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preface

This book is a collection of landscape photography I shot on foot and via drone between 2018 and 2022. Most were taken on my travels across US Interstate 77, from Ohio to Georgia, featuring various landscapes and city architecture. Entries include a bit more about me and the photo.

Growing up in Cleveland's Lee-Harvard neighborhood, my first exposure to nature was an outdoor patio attached to the upstairs bedroom I shared with my brother. It had a great view of giant oak trees and colonial homes a few streets over. I'd also spend time at local parks, my favorite being the nearby Garfield Park Reservation.

When I was 21, dissatisfied with the direction of my life, I wondered what it would be like to live outside of Ohio. After two weeks of deliberation, I settled on Los Angeles, 3,000 miles away from anything or anyone familiar.

My time spent exploring various parks as I settled into "home" -- wherever "home" was at the time -- helped me the most when I felt introspective, disconnected or discouraged.

It is said that home is a place where everything is familiar. At the same time, life brings us to crossroads of change as it unfolds around us. We choose to either resist it with fear and certainty or approach it with faith and love, despite our fears.

I arrived at a crossroads the night I slept in my childhood home, the day my mother died in 2016. Physically, the house and patio were mostly the same, and the oak trees were just as tall...but it wasn't as familiar as it had been. At first, it gave me something else to mourn, but instead, I was consumed with gratitude that it had when I was a kid.

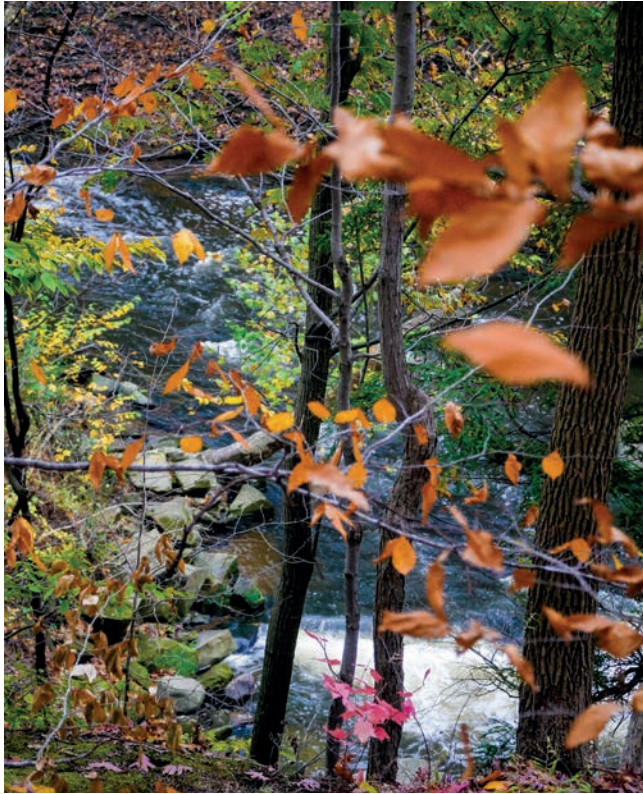
What I love most about nature is its omnipresence in our lives as we live them. Like a sleeping giant, it's quiet and loud and has no problems commanding our attention when it tosses and turns.

I hope you enjoy the visuals as much as I benefited from curating and writing about them.

- Darnell

11/7/2022





VIADUCT PARK

This small park, about 2 minutes from Downtown Bedford, features a beautiful waterfall and stream. On an autumn day, the incline of the walkway to the stream not only makes it appealing for exercise but also the views between the trees.



DOWNTOWN BEDFORD

This photo was taken after a walk around Downtown Bedford. I've returned to this location numerous times since I was a teenager. This area hosts an annual Strawberry Festival and is regularly a spirited area that is refreshing to visit.

BIG CREEK RESERVATION PARK

For me, August has unintentionally marked a month for many of my life's transitions.

As a child, it would include getting ready to start a new grade. As an adult, it has seen significant changes to my life: two moves to new states (2008 & 2012), a return to Ohio (2015), starting a new job (2000, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2021), and the expansion of family from births and marriage.

When autumn approaches and the leaves change color, it's like a reset for new beginnings.





