

REFLECTIONS



Captured on a tropical island

Carl Johan Kimell

REFLECTIONS



Captured on a tropical island

Carl Johan Kimell

Copyright © photos & texts Carl Johan Kimell 2nd edition printed in Bali by Niti Mandala 2015 Published by CJ Kimell

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be re-produced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system without prior written permission from the author.

REFLECTIONS

Captured on a tropical island

Carl Johan Kimell

PREFACE

This book was originally a gift to my father. A compilation of photographs from my first years in Bali as a summary of what I had been up to, that couldn't be described in the occasional conversations we had on the phone. My dad has accounts and access to all social media needed to follow and see any updates or posts I would send out through those channels, he just doesn't log on to them. Which is fine, he is still content and has managed to avoid the information overload that those superficial mediums may bring. Knowing this I came up with the idea to give him something substantial, something he could hold and take his time with and would give him a kind of summary of what had been accumulating on the Tropical Viking on Instagram and the blog. As I sat down and went through all the material I realised that this gave room for a lot more than just pictures with a tagline attached to them. A printed book actually provided the opportunity to elaborate on the thoughts that are the foundation to many of the short texts that accompanied the posted pictures. At first intended to be a document describing a process in image and words of how my view on life has evolved since I moved from Sweden, the writing rather got me chasing down the rabbit hole and forced me to question, define and put my thoughts to the test. Part of that chase is what you now hold in your hand.

It is called philosophy, to study the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality and existence. To me all of it starts with consciousness and I am immensely fascinated by it. The texts in this book ponders on this. They are notes and sketches derived from observing life as a novice explorer. My interest in human behaviour, reaction and reasoning have paved a path of reflective questioning, always asking why or how come that came to be. I see this as my first expedition into the jungle of human consciousness or perhaps as an excavation in the mine of minds where the source is far from depleted if yet even found. Putting it into print is admittedly a nervous task as I know my reasoning might change direction in the future. Not seeing this as an excuse not to do it, but rather as a catalyst that will allow that process to start I see no reason to procrastinate it and just get it out there. Life is an opportunity to learn and to learn we must admit that we are curious. The innocence of curiosity is a freedom that allows exploration without expectations of success or risks of failure and the point of exploration is not to dissect truth from subjective consciousness but to understand experience as united with the experiencing mind. Knowledge, reality, existence and the study of their nature may well lead to the love of wisdom but so far I have only managed to make them Reflections.

Dedicated to my father

Håkan Kimell

I love you.

Light makes its impression on us through waves, crashing into us and creating dents in our receptors which transmits the vibrations to our perception. The waves do not travel with a story, they carry no narrative as they roll into our view. Their impact is always in the present but what we think of it will be a product of its resonance. In the same way the captured moments in this book do not tell the story, they only present the starting point. Your journey is different to mine and so is your reflection of it.



Once the journey has begun the only way back to where it started is by moving forward.





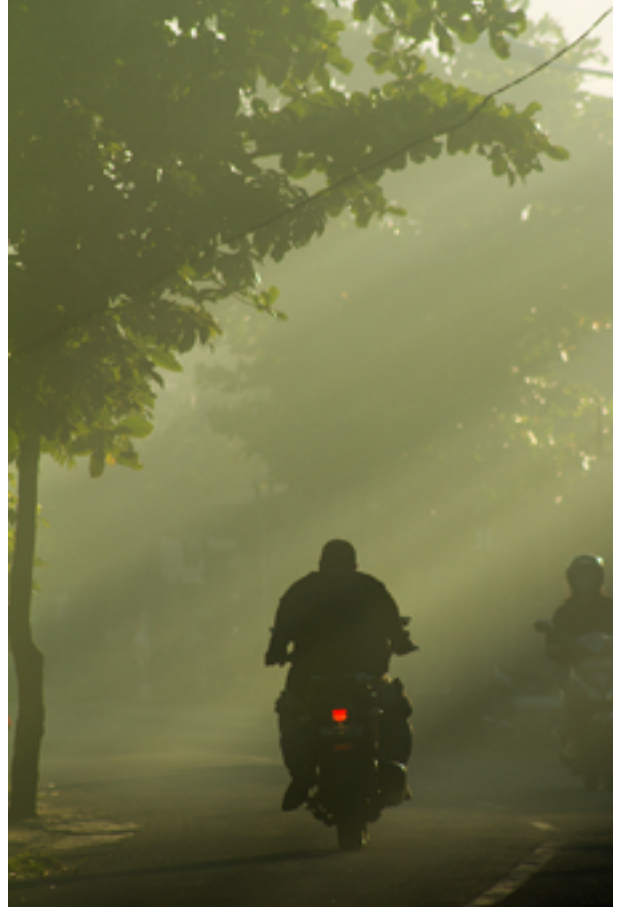
What there is, is there. All that can change is our relation to it.

