront hotel. But when I returned a year later it was gone. I shot it on 35 mm black-and-white negative film, using a filter to create the rays of light.



41. Gleason's Gym

Brooklyn, New York City, 2000.
Gleason's Gym is a long-established training gym for boxers. I was in heaven with all it had to offer visually, and the natural light was beautiful.



42. White Pickup

Washington State, 1987.
I took this shot from the window of a bed and breakfast I was staying at, and later sepia-toned it in Photoshop CS.



43. Shirley,

New York City, 1995.
Shirley, a waitress in my local deli, always reminded me of a 1930s blues singer. I invited her to my studio to capture a special period of America that was long gone. Shot on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film with studio lighting.



44. NY Buildings

New York City, 2001.
A Minox 8 x 11 camera and 400 ISO film let me take this shot unobtrusively. I used Photoshop CS to sepia-tone the image.



45. Skull nose

Santa Monica, California, 2001.
The animal skull has always symbolized the American Southwest. This one, which is at my home in Santa Monica, I have photographed in every way, but here I thought "less is more." I used a Minox 8 x 11 camera and 100 ISO film, then sepia-toned the shot in Photoshop CS.



46. At the Bar, Plaza Hotel
New York City, 1999.
I shot this at a New York landmark, the Plaza Hotel, in the Oak Room. Two patrons were having a beer and I was trying to catch the mood. Shot on Polaroid Polapan 35 mm 125 ISO film.



47. Baseball
Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, California, 2000.
I went to a baseball game to capture a touch of America. Shot on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film.



48. Rain Train
Short Hills, New Jersey, 2002.
I was waiting to catch a train back to Manhattan, when a heavy summer rainstorm started. Trains and train stations are one feature of modern life where a genuine feeling of the American Mood lives on.



49. Swings
Route 741, Pennsylvania, 2001.
Behind an Amish School, I found these swings. The emptiness of the place says more to me than it would have done if children had been playing there. I shot this with a Minox 8 x 11 mm camera and 400 ISO film.



50. 3 cars
Route 66, Arizona, 2000.
These three classic cars parked side by side made me feel like I was back in the 1950s. Shot on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



51. Cap May Hopper
Cap May, New Jersey, 2001.
This typical Northeastern building on the New Jersey coast strongly evoked the mood of my favorite American artist, Edward Hopper. Shot on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film.



52. Bus depot café
Kingsman, Arizona, 2000.
This bus billboard was painted on the side of an old hotel on Route 66. I shot it on Polaroid Polapan 35 mm 125 ISO black-and-white transparency film.



53. Caddy Tail Fins
Phoenix, Arizona, 1998.
The tail fin of this 1959 Cadillac is all the detail necessary to make a statement about this period of America. Polaroid Polapan 35 mm 125 ISO black-and-white transparency film was my choice here.



54. Red +White Gas station.
Kansas, 2001.
These bright colors are quite different from my usual monochromatic images, but how could I not capture a part of America that is so 1950s? I shot this on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film, using a polarizing filter.



55. Red Brick Bldg
Southwest Texas, 2001.
This small town gave the impression that it had been abandoned. I aimed to catch this mood with a wide-angle shot, and used the 28 mm focal length on a 28-135 mm zoom lens.



56. Pola2 Buildings
Dallas, Texas, 1985.
I was walking around downtown Dallas with a Polaroid SX70 when I shot this graphic image. It captures the feeling of modern downtown America at that time, but the architecture is already dated.



57. Ladder + Building
Arizona, 2001.
Off the main street of a little village, I saw this ladder resting against a typical Southwestern building. I used 200 ISO chrome film and a polarizing filter.



58. 5th Ave & Central PK
New York City, 2002.
A snowy day on 5th Avenue. Just two blocks from my home, the American Mood was already there for me. Shot on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



59. Factory street Boston
Boston, Massachusetts, 1989.
In the city's Back Bay harbor area, I found these old factory buildings, so typical of New England factory architecture of the early twentieth century. I tried to create the mood of a photograph taken around that time, using 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film. Sadly, when I returned a few years later they had gone.