GREETINGS FROM THE TAR HEEL STATE

"When the fear of regret drives you more than the fear of failure, you approach challenges in life with grace and curiosity." This was an internalized mantra I'd create from my life experiences up to that point.

As you travel south on I-77 toward Mecklenburg County, you will first pass Lake Norman, North Carolina's largest man-made lake.

There will be boats and canoes on the water on any given day. In 2015, I had the pleasure of competing in the annual Charlotte Dragon Boat Race atop Lake Norman.

I'd never raced a boat before, nor was it on my bucket list, but I jumped at the chance to immerse myself in my new surroundings.



A sunny day out on Lake Norman | Davidson, North Carolina

An aerial night photograph of Charlotte, North Carolina. The Bank of America Stadium is brightly lit in the foreground, showing the green field and orange infield. Behind it, the Bank of America Tower stands out with its distinctive blue and white illuminated spire. Other city buildings and streets are visible in the background, all lit up at night.

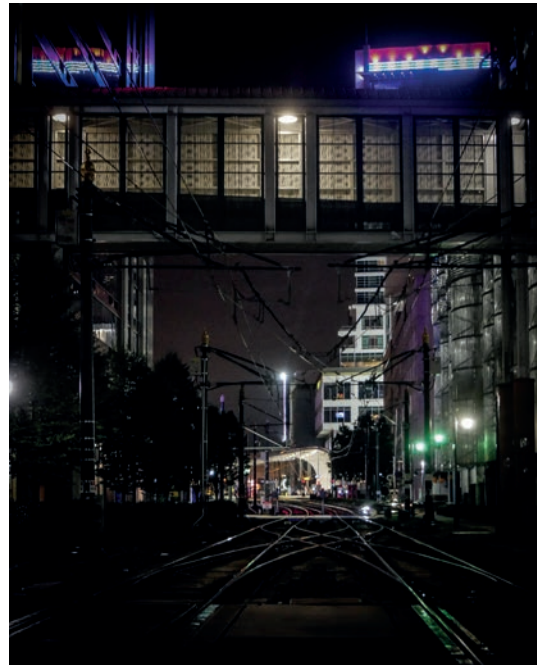
THE QUEEN CITY

It was late at night the first time I arrived in Charlotte. Seeing Uptown from afar was such a cool sight. The first structure that caught my attention was the Bank of America skyscraper. I still look for the spikes and try to guess the colors they'll be at night ten years later.



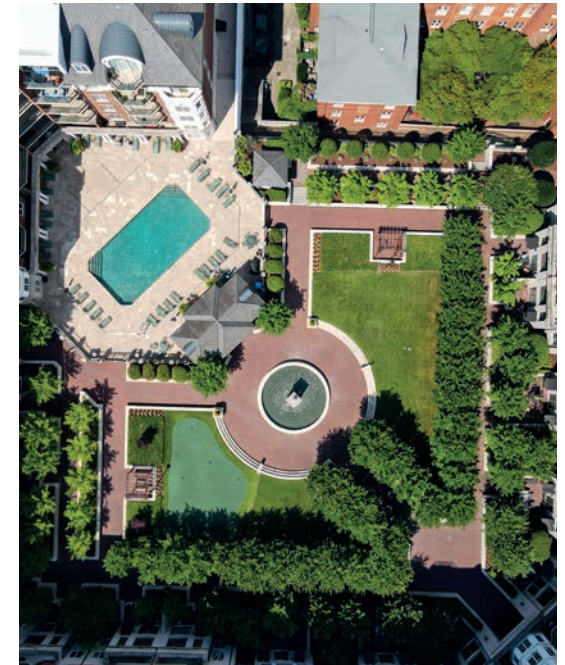
PLAZA MIDWOOD

Plaza Midwood in Charlotte is a refreshing blend of old and new. It's not far from Uptown and vibrant on its own. Corner Market has a good roast beef sandwich if you're in the neighborhood.



UPTOWN

There was a sense of serenity at this light rail stop on a late Saturday night. This area is usually vibrant, with young and old people coming and going to one of the nearby bars, clubs, and restaurants of different flavors.



THE UPPER CRUST

Aerial views of a nice apartment complex near Myers Park/Uptown. It blends in nicely with older structures, such as the nearby and historical Myers Park Baptist Church, which was built in 1925.