The reason we travel, it is said, is not to reach a destination but to experience the journey itself. As we move from one place to another we may become aware of the fact that our perspective constantly changes. We literally look at things from a different point of view, our relation to them change and with this change our understanding of these relations grows. The journey is then not about the travel but about changing a state of mind. This book is a journey, not intended to change the traveler's mind but to offer some perspectives that might reveal their point of view.















Reality, when described it disappears.

Our minds seem to have a habit of constantly describing the world around us. Categorising and labelling, creating an intricate matrix of reference points made of abstract symbols called letters and words. Isn't it amazing how we agree on the meaning of these shapes and sounds to translate our perception when we wish to describe it? We call it communication and often misinterpret it as a way to present reality when really a word is not a presentation, but a representation of experience. Something that acts on the behalf of something that is not present. Also, the word becomes a filter that will only let part of the experience shine through and be received. Therefore it might be wise to use these filters to their appropriate intention in order to express what we really want to have stated.

I thought it might be good to start with this reminder of the symbolic value of word as these texts tend to use them. Not saying that makes them meaning less but rather saying that the perception of the mind can never be fully represented by symbolic abstraction. Reality, only present when experienced...but then again, reality is just a word.









The barriers only purpose is to manifest the open field.

Is our world anything else but a constant game of comparison? In our habit of describing things we first have to define what it is we are describing, we have to make it finite and finished. To do so wet is separated from dry, hot from cold and cloud from sky by comparing the differences and outlining them with clear contours. Once the world around us is outlined and clear a contour around self appears automatically and can conveniently determine its position and judge its desirability in relation to other.

Imagine standing in a field with a fence around it with another, larger, open field on the outside of the fence. One could say that the field were you are standing is restricted and limited and the other is open and free. The fence lets us determine our position in relation to it as we move and we can measure our success or failure in doing so by either achieving to our expectations or not. We assume it is preferred to reach the other side of the fence where freedom awaits. Part of the problem is that the concept of freedom only exists as long as the barrier is there to manifest limitation. In the same way we construct obstacles for ourselves only to result in a desire to overcome them instead of looking at the field where we already are and recognising that there is grass under our feet