60. Snow Street,
New York City, 2000.
I shot this scene from my twelfth-floor apartment one snowy evening, using Agfa Scala 35 mm black-and-white transparency film at 200 ISO. The camera was a Canon EOSIN fitted with a Canon 70-300 mm image stabilizer lens, which allowed me to take a hand-held shot.



61. Scan 88 (Hats)
Montana, 1998.
I love walking through antique shops, like this one in Montana, in search of little vignettes that recall the past.



62. Art Study
New York City, 1988.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art is a place I often go to for inspiration. The art is only one part of what inspires me there. Another is the people, the way they look and the way they look at art. I enhanced the mood by using 35 mm recording film at 1/1000 second to give a grainy image.



63. Thin Trees
New England, 1989.
These birch trees in the Berkshires are very typical of New England. I shot them on Polaroid Polapan 35 mm 125 ISO black-and-white transparency film.



64. cowboy@Pond
Prey, Montana, 1997.
A tough American cowboy captured during a restful moment. The shot was taken on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film.



65. corr889_9398 (White barn)
Texas, 2003.
This white clapboard barn is so typical of rural America. With just the right amount of sunlight casting the shadow of the old-style light fixture, I was able to compose a picture that would express the nostalgic mood I was seeking. I used a Canon 1DS digital camera.



66. Faucet
Long Island, New York City, 1977.
This simple still life is so much a memory of America to me. It was shot in natural light on 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film pushed to 800.



67 .ChairMin
Santa Monica, California, 2002.
Here I used Minox's replica of an old Leica camera, with 8 x 11 mm 400 ISO film.



68. Bedroom
Rockport, Maine 1981.
I was teaching a class on nudes at the Maine Photography Workshop. We used this setting with our model, but I found it gave me a feeling of a typical American farm bedroom. Shot on 35 mm 160 ISO chrome film in natural light.



69. Amish carriages,
Intercourse, Pennsylvania, 2002.
Traveling through the Amish area of Pennsylvania, I came across a church service. Out back, overlooking a field, stood a group of Amish carriages, as if waiting for their horses to return (these were feeding nearby). Shot on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



70. Palm Leaves
Santa Monica, California, 2002.
Palm leaves are to me an important part of the American landscape. I grew up with them in Florida and lived among them in California. I shot these on 120 mm 645 black-and-white negative film (C41 process).



71. Keys Bridge
Florida Keys, 1998.
This shot shows the Florida Keys end of the old US Highway 1, which was being demolished. Here I used 35 mm 1000 ISO chrome film and a polarizing filter.



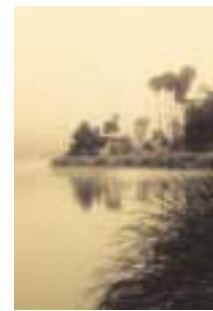
72. Balconies
Boca Raton, Florida, 1999.
For me this image, which I shot on 35 mm 1000 ISO chrome film, symbolizes the American motel.



73. Red Truck AZ
Arizona, 2001.
My eye was caught by the weathered red pant of this classic truck, parked in front of an abandoned motel. The dramatic sky and a wide angle help create the mood.



74. Santa Monica Palms
Santa Monica, California, 2002.
These palms on Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica could be on a postcard from the 1930s, when they were a popular subject. I shot them on 120 mm 645 black-and-white negative film (C41 process) and sepia-toned the image in Photoshop CS.



75. Santa Barb Fog Pond
Santa Barbara, California, 1995.
I had a house in Santa Barbara and often tried to capture the many moods of the locality. This image was shot on 35 mm 1000 ISO chrome film with a sepia and diffusion filter.



76. still + Seagull

Malibu, California, 2002.

For me this still life, taken while I was having lunch, encapsulates an American mood. I used a Minox 8 x 11 mm camera and 100 ISO film.



77. Beach&RR

Northern California, 1988.

Driving up the Pacific Coast close to the California–Oregon border, I came across this scene. The wooden railroad trestle and the figures at play on the beach evoked the past, perhaps the Works Progress Administration years of the 1930s. Shot on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



78. Cyclone

Coney Island, New York City, 1981.

