



Focusing on...

Hanoi — Four Days on the Streets of the Old Quarter

by Drew Jackson

As I try to remember when I was first hit with the feeling of, “What am I doing here???” while visiting the Old Quarter of Hanoi last summer, my mind is awash with the sites, sounds, smells, and tastes of this incredibly busy and vibrant place. As I worked backwards through my memory of experiences I came to the conclusion that I first had this feeling long before my wife, daughter, and I even got near the place where we would spend four days exploring. I had it in the taxi on our drive from the airport.



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~ CALENDAR ~

SEPTEMBER

- 04 Digital entries due
- 10 Dinner with the Judge 5:30pm
Monthly Competition 7:00pm
- 19 Field trip, Petaluma night shoot
- 24 Program: Wildlife Photography,
Steve Emmons of Sacramento
NWR
- 25 Newsletter items to Sheri

OCTOBER

- 02 Digital entries due
- 06 Board Meeting, LBA&G Ctr 7pm
- 08 Dinner with the Judge 5:30pm
Monthly Competition 7:00pm
- 16-18 Field trip, Gold Country
- 22 Program: Master’s Presentation,
David Wallace; fair winners 7pm
- 24 Newsletter items to Sheri
- 30 Digital entries due for 11/6
meeting

NOVEMBER

- 05 Dinner with the Judge 5:30pm
Competition Meeting 7:00pm
- 12 End-of-year Competition 7:00pm
- 23 Newsletter items to Sheri

~ EXHIBITIONS AND ONGOING CALLS TO ARTISTS ~

**EXHIBITIONS, ETC.
September 2009**

Deadline: 18 September

Phantom Gallery, a project of the Santa Rosa Arts District, is accepting proposals for individual or group exhibits at the gallery, 535 7th Street in Santa Rosa. Exhibits will last six weeks, starting in January 2010. Details and application forms at www.santarosaartsdistrict.com.

Deadline: 5 October

Sebastopol Center for the Arts invites entries for "Dualities," to exhibit artwork that depicts both sides of a duality, such as birth/death, yin/yang, war/peace, serious/foolish, light/dark, movement/stillness, soft/hard, and so on. Open to all media. Details at Dualities Prosp.pdf (on www.sebarts.org under "Calls for Entry").

ONGOING CALLS TO ARTISTS

Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks

Department: Exhibits at Finley and Steele Lane Community Centers and City Hall. To apply, go to Finley Community Center, 2060 West College Avenue, Santa Rosa, to pick up an application. Community Center hours are Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 7:00 pm and on Saturday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. For further information, call 707-543-4512; contact is Tara Matheny-Schuster, email tmatheny_schuster@srcity.org

The Atrium Gallery at Marin General Hospital mounts four shows a year of "healing art." The gallery is looking for local artists for future shows. Previous artists have included Ernest Braun. Send slides and SASE to Wende Heath, Institute for Health and Healing, PO Box 8010, San Rafael, CA 94912.

~ MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION ~

SPRS WEBSITE

<http://www.santarosaphotographicsociety.org/>

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION AND CORRECTIONS:

Contact Sheri Prager, Editor, The Positive Print

See SRPS roster for email address

~ Program ~

24 September 2009

Wildlife Photography

Steve Emmons

Steve has been employed at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge for many years. He is a skilled nature photographer and from his years at SacNWR and nearby wildlife refuges he has identified locations that provide prime opportunities to observe and photograph wildlife through the seasons. He will share this knowledge with us, provide tips on wildlife photography, and show examples of his work. Steve's presentation to our members three years ago was well received and was followed with a field trip to SNWR where he led us to some great spots.

Preceding his talk we will have dinner with Steve at Kirin on Yulupa Avenue at 5:30pm. Please contact Marilyn Brooner by email or phone (578-1952) to make your reservation.



~ New Member ~

VAL GAVOZDEA

WELCOME!