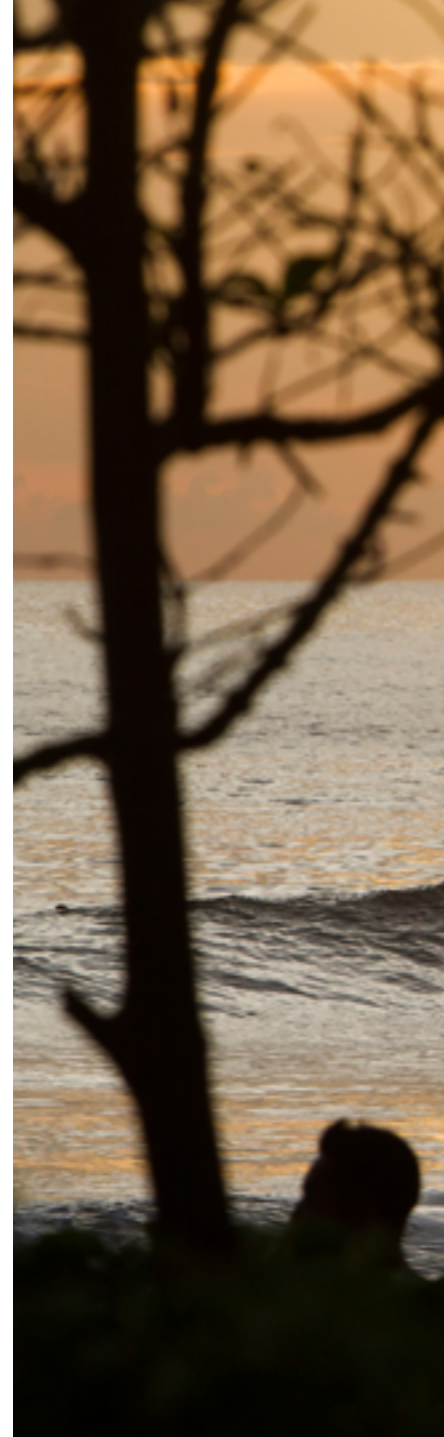




To search is being on a path built on expectations, to be lost is a path paved with acceptance.











Never did a single drop of water end up where it wasn't going.

It is not really true that water will always take the path of least resistance as water will actually only take the path of no resistance. In a world of yes or no the water either goes or it doesn't. Resistance is only us measuring the path in order to give it a value and be able to compare it to other. In the same it seems the human mind is more interested in looking at the resistance than on the flow and by doing so we give focus to the object rather than the void around it. By making it apparent we give it presence and by growing the desire for its absence we only enhance our knowledge of its existence. Just like water will not ignore resistance neither can we run away from our problems but if we act in accordance with the resistance we can avoid running into a solid wall but instead learn how to flow between. Not saying it is that simple, but it kind of is.















If beyond this there is nothing, then this is everything and nothing can wait.









Thinking life will go on risks living to be postponed for . . . next time.

Perhaps it sounds a bit harsh but being alive is not an end in itself, it is a means and our tool to live. New experiences is what I believe feeds the human soul, it leads to new learnings and a richer understanding of one's own essence. To reach there one must leave assumptions and expectations at the door, step outside and cross the border of the comfort zone. The fear of the unknown is the greatest fear of all but once fear is accepted curiosity is allowed to step in and lead the way to where adventure starts. Knowledge does not come from assuming it comes from experience and the only way to do that is to live. There is no reason to chase the end of it but we are not here with the purpose to survive.









Who are you?

I was sitting in a café with my camera and laptop on the table when the person next to me asked if I was a photographer. In other words he was asking "What do you do?".

It is interesting how we so often are determined to put labels on each other by what we occupy ourselves with for the majority of our time. As if we can define the people around us by their choice of profession. This works both ways and not only do we label others but identify ourselves in the same process. Often resulting in elaborate explanations to why we do what we do and sometimes excusing it by saying we would rather do something different but just haven't come around to it yet. Just to make it clear that we are potentially someone else.



It may be true that what we do is what we are, in that moment and it may also be true that it can be beneficial to present what we have done in the past to give someone an idea of what we are capable of. But the cohesion on the label should never stick to the ego longer than the action if we want to open the opportunity to being in the moment.

I smiled at my friend and answered

"Yes, when I take pictures, I'm a photographer"

"I hear what you're saying," he replied with amazing acknowledgement

"and when you surf, you're a surfer!"

An even bigger smile appeared as I sipped my coffee

"My point exactly, but mostly I just breathe"







Time does not pass unnoticed, it only appears when thought of.











