

On Blessed Grace and Timeless Beauty...

Who Ever Loved, That Loved Not At First Sight? As You Like It, Shakespeare

Restin'...

A soft, yet cold winters evening is gracious host to gentle sky and perched, solitary denizen. A slight wind ruffled open water and ice-covered pond behind the tree. Light thistle tops accent a solitary tree. As the tree arches gracefully from water, clouds seem to cap the eyes upward sweep, falling to distant mountain shadows.

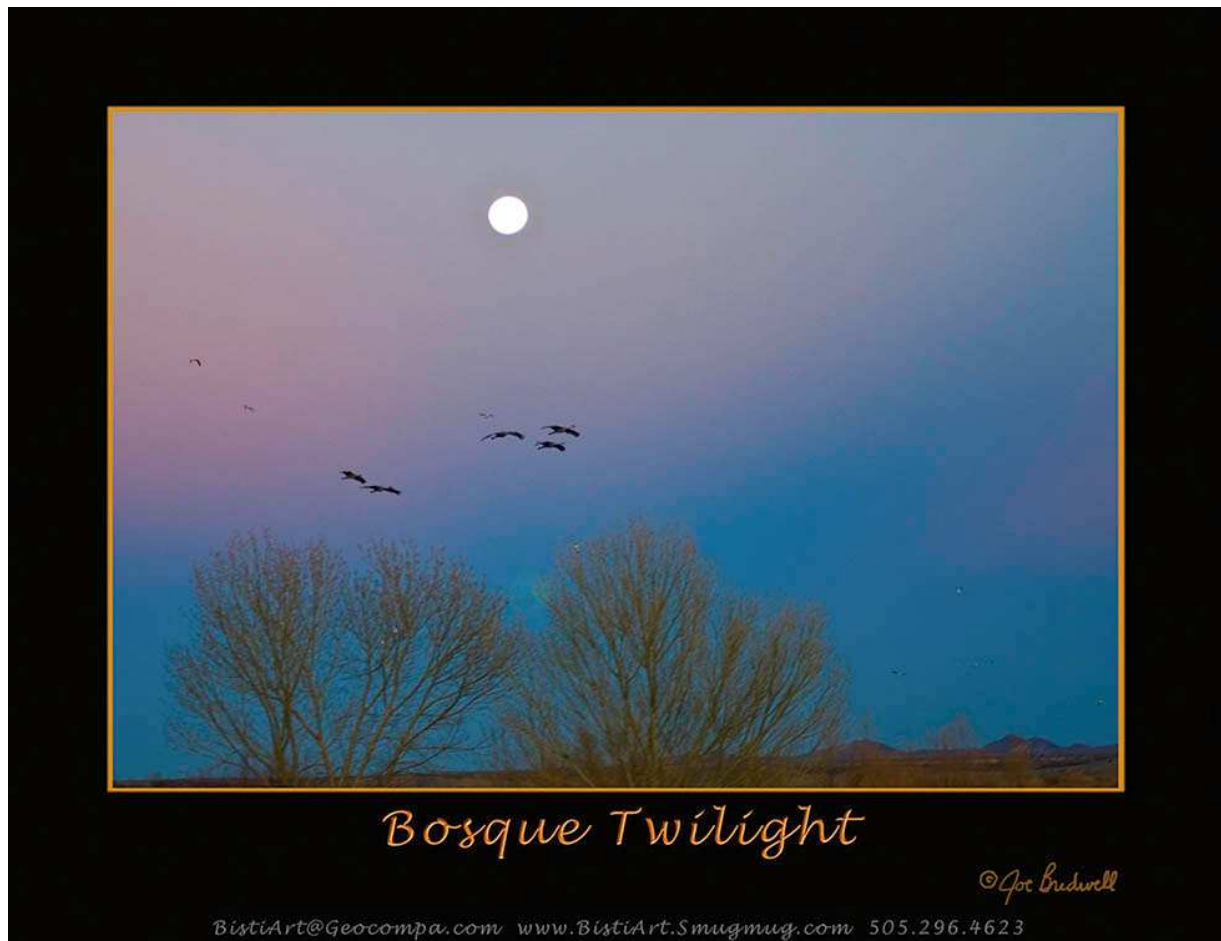
But it's golden thistle tops and ruffled water which really stir timeless memories.

