

Light's Passion Play

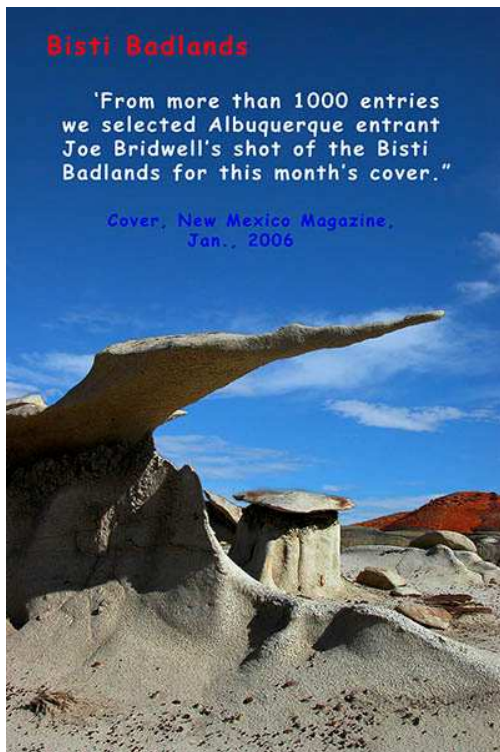
*Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making famine where abundance lies...*

Sonnet I, Shakespeare

Lovely Juliet (Gweynneth Paltrow) first appeared as a mustachioed boy in Oscar-winning *Shakespeare in Love*. In the last scene, after evocative emotional twists and turns, Juliet was bedecked in a gorgeous gown before Queen Elizabeth (Dame Judy Dent)...

Yes, I know photography doesn't often start with this simplicity, but an idea's germ can begin an elegant body of work.

May I take you through some intriguing images from my own source of digital growth as I learned to chase the right light? Early shots were simply broad daylight shots capturing shape, not light. Later shots captured evocative light, eventually creating dynamic landscapes worthy of merit. Each image here has been vetted ~ scrutiny by judge, jury, or multiple photographer in competition and has one of several levels of award.



How did my new path, chasing wild light, start?

For me, a friend brought in a magazine one day and I found my image on the cover. I had entered a competition; the image above won the competition and became a magazine cover.

Thus began a love affair with the Bisti Badlands and digital photography. The parameters: daylight, a point-and-shoot, and all I knew of the digital darkroom was Photoshop Elements...



Later, I read Galen Rowell's *Mountain Light*. Researching light, Rowell showed Newton's 16th century experiment in which *Light, Rather Than Any Object Itself, Is a Source of Color!* Its inspiration set me on a quest equaling Romeo's avid pursuit of Juliet. The quest ~ a pursuit of light in wild places, light's evocative expression on dynamic landscapes, and, in why light has such an important effect of photography.

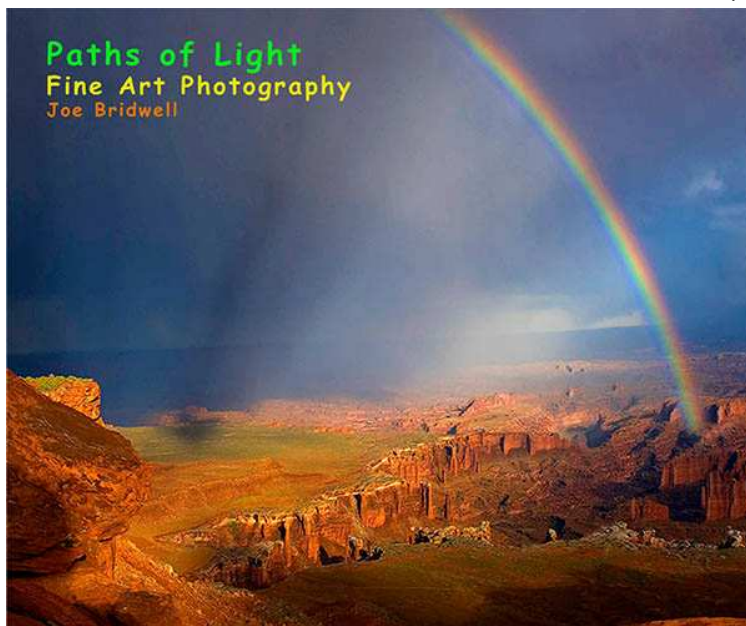
For me, this White Sands image called Lavender Dawn epitomizes Newton's edict. It's predawn, sand is a virtually trackless waste, and faint light gives an eerie lavender color to these gorgeous scimitar shapes. The saffron sky echoes brighter pastels in this richly lustrous panoply of color and velour texture.