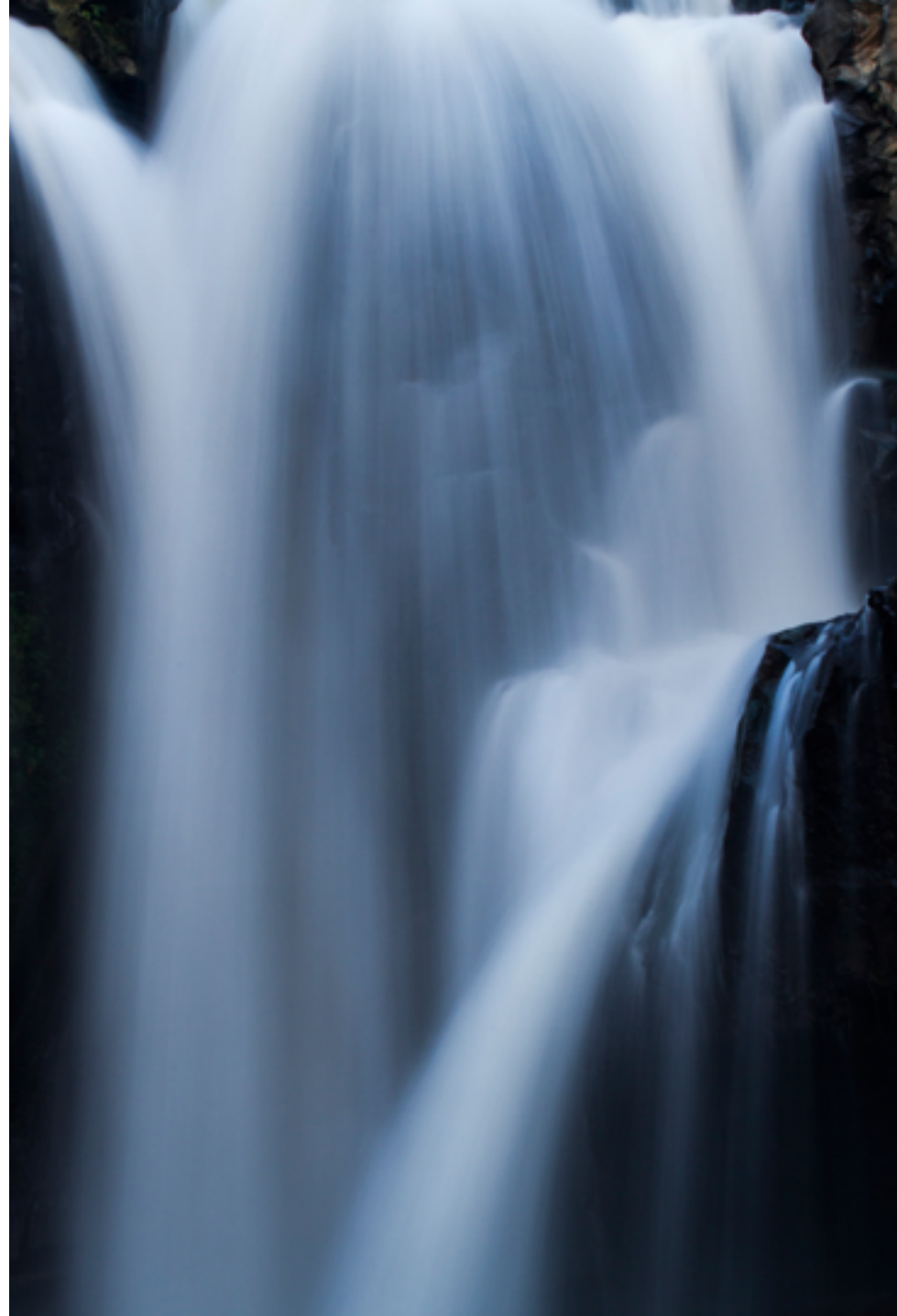


Past events do not create memories, present preferences of them do.





The edge of water is sharper than the blade of any knife.







*Once a hunter gatherer always a hunter gatherer.
Chasing events to come and collecting moments to remember*









If we imagine perfection we only achieve the ability to avoid it.

