

THE LIGHT THAT BRINGS US BACK



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Published by
RIE
Rossland Image Enterprises

Printed in Canada

USA \$60. Canada \$60.
ISBN: 978-0-9869475-1-3



At this point in my life it is becoming difficult to remember a time when I wasn't looking at the world through the lens of a camera, rendering it in my mind in tones of black, white and greys, putting four defined borders around what I envisioned, organizing what might have been chaotic into something that made sense. At least to me.

My father, Frank, handed me my first real camera when I was about 14 and enrolled in a high school photography class. It was a fine German made 35 mm that he had used to record images of our family as we traveled in the U.S. southwest on our many vacations there. He shot beautiful colour slides and I remember the many times we viewed them on a fold-up projection screen in our living room. While I don't really know why he stopped shooting photographs, I suspect that it was because as a family, at some point we stopped travelling.

If my father were here today I would thank him profusely for that gift, and while I no longer have that camera, I have retained and nurtured his love of recording images of the world around us. And I hope, taken it to a level that transcends merely making a visual record. Like so many aspiring photographers, I began my visual journey using a 35 mm camera but soon graduated to medium format and later to 4x5 and then to a big, cumbersome, but highly rewarding 8x10. Photography has evolved and I guess, so have I - evolving might not be the best choice of words - and I now use a medium format digital camera, with my darkroom in a laptop and on a monitor screen.

But photography is art, or it can be, and while there are literally millions upon millions of images recorded on cell phone cameras every day, I don't see much of it as art. Art is interpretive and it is emotionally evocative. It usually does not happen by accident and is as much about feeling as it is seeing. A large part of this artistic process involves "pre-visualizing" the image, a thought process that takes the photographer along a linear path from conception to finished image. It is not simply a matter of recording in pixels or grains of silver halide.

Thanks Dad, for the gift of the camera.

Richard Philip Soltice, June 2023



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A Second Photographic Journey by
RICHARD PHILIP SOLTICE