It's Magic Hour - that special time around sunrise and sunset when golden sunlight makes nature really come alive. In the next images, let's follow incoming sand hill cranes from down Sun until their glide lands them in safe waters.



Bosque Twilight

Galen Rowell coined an enduring phrase photographers love - *Edge of Light**.



An Edge of Light occurs just after sunset when direct light turns the sky pink and reflected light turns the sky below blue.

Bosque Twilight, with pastel hues and dramatic sky, provides elegant testimony as an exquisitely poignant backdrop to sand hill cranes seeking a cold winters landing at Bosque del Apache. Here, incoming birds, seeming to stand in sharp, *bas* relief, intent only upon a night's rest, simply want some place to take it easy...

A subtle, but compelling compositional point consists of sub-triangles within triangles. Sand Hill cranes in the lead trio seen the focus point of a compositional triangle. Yet, when we consider two trailing cranes and rising moon, we have another, more subtle triangle. Finally, a third triangle of two trees and moon encompasses our incoming cranes.

Rowell's subtle Edge of Light dramatizes this image, which these cranes seem to soon cross.

Saffron Peace

With my imagination caught in the exquisite grace of such effortless flight, I turned to see they were closer to water now. It seemed like "*I'm going home...*"



The sky's pastel panoply spoke in delicious change, softening and deepening my quickly reacting mood during final descent. My mother painted in such pastels; two soft pink roses in a vase have adorned my bedroom wall for a quarter century.

Soft light reflected from ice covered pond, a faint belt of somnolent fading landscape, Saffron hues of setting sun - all seem a sacrament to the peace of our gliding Bosque birds.

In *Chesapeake*, James Michener devoted many evocative passages to migration of Canadian geese along the friendly shores of Chesapeake Bay. He even named the lead bird Onk-Or, as it brought mate and remaining family from distant flight safely to night's rest.

By now, I've become deeply enmeshed with changing, evocative colors of Bosque's twilight transition. These images were shot in sequence, from Bosque Twilight's dramatic Edge of Light to warmly encompassing yellow gold panoply of

Saffron Peace. We see nature in its rarest form, as light's subtle change makes a truly magnificent backdrop.

Clearly, it's light which is the major theme of this piece...

Saffron Landing



Saffron Landing

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At day's end, our incoming flight is on its final glide path. Shortly, they will touch down in open water.

You can feel the lead bird's concentration; "I see our extended family already safely resting. Follow me down...!" Spread wings, feather tips almost like a hand full of fingers ~ all seem to point to a chilly, ice-covered landing spot. In another moment or so, after an evening of exceptional clarity and alluring sunlight, darkness will set in - broken by the occasional quack.

From the perceptible Edge of Light in Bosque Twilight to final Saffron Landing, our eye is graced with evening's soft sunset beauty. In writing fiction, a Muse, that elegant Spirit of Creativity, is often called upon for true inspiration. Perhaps

our returning friends are just such a graceful musical score from an enduring, ever-present Muse...

Joe Brudwell

** Twice each day, the cool, blue light of night interacts with warm tones of daylight. For a full hour at either end of the day, colors of light mixed together in endless combinations, as if someone in the sky were shaking a kaleidoscope. This effect takes place, not directly where the sun rises or sets, but where sun's rays bring warm, direct light onto parts of land and sky also lit by the cool, reflected light of evening.*

The most interesting parts of the natural world are these edges. Places where ocean meets land, meadow meets forest, timberline touches the heights ... all create dramatic visual impact!

Near day's end, transmitted light becomes ever warmer, reflected light ever colder. I look for this visual edge, especially where it is emphasized against clouds and other light backgrounds. In fact, my favorite way to photograph a geographical edge is to make it converge with a visual edge of light to underscore the subtle, yet magnificent difference between these two zones.

When Magic Hour arrives, my thoughts center on light rather than landscape. I search for perfect light, then hunt for something earthbound to match it. The best images look like visual riddles _with_ unexpected answers. These visual riddles have been created by starting with answers, then working backward.

Galen Rowell, 1986

31 January, 2008

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