I was exploring what was left of this great old amusement park when its famous Cyclone hurtled into sight with these screaming riders.



79. Swimming,

Somewhere in the Midwest, summer 1992.

Looking for typical American scenes, I came across this swimming pool right alongside the road. My timing was perfect: I didn't have to wait, as the diver seemed to know just when to plunge off the diving board.



80. Lace on the line

Pennsylvania, 1991.

Driving through rural Pennsylvania, somewhere near the border with New Jersey, I stopped to take a closer look at an old farm, but it was the lace curtains drying on the clothes line in the backyard that really did it for me. I shot the scene on Polaroid Polapan 35 mm 125 ISO transparency film.



81. Up the stairs

New York City, 1988.

Once again inspired by people at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, I captured this gentleman climbing the back stairs. To me he looked like a figure from the 1940s, perhaps not long returned from war. Shot on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



82. Beer & News

New York City, 1999.

Sitting in a bar, I shot this image on Polaroid Polapan 35 mm ISO 125 film. The combination of low available light and a shutter speed of 1/30 second gave it just the right degree movement.



83. NY Street Lamp

New York City, 1998.

If you really look for old NY, it's there. I found this street lamp in SoHo and shot it on 35 mm 1000 ISO film, adding slight diffusion with a sepia filter.



84. NY Skyline

New Jersey, 1975.

For this shot of the New Jersey skyline, seen across the Hudson River from New York City, I used 35 mm 160 ISO Kodak E4 chrome film.



85. RailRoad crossing

Utah, 1999.

Somewhere in the Utah desert, around a hundred miles from Moab, I found this railroad crossing. To me this is a powerful symbol of America, particularly because it evokes memories of the Lionel electric train set I had as a boy. Shot on 35mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



86. Rock

Arizona, 2001.

I was actually looking for some typical Southwestern architecture when I found this desert rock formation. Isolating the surroundings and composing with the sky and clouds, I was able to capture the mood I was searching for. I used 35 mm 200 ISO chrome film and a polarizing filter.



87. Montana Barn,

Kalispell, Montana, 1995.

Capturing old buildings such as this barn feels like preserving America. The mood is everything here: the way the barn sits on the land, the tall crops, the dramatic Montana sky. Shot on 35 mm 400 ISO black-and-white negative film.



88. Truck

Wyoming, 1994.

I was parked on a Wyoming highway, and without leaving my car I took this shot using a 28-135 mm zoom lens set at 28 mm. The film was 35 mm 1000 ISO chrome, and I used a polarizing filter.



89. Gas Station Amarillo TX.

Amarillo, Texas, 2001.

The sun was setting as I drove into Amarillo and saw this disused gas station. I shot it on 120 mm 400 ISO 645 black-and-white negative film.



90. Cowboy riding the fence

Montana, 1998.

To be a cowboy: what an American dream. To ride your horse on a beautiful ranch in Montana as the sun goes down. I took care to not intrude, because this was a private moment between the cowboy and his surroundings.

Working Methods

The Way I Work

I'm writing this in the realization that a statement on how I work will date within a very short time. The technology of digital imaging is advancing so rapidly that my purest roots and beliefs as a photographer are continually driving me to test the waters.

My first jump into digital was in scanning and printing. I have been using digital output for my fine-art prints for the past few years, but I had hesitated to shoot digitally. The challenge I've had until recently is a personal one. To me digital photography did not have the same personality as shooting with film. I have always worked in a style where the choice of film, along with the correct mix of light filters, ambience, etc., helped to give a look that satisfied me creatively. I grew up in a world of photography in which you delivered chrome that came directly from the camera to your commercial clients. So, what came out of the camera had to be "you": no darkroom, no prints, no post manipulation. Besides, I'd rather spend my time shooting than working in a darkroom or at a computer.

So, after experimenting with a range of digital cameras, I have finally been able to achieve the mood that satisfies my creative desires. I'm proud to say that I now shoot more digitally than with film.

