



**Silver & Light**  
fine art b&w photography  
by Keith Seat

# **Transience: Selected Images and Poems**

*B&W Photographic Images by Keith Seat*

*Poetry by John Morris*

*Transience* is a central fact of our existence. The poignancy of momentary beauty in fallen cherry blossoms and piles of no longer needed conch shells reminds us that our lives – like the world itself – are transient. Children’s toys break, we suffer the losses of even those closest to us, storms break down our reinforced defenses. Even our symbols and understanding of faith are often transient, and in need of ongoing renewal.

## **Print Titles, Descriptions and Poems**

*[Entry Room, from left wall]*

### **1. Reflection**

If there is anything more transient than cherry blossoms, it must be fallen blossoms floating on the reflected image of their tree.



## 2. **Trinity**

This simple yet somehow unlikely image is from the Assateague seashore.



### TRINITY

Left foot, left foot, right foot.

No one person  
could do that dance,  
no matter how good  
you are at Twister.

It might take two, or three.

Is the thing a hoax, cousin to the crop circles?

Yes, another possibility.

Suppose I told you  
the three footprints  
were being seen all over this beach,  
and beaches everywhere?

Coincidence is a possibility, yes.

Or it's a Great Three-Legged Hominid  
(Semi-Aquatic). And what if  
someone told you *I know*

*who made those prints* and

you asked *Who?* and were told

*Come and see* – would that make a difference?

Are you willing to play

the crazy-stepping game of faith?

### 3. **Birdfeeding**

A local man near Tulum, Mexico, came to this spot to feed and commune with birds at dusk. He may have been a fisherman disposing of excess bait, but moved with the grace of regularly practiced ritual.



## BIRDFEEDING

They frighten me sometimes, these descendants of the dinosaurs.

A kind of evolutionary perfection. Everything they do is right.

Look how they pluck my offered food out of the air.

And look how the clouds imitate their circling.

*You* try it – organizing the sea and sand and sky around your own beauty.

Look at me. I've organized a modest sand castle amidst the rocks, which the tides will erase. It is, I guess, our own contribution to the cosmos: We've learned nothing lasts forever.

#### 4. **Conchless**

What appears as a beautiful pile of shells on a Yucatan shore might seem to the previous inhabitants to be the eroding rubble of homes destroyed as by a mighty hurricane.



## 5. **Breaking**

Mysteriously, the breaking wave is at equipoise, while the surrounding elements rush past.



### BREAKING

You never know  
what the breakers will throw  
onto the beach.  
Perhaps we each  
find frozen  
there a thing chosen,  
hidden in the curled  
instantaneous world,  
chosen for me, for you, alone.  
The wave is bearing down,  
then the eye freezes  
the flowing foam and curl, frees us  
from endless breaking.  
You never know what's taken  
out of the sea and brought to the beach,  
to you, to teach,  
to terrify, to stop the flow.  
Or start. You never know.

## 6. **Broken**

This plastic arm washed up amidst all the detritus that routinely finds Caribbean beaches.



### BROKEN

The girl had nightmares for weeks, even after her parents kissed her, held her, told her *It's only a doll's arm, sweetie, you just found a silly piece of trash on the beach.*

At four years old, there aren't words to explain how real it was.

In Sunday school she heard about Jesus healing all the people who couldn't walk but when she prayed about the doll, the teacher said no, and explained the difference. *But what if it was my arm, on the beach?*

The teacher said *Oh, it couldn't be* but she wrote a note for the parents: *Is Lucy worried about anything?*

## 7. Tears



(Initial image in collaboration with Kris Herbst.) This image became much more meaningful to me as I was working to develop it when I learned that the mother of my friend had just died.

## 8. Hope

After a massive hurricane destroyed even reinforced concrete homes near Majahual in central Yucatan, an adjacent house was built within the year.



### HOPE

Ramón, I'm starting over. I asked myself which structure showed me at my best – you, Ramón, of all people, understand how I am always falling apart. I could no longer inhabit that blinding white domicile, the balconies, the houseplants, the optimistic view. I write to you a more honest man, if no happier, staring out from the rusted rebar, the failed concrete. Has the governor ceded you the *finca* yet? Wish you were here.  
Your brother Juan.

## 9. **Faith**

Services are no longer held in this weathered church in a tiny town on the Kansas prairie.

### FAITH

The boards run straight and narrow,  
cast their wracked shadows, trap the heart  
in rules that some old T-squared planner  
thought would last forever.

But the lines suddenly fracture  
in whorls and loops, glassy shapes  
like grace – or only a way of showing  
how the light gets in.



## 10. **Altar**

I am deeply moved by this image, with its huge tree pressed against a tremendous boulder bearing a figure in the West Virginia wilderness of Dolly Sods.

