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LumiGnosis

Michael G. Mitchell

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LumiGnosis

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PHOTOGRAPHY CAN compress what moves through eternity into the appearance of a single moment. Eternity is always willing to participate; light is its favorite son. Light is always ready to befriend the sensitive photographer and to induce metacomprehensive wonder. I have sometimes wondered whether light might actually be alive; or perhaps something alive is breathing through it. In either case, I am a prostrated moth.

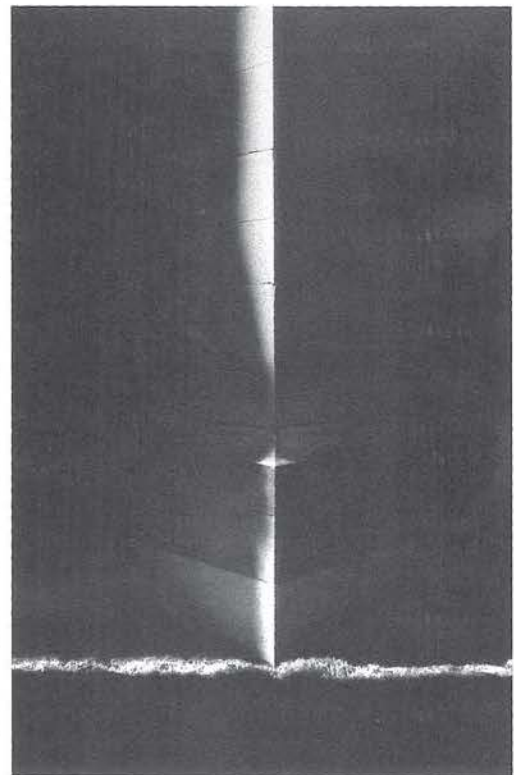
I was twenty-four when light introduced itself one night. It was not just a handshake. In the throes of great despair, I had been trying to photographically diagram my own internal wiring when I photographically discovered the current running through it. It was a spontaneous initiation: a young ego looking through a lens and meeting the Self. Light was not the current flowing through my wires, but the two mysteriously conspired in successive synchronicities.

The experience began when I walked out onto a pier at night. It was late; the sky shouldn't have been as bright as it was. I was surrounded by a fast-moving, vaporous luminance that seemed more infinite than a sky full of stars. Offshore I noticed a cluster of rocks. They seemed to hang suspended in a perplexing penumbral glow. My eyes could fix upon nothing else. The light was spaceless motion in which I too was suspended and an almost mathematical equation formed between man and rock.

As the clouds suddenly lifted like a theater curtain going up, an enormous full moon at center stage beckoned me to join it. The plot then unfolded within a multidimensional polygon formed of things seen and unseen, things known and unknowable. A love of immeasurable density reached out to me, embraced me, invited me to dwell within it. The whole experience, enacted in a poetic geometry, both empyrean and intimate, was what British author Charles Williams must have meant when he said that love is "the pure mathematics of the spirit."

When the drama was over, the image on the opposite page was left on stage—"a footprint left at the passing of joy"—as C. S. Lewis once said. Everything in my life became reordered around a new center.

Truth has always come to me through my eyes. What I call "greater truth" comes as poetry sung by the voice of light.