AUGUST COMPETITION RESULTS

GENERAL

Level B

1st	Geometry	Ken Hutchins
2nd	Woman Viewing a Painting	Rodney Jonk
3rd	Anticipation	Darryl Henke

Level A

1st	Towering Tulips	Phillip Hann
2nd	Fishing Was Great	Harold Moore
3rd	Rogers Digs as Dalhauser Sets	TJ Mills

Level AA

1st	Peyto Lake Overlook	Linda Caldwell
2nd	Winter at Cooper Landing 2	Linda Caldwell
3rd	A Safe Place	Joe Simons

Level M

1st	Sea Palms at Salt Point	Russ Dieter
2nd	Window Mendocino	Edmont Bridant
3rd	Life, Death, Faith	Tania Amochaev

NATURE

Level B

1st	Lightning Near Glacier NP	Phil Wright
2nd	African Pygmy Falcon	Robert Walker
3rd	Giant Cockroach	Rodney Jonk

Level A

1st	Red Shouldered Hawk with Mouse	Harold Moore
2nd	Familiar Bluet Damsels	Kevin O'Conner
3rd	Anna's Blue Mating Pair	Adele Wikner

Level AA

1st	Infant Egret Learning Balance	Joe Simons
2nd	Arches NP	Nadine Amoss
3rd	Emerging Poppy	Gary Saxe

Level M

1st	Angry Osprey Protecting Nest	Tania Amochaev
2nd	Waxwing Feeds on Hawthorne Berry	Marilyn Brooner
3rd	Wood Duck Monte Rio	Russ Dieter



CREATIVE

Level B

1st	Jumbo Juggling	Roger Mercer
2nd	Abstract 1	Darryl Henke
3rd	Rope Balls	Terry Connelly

Level A

1st	Sturgeon's Mill Working	Ira Gelfman
2nd	Circled Flowers	Dick Weston
3rd	Zinnia Squared	Dick Weston

Level AA

1st	Fossil Assimulo Creatura	Jon Frieseke
2nd	The Last Drop	Janet Gelfman
3 rd	xxx	

Level M

1st	Here's Looking at You Kid	Barbara Larson
2nd	Sphere #5	Diane Miller
3rd	Childhood Memories	Gus Fiessel

2008 End of Year Winners B—Creative

**"FANTASY DUET"
BY PHILLIP HANN**



MANY THANKS TO KENT FORTER FOR
JUDGING THE JULY COMPETITION.

~Planning for 2010 ~

It seems like 2009 is passing us by very quickly, and the holiday season will be here before we know it. This year, SRPS members have been very fortunate to have a wonderful group of board members and volunteers filling a wide variety of club positions. Their efforts make it possible for you to have fun and learn more about photography by way of SRPS competitions, program night presentations, salons, newsletters, field trips, exhibits, the website, the Forum, and much more. Please be sure to express your appreciation to these people for their time and effort, many of whom have served in their position for several years.

For 2010, I'm hoping to see more members offer their help with various SRPS positions. At this point, we hope you will consider filling one of the following positions that will be open in January:

- Secretary
- Judge Coordinator
- New Members and Guests Coordinator
- Refreshments Coordinator (Program nights)
- House Chair
- Field Trip Coordinator
- Vice President
- Exhibition Coordinator
- Coordinator for the annual calendar publication/photo entries.
- Librarian

If you are interested in one of these positions, please discuss it with me. I would be happy to answer any questions such as, "What are the duties?" or "How much time does it take?" or "Do I need experience?" I will also be providing more information about each open position by email and via the newsletter.

I appreciate the members who have already offered to continue in their positions for 2010, and those who have already volunteered for new positions. Please consider taking one of the open positions so that our membership can continue to enjoy and learn from all of the activities that SRPS has to offer.

Phil Hann
Vice President

SRPS Positions: "Secretary" and "Field Trip Coordinator"

Two of the open positions for 2010 include Secretary and Field Trip Coordinator. Some of you may not know what these positions entail, so here is my summary of each one:

The Secretary attends four SRPS Board of Directors meeting each year. After each meeting, the Secretary prepares the meeting minutes. The Secretary may also occasionally send out a card ("get well", etc.) or a letter representing the club.

The Field Trip Coordinator arranges and/or plans field trips for the Club, subject to approval by the Board. As Coordinator you can enlist the help of other members to plan and/or oversee individual trips if you wish. The Coordinator provides information regarding the upcoming field trips at club meetings and to the newsletter editor. If you are interested, I already have an extensive list of potential field trip ideas you can work with.