Things could always be better, couldn't they? Is that not why we keep chasing, hoping, expecting and anticipating constant change? It is the comparison game in its prime. Constantly looking forwards towards better becomes in itself an endlessness that the present can't keep up with. Improvement is a fickle path, at the same time as we strive to erase disease we tend to tip the scale towards the pursuit for pleasure instead of settling with being content. As long as we keep comparing the concepts of better and worse will keep interrupting the equilibrium that is perfection. However, perfection does not arrive by the changing of conditions but rather by us adjusting our perspective of them.





In a world perceived through contrasts, those who shine bright will fade quickly into backgrounds of neon lights.

To perceive is to measure. Our definition for the world is a result from determining something as being less or more of something. It is a game of contrasts and when boiled down and pushed to its extremes it is all bright on dark or dark on bright. Background or object and in order to see the background we need an object, we need a relationship, a reference to measure by. In the same way that we can only feel heat when we know how it is to feel cold and vice versa, a cloud will only appear at the edge of the sky. To understand what it means to add we must recognise the concept of subtraction because they are the same only from different sides of the equation line and can not appear without each other. Thus life is a constant comparison where the nuances are nothing but binary code deluding our senses by being camouflaged in the high resolution in which we perceive the world.



















Expression, always converts to impression on the receiving end.



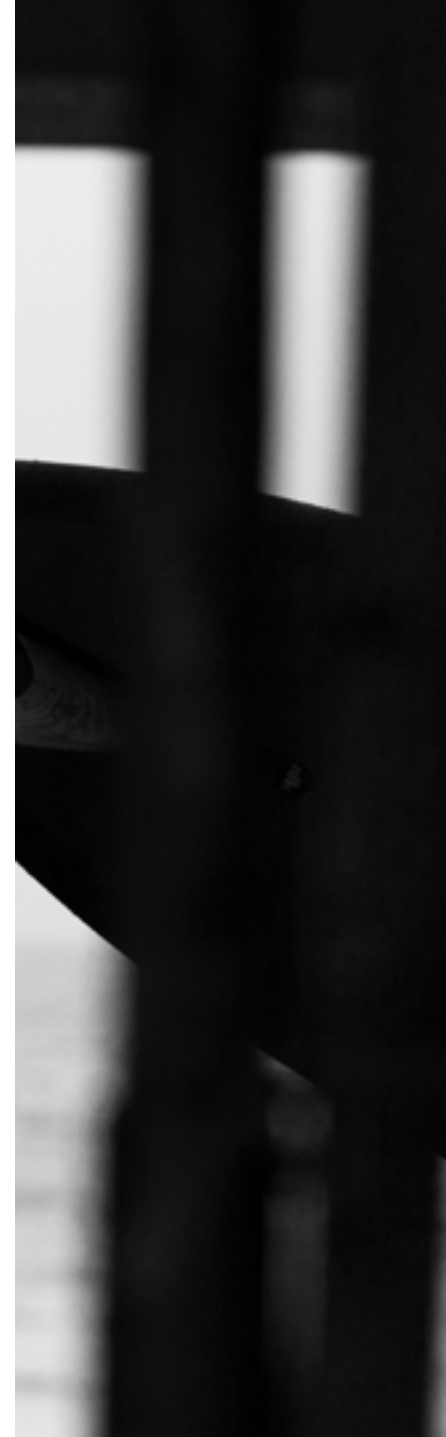




The attitude at the bottom sets the approach for the top.

"Ok I will try that next time" is a comment I've heard so many times when giving advice in different situations. Considering an action as trying will automatically condemn the activity as less than itself. It is as if by trying we permit ourselves to see our doings either successful or failures in comparison to an expected result instead of valuing the doing as an incomparable unique experience in our lives and an end in itself. To attempt to do something is labelling that whatever we are aiming for is not actually what we are doing. Whenever the expectations are not reached, frustration arises and when expectations are achieved the strife for the next achievement begins. My experience tells me that satisfaction is most often reached if actions are carried out with the intention of experiencing them. Seeing that there is no purpose to what we do is the fastest way to give them meaning.











