



BRYAN SABOL

artist's statement

My childhood was spent on an 18-acre farm outside Eugene, Oregon, with thousands of acres of evergreen forest beyond it to roam. This was at a time and place where dark skies were the norm, and the ribbon of the Milky Way whispered overhead on crisp autumn nights; where summer's intense sunsets turned tree-lined hills to silhouettes and lit the clouds with flaming red and orange; where spider webs laden with bejeweled dew twinkled in spring's early mornings; where the magic of snowfall in the dead of winter—uncommon as it was—silently flashed in and out of existence as individual flakes were momentarily caught in the glare of floodlights; and where I pursued all nature's spectacles around me with my camera.

With such an upbringing, it's no surprise that landscapes and images of nature are my favorite photographic subjects. My projects reflect my quest to capture emotive landscape imagery. But while the foundation of a quality image is based on composition, light, and pattern, these aspects are meaningless if they result in just a "pretty picture". I strive for something more.

Story is the driving force behind my creative work. At its best, photography should evoke a sense of wonder, if not wonderment. I want my work to make the viewer pause, to take a longer second glance. Something—as ineffable as it might be—draws you into the image. It speaks to you. In that moment, the photograph transcends mere imagery; it now has a story to tell.

Previous projects include "Horizons", which focuses on the intense relationship light plays in the boundary between sea and sky; "Canyonlands" and "Slot Canyons", which highlight the beautiful and sometimes unearthly landscapes of the American Southwest; and my whimsical "Doors of Beaune" project that illustrates how the incredibly varied front doors of homes in the old center of Beaune, France, offer insights into the character of each building—and act as a tantalizing hint of what stories lie behind them.

In my current project, I explore the power of suggestion by combining my landscape photography with fanciful textual descriptors. This synergy of image and word plants a whisper of possibilities into the viewer's mind, imbuing my landscape subjects with thoughts, capabilities, and desires that are universal to the human condition: boulders in the surf who dream of escape, a shipwreck mourning its failed ambitions, a tree whose trunk forms a gateway that beckons us into a magical forest, a bridge with the power to bind lovers together...

My process begins with the photograph, looking for an unexpected viewpoint or compositional element that transforms the natural into something remarkable. Next, I take inspiration from the tone of the scene to craft a description that captures the viewer's imagination and transports them into the realm of the myth born from image and text. The nascent story then continues along a path of their own making—if only for a moment.