Please let me know if you would like to manage either of these positions for the club starting next year.

Phil Hann
Vice President

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Motorcycles, bicycles, cars and people were everywhere. This city of 3.5 million people has 1.8 million motorcycles, and they use them to transport almost everything. I saw one motorcycle with four family members of different ages draped in every conceivable place. The motorcycle we saw out the window of our van a few days later while on a tour of the different craft villages outside the main city carried eight pigs and seemed to have room for more. At a local pottery village on that same tour I marveled at the bicycles that were reinforced to carry 300 kilos of clay or finished pots to or from the local merchants. These were the tools of very resourceful people and they used them everyday. On our twenty-minute drive from the airport to the old city we were barraged with the intensity of the two-wheel traffic. I knew right then that the streets would be our biggest challenge and I was not sure we were truly prepared for what was to come.



All of the buildings in the Old Quarter are narrow and tall. My understanding is that the taxes were originally based on the amount of street frontage. Because of this, most buildings are no more than fifteen or twenty feet wide. There also used to be a limit on how tall the buildings could be so that none were taller than the emperor's home. (I think it was originally four stories.) That requirement was eventually dropped so some of these buildings are six to eight stories high. Put those buildings on streets that are barely wide enough for two vehicles and you get a pretty good mental picture of what it is like.

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Our hotel was called Queen Travel (<http://www.queencafe.com.vn/index1.htm>) My wife, Mary, had made all of our Vietnamese travel arrangements through them and it turned out to be a very good choice. They picked us up at the airport, transported us to the hotel, and arranged a van tour to some of the surrounding craft villages. It was centrally located and within easy walking distance of anything in the Old Quarter. The hotel itself was a site to behold. What we found inside was an even bigger surprise.



The three of us shared two beds in a room equipped with air conditioning, TV (including DVD player), a computer (with internet access!), and mini fridge. I was shocked. I was expecting the minimum... and we got so much more. What was truly amazing was that everything worked. After a few hours of the heat, humidity, and intensity of the city streets, it was wonderful having a cool and comfortable place to recharge the adventure batteries.

On our four days of exploration we walked the streets, took a van tour, ate some incredible inexpensive food, and soaked up the ambiance of a place very different from anyplace else we had ever been. We all came away from the experience with the feeling that this wasn't a vacation; it was an adventure .. an adventure we will not soon forget.



~ FIELD TRIPS 2009 ~

**Sunday, 20 September
Petaluma**

Our next Field Trip has been changed from September 19th to September 20th (Sunday). We will be going to Petaluma. The trip will begin with supper at McNear's Restaurant located at 23 Petaluma Boulevard North. Reservations have been made for 5:30pm so it is suggested that you plan to be in Petaluma early enough to park and walk to McNear's with your gear. Parking can be found at a lot on Western across from the Petaluma Market, about three blocks up from the river. Be very careful to read any parking signs so that you avoid fines, etc.

After supper members will photograph in Petaluma during the twilight and evening hours. There is much to photograph here beginning with a walk down Western Avenue to the bridge and the river with its reflections and evening colors. When we visited in late August, we found egrets flying toward us to roost in the trees at the river's edge. There are buildings with interesting shapes to photograph, neon lights, moving cars, people and much more. This is a great opportunity to work on night shooting in a variety of venues.

Tripods are always good for night shooting with longer exposures, etc. Please also travel with at least one other buddy as you move around town and keep your gear in sight at all times.

If you want to join this trip, be sure to sign up at the September meeting or e-mail Dick Weston. It is important for Dick to know who will be there and to increase the reservation at the restaurant if need be.

A reminder that those of you who have participated in the Club sponsored Field Trips will be eligible to enter two images from each trip in the Palmer Field Trip Competition held at the end of the year.

Dick Weston will be "host" for this event since the Gelfmans will be traveling. If you have questions or concerns beginning September 9th until the date of the trip, please contact Dick directly. Do not send e-mails to Janet since she will not be receiving them.