When I'm not shooting digitally, it is either because I shoot black-and-white negative film using a Canon EOS 35 mm, or in medium format (120 mm) with a Contax 645, or even in the 8 x 11 mm miniature format of the Minox. I also love working with Polaroid, which is a great way to keep all the benefits of film and still not need a darkroom.

The digital camera I use most often is the Canon 1DS. This 11-mega-pixel camera creates the size of files needed for reproduction in a fine-art photographic book (which are required to be at least 350 DPI for printing).

The photographs in *American Mood* were shot over a period of thirty-five years. However, a good portion of the work was shot more recently, within the past decade. Some of the images are recent enough to have been shot digitally.

As in my previous books, my intention is to share my vision. When I look through a book of images that compels me with its beauty or emotion, I find afterwards that there is something more that I desire. So, in consideration for my fellow photographers, I have included some notes along with the images, as well as statements on my preferences for equipment and material.

Cameras

I work mostly in two formats: 35 mm and 120 mm. However, I like to experiment and challenge myself, looking for new ways to stimulate creativity. Because of this, I also work in unconventional formats. You will see a number of images that I shot for *American Mood* with the Minox 8 x 11 mm format. I've also been using point-and-shoot Canon SureShot digital cameras. I often use Polaroid cameras, or a Polaroid back on a medium-format camera.

Lenses

The lens I prefer is the Canon 28-135 mm IS (image stabilizer) zoom. Other zoom lenses that I work with are the 75-300 IS, 70-200 2.8 (for speed I find them all equal in quality of optics), and the (ultra-wide) 17-35 mm 2.8. Working with the zoom lens allows quick changes of composition, and thus more variation in my final choice of images. I also use the fixed focal length of the 90 mm TS (tilt shift) lens for select focus shooting, used in the same way one would work with a view camera.

Film

For color I use transparency (positive) film. Because *American Mood* has been shot over an extended period of time, the images have been shot with various brands of film. I use Agfachrome 1000 ISO (which I shoot at 800 ISO) and Agfachrome 200 ISO. You will also find in this book a good number of images shot on Kodak Ektachrome films, both the earlier E4 and the E6 films.

When shooting in black and white I work with a variety of films. My choice depends on the feeling that I want to achieve. Most of the images shot on black-and-white negative film were taken using Agfapan 400. However, there is one image shot with Agfa Scala black-and-white transparency film (see p. 137).

I also use Kodak T400CN black-and-white negative film. This is developed using the C41 process and achieves beautiful results.

Polaroid

I used Polaroid Polapan 125 ISO 35 mm instant transparency film throughout the book. Unfortunately, Polaroid has stopped manufacturing it.

Digital Film (Compact Flash Cards)

I have been working with SanDisk flash cards, the 1 GB Extreme or Ultra. More information on the important difference between these can be found at www.photoworkshop.com.

Scanning

All film images in *American Mood* were scanned on the Imacon 848, creating files of over 250 MB from 35 and 120 mm film and Polaroid SX70 prints (reflective scans). The 848 allowed me to do my own scans in-house, with speed and quality equal to those of a fine service bureau or top professional lab.

Photoshop

I use Photoshop CS with my images in the same way that I would work on them in the darkroom. I do not use Photoshop to manipulate them, but only to adjust contrast, color, sepia toning, spotting, and cropping.

Color Management

To create accurate color-match prints and scans, my monitor, scanner, and printer have had to be calibrated. To do this I used the Gretag Macbeth Eye-One calibrator. More information on this can be found at www.photoworkshop.com.

Using the correct accessories is essential. I found the GTI PDV desktop viewer an important component of color management, although I didn't realize how important a tool it is until I first started to work with it.

Output

For the purpose of this book I had to create match prints. For speed (approximately 100 prints had to be reproduced) and quality I used the Canon i9100 Bubble Jet printer. The match prints were printed on Legion Photo Matte paper.

For exhibition, aside from the traditional darkroom and silver prints, I also use a number of inkjet printers. I find both the Canon and the Epson give me astounding results, especially when used in conjunction with fine-art papers such as Somerset Photo Enhanced and Arches Infinity Matte. I also have my large-format gallery images printed in this form by Nash Editions and Duggal Digital Solutions in New York.

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