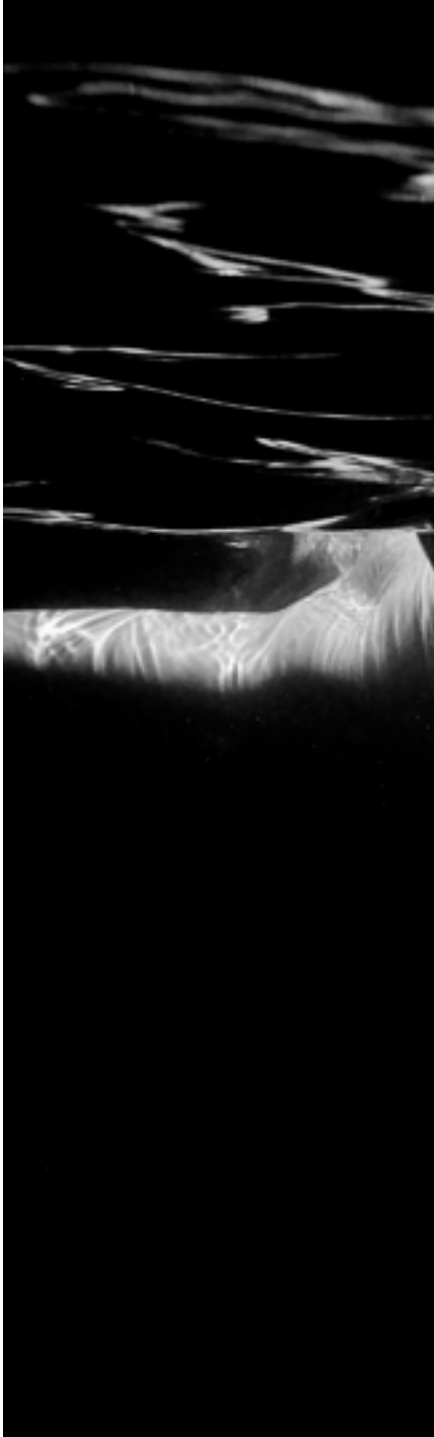
It keeps happening because you are. Without you, it wouldn't.