Janet Gelfman, Field Trip Coordinator



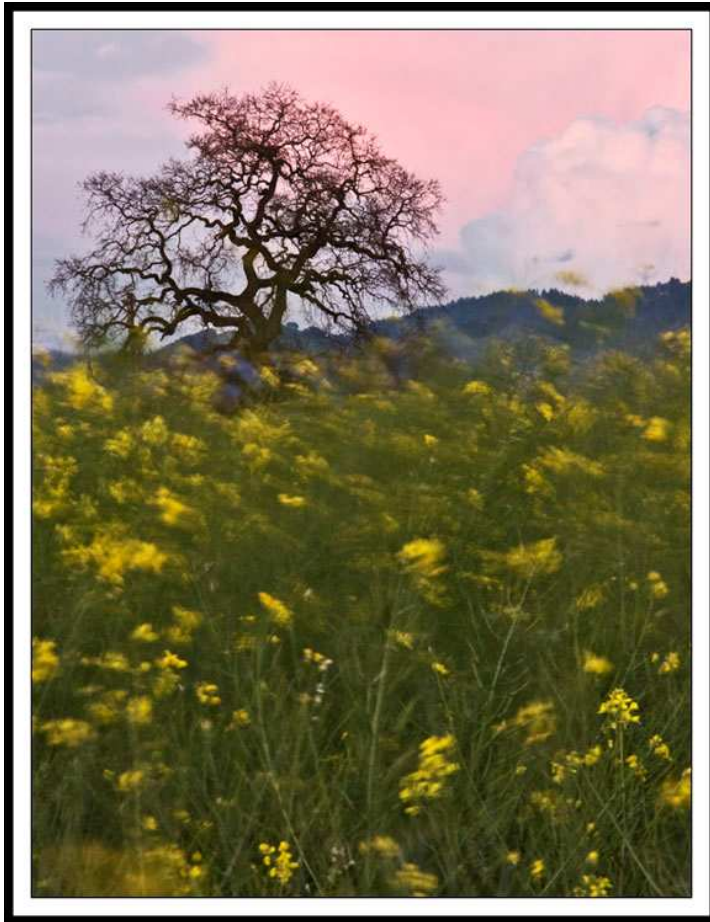
Photo by Ira Gelfman

THE SIGN UP BINDER FOR ALL FIELD TRIPS FOR 2009 IS ON THE SIDE TABLE AT EVERY MEETING. PLEASE NOTE IF YOU PLAN TO BRING FAMILY AND/OR FRIENDS WITH YOU.

~ FORUM FEATURE ~

~ Oak in Mustard ~

1 May 2009



Marcia Hart

Any comments or suggestions on this one?

Howard Bruensteiner

Here's a few ideas at first glance. Lose the sky, and most if not all of the oak tree. The oak just adds some sense of place but competes with the foreground for my attention. And it looks awkward to me to have a well defined foreground and background separated by a blurry area, particularly when aspects of the blurry area to me are the main points of interest. Then focus closer with a shallower depth of field (use neutral density) and take longer exposures from a slightly higher camera angle so that the background fades off and doesn't reach into the sky. Take lots of exposures. You may get a more interesting pattern in the blowing mustard. You might even try some flash to catch a sharp stop in the action of the near stems which might make a good center of interest surrounded by a pattern of blur.

Also, without the sky it would be easier to add some contrast and life to the yellow blooms.

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Greg Gorsiski

My reaction to this is pretty much the complete opposite of Howard's. This feels composited and purposefully created this way. That's how I take it. I feel this is a composition of the Tree and Sky, and don't understand the need to remove it. It's common practice in art for foregrounds to be, well, not foregrounds but more an entrance to the focus. In this case the tree. The colors, the sky, the composited layers feel created that way. That's the artists vision. The hole in the bottom of the tree where the trunk seems to disappear bothers me some, but that feels like execution, not compositional.

As a compositional piece I like it, Marcia. I get where you were going, at least I think I do, therefore it is pleasing. The double focusing is interesting as it adds an element of wind feeling.

Is it reality? No, but I don't care. Its an artistic piece, almost painterly.

Getting back to using a foreground as not a foreground, this is where it may be too flat. I tried just adding some shadow enhancement in the foreground to leave the second focus area to also use the light. I'm trying to invite you to go into the image, to "go to the light" as they say. But I'd like to leave the intended composition.

I completely see where Howard is coming from, and with a straight nature photograph I can see it. But I don't believe this can be treated as a straight photograph. If I was creating this as a compositional painting, which I feel Marcia was going for, you cannot crop out the sky. It's the contrasting backdrop for the main focus tree, which is framed into by the field or motion.