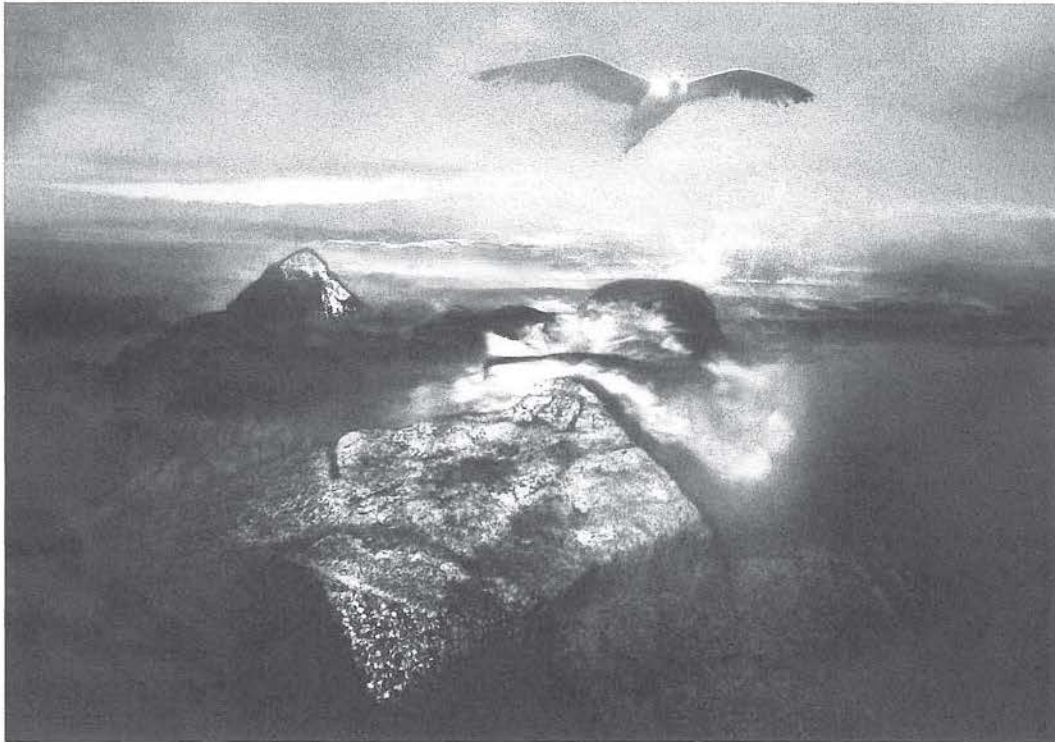
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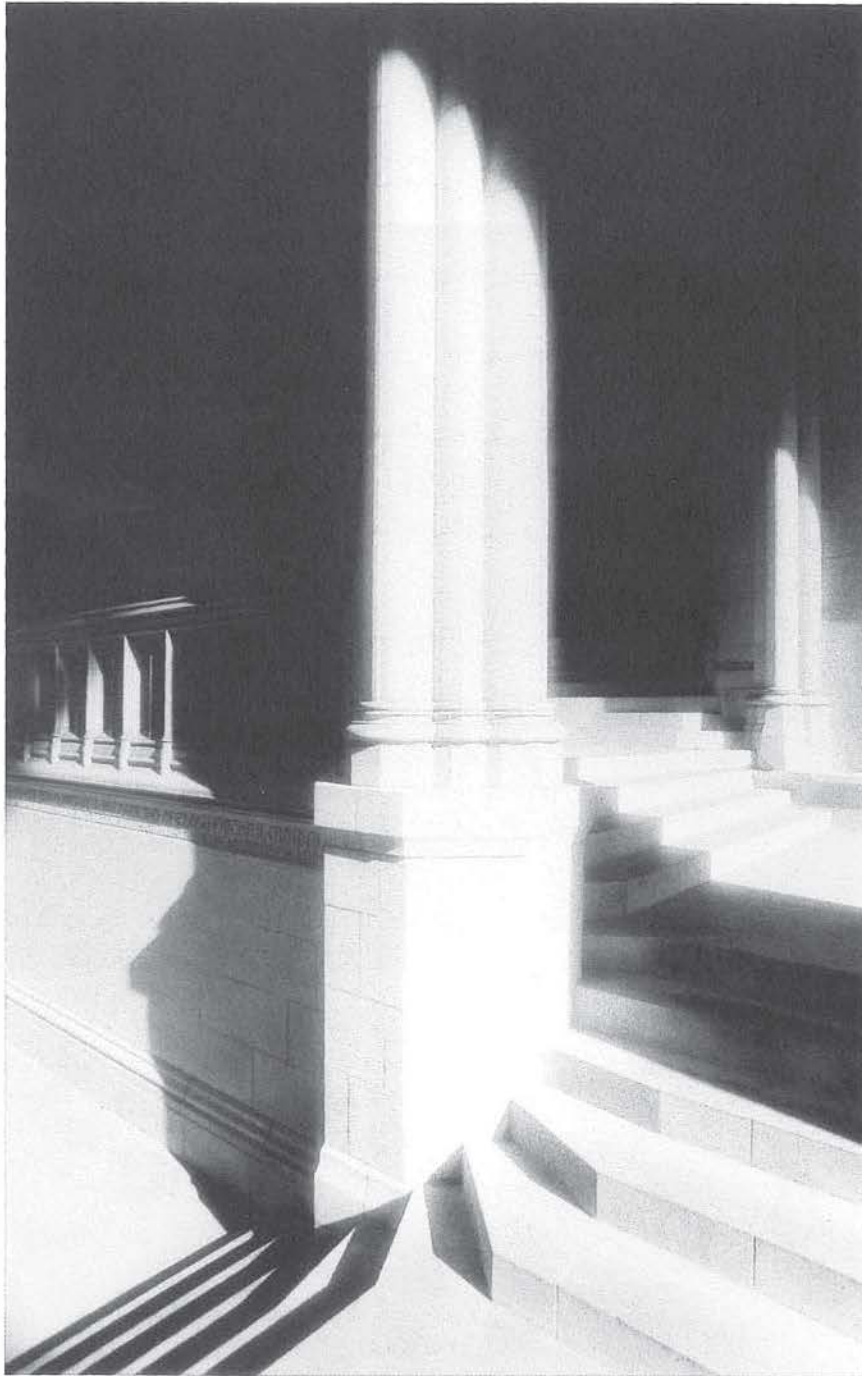
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