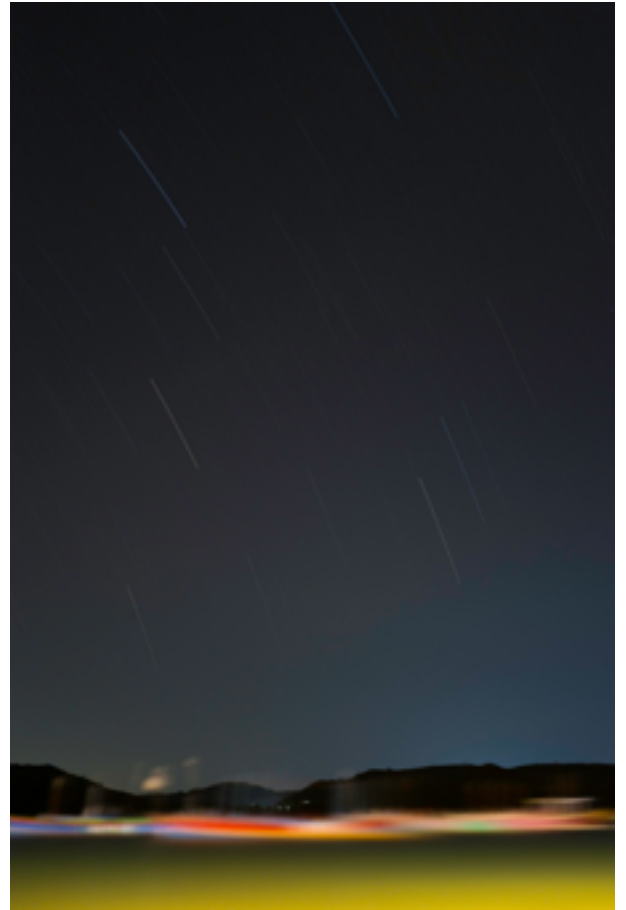
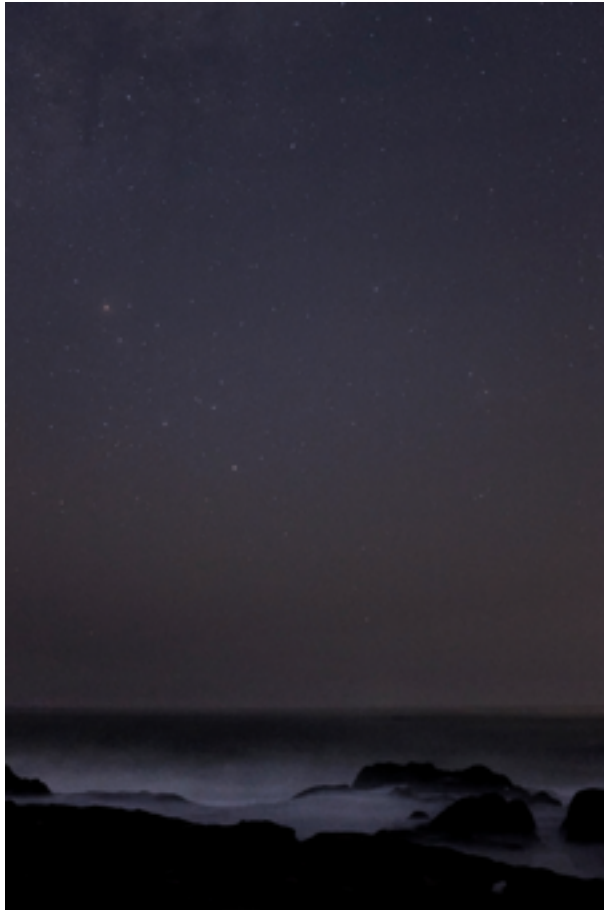














What's the matter?

Someone once pointed out to me that the mass of the world is constant and that all we do is moving matter around. Just as with energy nothing is ever created or destroyed, only changed. We take things from one place, peel, melt, shave and shape them with the intention to make it into something different. To me this process can be very beautiful, reshaping nature and resulting in something that makes life more pleasurable. At the same time I believe there is a balance to be considered in each act of moving mass from one place to another. We invoke change with every movement and perhaps is it the fact that we do it so often that we stop to notice the change and cease to care. It is almost as if we believe that things are only important when we give them thought but as long as we don't consider them they don't have and impact. As if the thought could flee the fact just because it doesn't matter.











TO CONCLUDE

I went away for a couple of days and spent some time in the mountains to meditate. At the moment I was going through some heartfelt issues and a change of environment was well called for. I switched off all connection to the outer world, no phone, no laptop, no input of any kind except what was experienced. With my camera and notebook I ventilated my thoughts in between yoga and meditation, all in silence. When I returned to my home a few days later and turned on my phone again I had a text message waiting on my phone. It said simply "Are you back?". I looked around my room, at all the things that were exactly as I had left them and realised I something had changed, I saw them differently. Without even reflecting over it I started typing back to answer "No, I kept on moving". We can never go back, only return after having moved through and around. The road of life might not always seem like the most pleasant journey but there is a lesson to be learned with each experience. With that in mind putting one foot in front of the other can be either cautious or curious. With time we learn that all moments pass, the good and the bad and there is no need to think that we will be stuck with either. There is no choice but to keep on moving and whether we are willing to realise it or not it is a constant exploration. Every moment a new experience and an opportunity to be reminded that all I know is that I will never know it all.



The only way to keep our mind from running away is by setting it free



REFLECTIONS



REFLECTIONS