I don't think this is an image of blur as the focus. I'd want it to be a background element of motion feeling, so I would not crop it at all, but maybe give more focus to the other elements. which I did here with the use of Light.

My two cents.



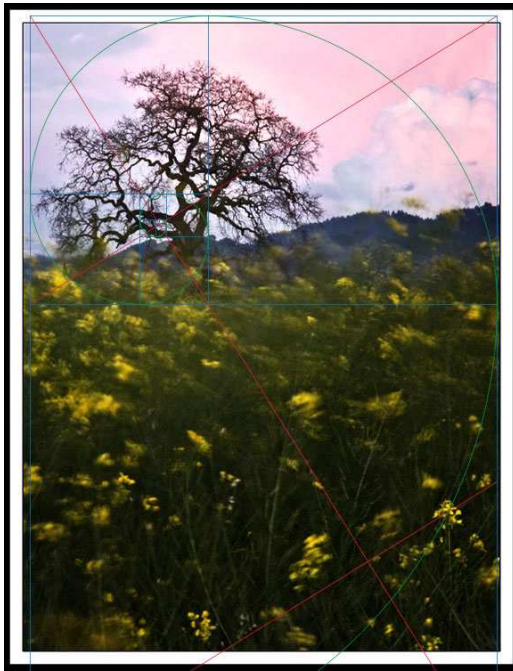
(I filled in the hole in the base of the tree)

Using the intended focus of the tree as the main compositional element, I overlaid a Divine Proportion over the image, its almost is a perfect composition.

A Divine Proportion is to help us look at an image, how our eyes follow an image once they lock into a starting focus point.

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Using the 2 different ways to look at this image, Howard's and mine, you can see how this Divine Proportion works.

I picked the tree as my starting point. It follows Divine Proportion, I'm happy.

Howard picked the foreground as the starting point. It doesn't following anything. It's almost chaos. Howard is not happy.

Who's right? Neither of us. It's how we perceived the image. Now its up to Marcia to decide. If it's the tree, then maybe you have to reinforce that more (like I did with Light). If its the field of flowers, then maybe the tree is distracting, like Howard feels.

An artist's job is very tough. We have to pick our direction, then hit people over the head with a 2X4 so they get what you are trying to say.

Drew Jackson

I agree with Greg.

What bothers me though about this image is how the foreground appears impressionistic in the upper left third of the image and then transitions to more realistic towards the bottom. If it were mine, I would focus more on the oak and the awesome color of the sky and keep the foreground in that wispy other-world mode.

Marcia Hart

Well, Greg, you are right. This was the composition I was looking for - a beautiful old oak set in moving mustard. Your suggestions were very helpful and here's my next try. I worked on it a lot more after taking a look at your ideas. I tried to make the shape of the trunk more obvious. (It's VERY slanted with the true base concealed by the mustard.) I hope this works better. I also buried the wires and the post. I also like the new lighting and contrast better now and am open to more ideas. MANY thanks!

(Drew: What bothers me though about this image is how the foreground appears impressionistic in the upper left third of the image and then transitions to more realistic towards the bottom. If it were mine, I would focus more on the oak and the awesome color of the sky and keep the foreground in that wispy other-world mode.)

I guess I could try using a blur filter on the foreground, but if I cropped the image where it appears you're suggesting, I would end up with the horizon exactly in the middle which is rarely pleasing and definitely not in this one. It also loses the feeling I like of having to move through some distance to reach the tree. Thanks for the ideas, Drew. I'll try blurring the foreground (rather than cropping it) which may have been what you had in mind and see how that looks.



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Howard Bruensteiner

I guess my first take on this was that the moving mustard was more interesting than the oak. I've seen lots of oaks and this one did not look very special, particularly with its trunk obscured. And the sky was too bright to allow me to appreciate the faint color it had. I couldn't see or feel what Marcia experienced on that day. So I focused on the mustard.