### ALTAR

What can I offer  
you, Lord? This is my  
body,  
unbroken for you.

The serpent spoke. Now  
I am afraid. Aztec gods  
craved a bloody heart.

Don't sacrifice me,  
God of mercy, God of love.  
Yet the very limbs

of trees uprooted  
by the world you made cry out,  
*Give us Adam, leave*

*him to us.* Take me,  
Lord. I know my nakedness.  
Save me from Eden.



## 11. **Eden**

Evening falls on Red Creek in Dolly Sods, West Virginia, which has without question become my favorite camping destination.



## 12. **Prayers**



Cairns are used to mark trails and crossings within the Dolly Sods wilderness, but this one is not marking a physical path.

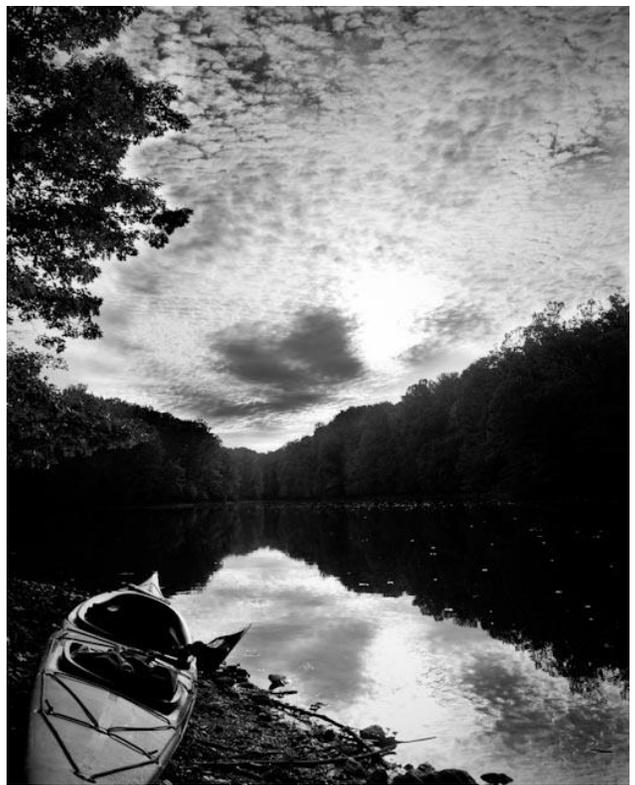
## 13. **Mosaic**

At a historic site in western Pennsylvania, a little boy and his sister were terribly excited to have found an old pond with "millions" of tadpoles! Their parents were unmoved, but I was intrigued and was led eagerly to the prize.



## 14. **Possibilities**

Open water on the Rocky Gorge Reservoir, Patuxent River, Howard County, Maryland.



### **Artists' Statements**

KEITH: "I'm delighted to work with John and have custom created poetry to accompany most of the images in the exhibition. The poetry adds layers of meaning – and sometimes whimsy – that brings broader perspectives and sometimes differing narratives to the images. Transience also comes to mind as this is my first exhibition of digital photographic images, after my dramatic shift to a Nikon D700 DSLR system, Lightroom 2 and a massive Epson 7900 printer, in place of my medium format Mamiyas and beloved traditional darkroom. While fully embracing the new potential, my aesthetics remain the same, as all my serious work remains in black & white without digital manipulation and development only to show reality."

JOHN: "It's a pleasure to free oneself from one's own poetic preoccupations and allow fresh images to invoke the words. In the end, these poems are not about Keith's photographs, which stand splendidly on their own. But nor could my lines have been spoken without his."

**Keith Seat** studied photography while at Oxford University and put himself through law school with wedding photography and black & white portraiture, as well as selling his photographs in art shows and fine restaurants. After many years using a smaller format and shooting color transparencies along with black & white, Keith began working exclusively in medium format in 1996 for the higher quality yielded by larger negatives. Keith made the transition to digital in 2009 and now primarily shoots with a Nikon D700 camera and lenses, develops the resulting images with Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 2, and prints with a massive Epson 7900. All of his serious work remains in black & white, without digital manipulation and development only to show reality.

**John Morris** has published fiction and poetry in more than 80 literary magazines in the U.S. and Great Britain, including *The Southern Review*, *Missouri Review*, *Five Points*, *Subtropics*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Poetry East*. His work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and reprinted in *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*. A chapbook, *The Musician, Approaching Sleep*, appeared in 2006 from Dos Madres Press.

***Images are custom developed and printed by Keith from large RAW files on Somerset Velvet paper, which is 100% cotton and acid free.***

***Framed prints (as shown with protective spray in place of glazing) are available for \$225 (16"x20") and \$300 each (24"x30").***