Many of you have seen White Sands when it is white. Those pictures were usually taken in midday. So Newton, again, was right?

If Shakespeare had included this lavender colored scene in his poignant words, would Juliet feel *"Who hath loved, that loved not at first sight!"*

What about the cover for *Paths of Light*?

An afternoon's run across a wet, slickrock slope brought me to the very edge of



Island in the Sky, Canyonlands. A single lens reflex camera, guarded in one hand, dangled from its strap as another hand kept brush off.

Light seemed to focus in Majestic Blessing, as if I was standing near a window - between cliffs of the Colorado, a magnificent spring rainbow's arc, and an ominous darker shadow falling on the distant green mesa top. Oh, Happy Day...

If Romeo stood on this distant point, would he have said, *"But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks?"*

During the deepest passions of love, dreams, and emotions, a soul's sincerest feelings seem to all congeal when a Muse taps one's shoulder, often clamoring ~ awake, create a new masterpiece.

What if the opus is a surreal other-world ~ an Anasazi Moon? Perhaps, in that distant, even ancient time, things simply were not as they would now seem. Instead of humans, Hoodoos held sway. Instead of distant moons, a nearby planet's reflection served to light their way.

And light - this world's sunsets have a diffuse edge of light - pink where direct sunshine falls, blue where light is reflected.



Fair Juliet, she of the ready answer, she overcoming her boldness, might say, *"Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel, Making a abundance where famine lies..."*

Or maybe, light is simply reflected from lowering clouds as in Sleepin' Ute Sunset below. Such evanescent ight from day's end adds compelling, inspirational glory.



A day of furious, almost vindictive wind buffeted the car, put dust in the lens, even played havoc with allergies. Winding down from the mountain, the rearview mirror suddenly reflected gold. Cold now, the abating wind banged the rear deck against the handheld camera.

Yet, this provocative scene was simply too vivid to ignore.

I was not to see until in the digital darkroom the most gorgeous aspects of this image, expect spectacular triangle of light created by the Sun's reflection across the belly of Sleeping Ute Mountain bouncing off the golden fleeced clouds above.

Once again, Shakespeare also seemed to know light, fashioning emotionally dramatic plays just as God paints incredible landscape scenes above from the Four Corners Region of the Southwestern United States.

For, did Romeo not say,
*"What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon..."*

Light has become my friend, my companion in wild captures, my provocateur to titillate judges interest...

Light, from soft predawn pastels, through daylight's brash dominance, to evening's elegantly evocative 'lovely gown', repeatedly draws me to its ever-changing bosom. Lavender Dawn, Majestic Blessing, Anasazi Moon, and Sleepin' Ute Sunset might have simply been different fabrics Juliet wore in a new gown at each subsequent meeting with her tempestuous Queen.

Our mustachioed boy was really not much to look at. In many ways, that's what we might see when we take daylight pictures. The light seems harsh, the colors strong, perhaps stark rather than subtle and rich.

Yet, dawn or dusk were really Juliet's meter as her persona changed with each dazzling gowns stunning beauty when standing before Queen Elizabeth. Each of these four images might represent such a gown's attraction. For, Elizabeth had an eye for beauty, as well...

Worthy of Merit

Bisti Badlands, Cover, New Mexico Magazine, Jan., 2006

Lavender Dawn, Member's Choice, 2nd Place, Story/Mood, Enchanted Lens Camera Club, 2008

Majestic Blessing, People's Choice, Adult Amateur, New Mexico State Fair, 2007

Member's Choice, 1st Place, Landscapes, Enchanted Lens Camera Club, 2007

Anasazi Moon, Member's Choice, 1st Place, Outdoors, Enchanted Lens Camera Club, 2008

Sleepin' Ute Sunset, 2nd Place, Single Judge Competition, Enchanted Lens Camera Club, 2007

10 June, 2008

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