To look at this fully without cropping I still can't get past the ping-pong effect of having sharp elements at the top and bottom. And there is a horizontal line of blurred mustard which further divides the image. (Greg, how does your nautilus shell compositional swirl get past that horizontal band of blur dividing the image?) Greg's dodge/burn of the mustard's brightness so that the eye is led to the tree did wonders to pull the elements of this image together. Black and white masters will tell you that you can take control and lead a viewers eyes by the flow of light you create in the "darkroom". But still, the ping-pong effect between the tree and the bottom right flowers had more control of my eyes. Our eyes are drawn to areas of contrast and sharpness. And I was still pulled in two directions.

I decided to work on this and I felt I needed to crop out the bottom third of the mustard. Just blurring that area couldn't do enough and the bright parts of the mustard stems could still be distracting. Darkening them would leave an uninteresting featureless area.

So I cropped. But I didn't do it using a simple crop. To avoid the middle horizon problem I selected the mustard area I wanted to keep and did a transform>scale to pull the bottom edge of that selection over the area I wanted to lose and took that edge right down to the bottom edge of the image. The mustard is distorted by its movement so the additional distortion of the scale adjustment is not noticeable.

Then I did a highlight adjustment in shadow/highlights to bring out detail in the clouds, followed by other selective contrast and saturation adjustments to bring out detail in the mustard and clouds and further enhance the flow of light from the mustard up to the tree. I also cloned or healing brushed some areas in the mustard, thinned out the dense area of branches in the top center of the tree, and darkened where the trunk is obscured to give it more length.

Drew Jackson

Howard's treatment eliminated what my eye saw as distracting elements (the in-focus flowers at the bottom of the frame) and is definitely an improvement. I am still at a loss as to why anyone is concerned about the horizon being dead center. This image doesn't have much of a horizon. (The oak breaks this line)



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Drew Jackson



I started working this image and it was leaning more and more toward Velvia on steroids. I think you get the idea of where I was headed.

Fun image. I like the blurred elements with the sharp silhouette of the oak. The trick will be getting the mustard to pop. My greens are a little more intense than Howard's. (His are a more natural green) Where do your tastes lie?

Marcia Hart

May 3, 2009, 11:31am, Howard Bruensteiner wrote:

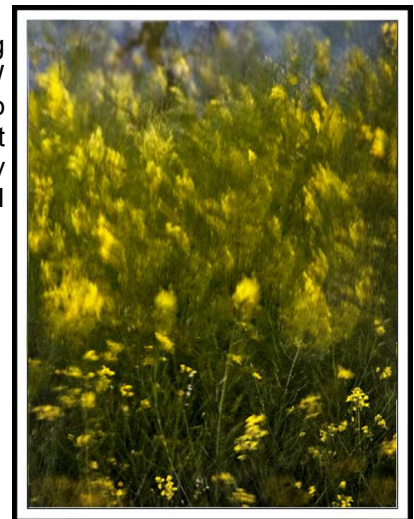
(Howard:*I decided to work on this.*)

Thanks for your ideas on using the transform tool to draw the mustard in motion down to fill the space where the motionless mustard lives. Interestingly - and I know I'm likely alone in this - I like the well focused mustard in the lower portion. It draws my eye in in the lower right corner then I weave my way through the mid-section to the tree then through the sky. Works for me, but clearly not for you and not for others.

Clearing some of the bulkiness in the upper branches of the tree is another good idea and I'm going to go back and work on that.

Howard Bruensteiner

Given our different takes on what we find interesting in this photo, I'm going back to my original point of interest which is the mustard. Perhaps the RAW file has more to work with but I haven't seen an edit yet that comes close to what Marcia describes as her experience with the light that day. The sky is just too bright and the oak is too ordinary. So here is the mustard. This is really rough, And I really like the mustard portion of Drew's latest edit much better. I probably should have just started with that image and stretched it out.



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(continued from page 13)

Howard Bruensteiner

OK, I did the same thing over but this time started with Drew's edit. I like it much better:



Marcia Hart

Having seen a lot of your images over the past few years, I know this type of image appeals to you. But, I just seem to wander around in these last two looking for something interesting to land on. If anyone's interested, I can post the two originals from which the image was made. I'm guessing everyone's had enough of this one by now...

Howard Bruensteiner

(Marcia: *I just seem to wander around in these last two looking for something interesting to land on.*)

It's like trying to capture the wind. If you or it stops, it isn't there anymore.