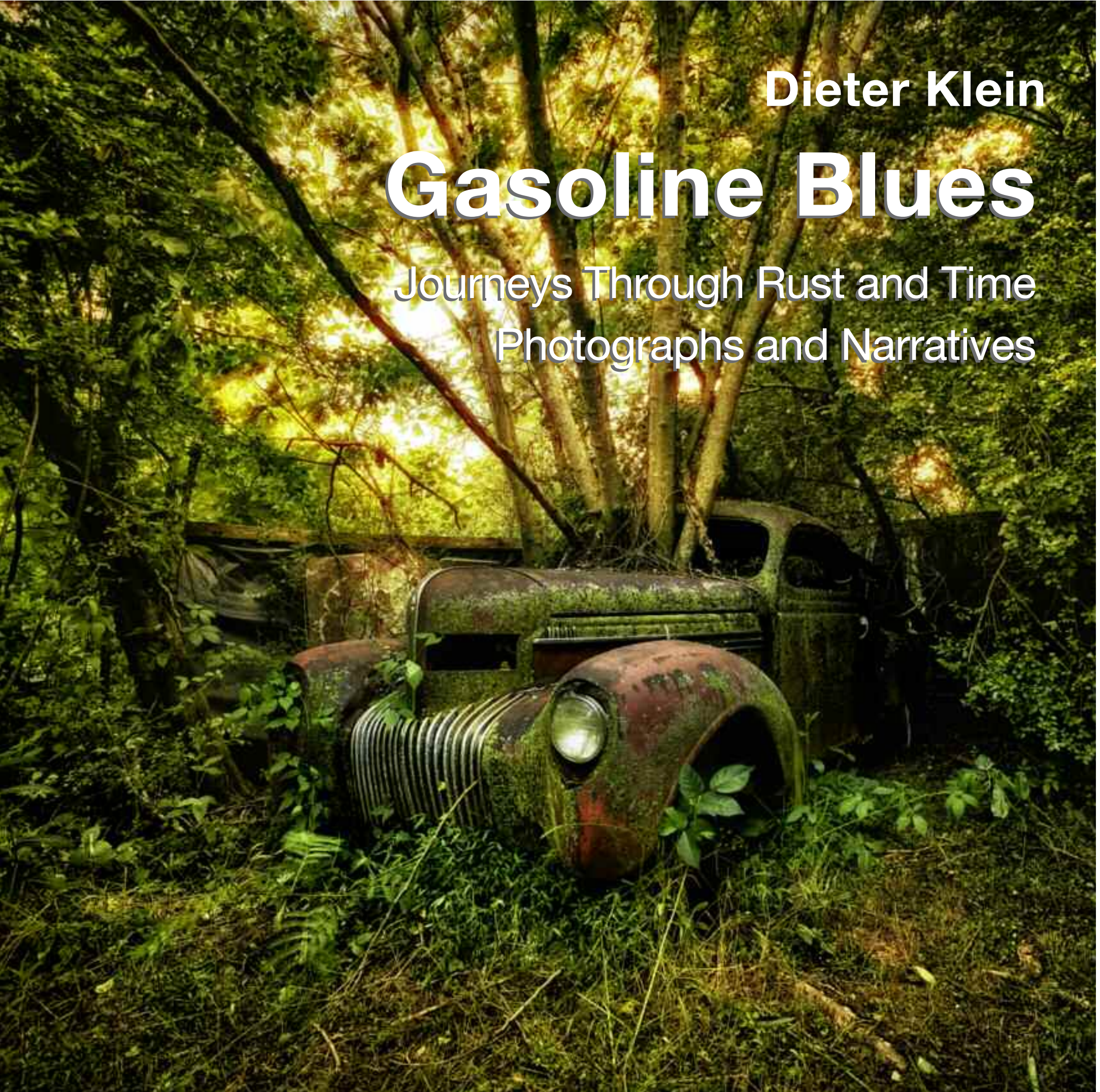




Dieter Klein

Gasoline Blues

Journeys Through Rust and Time
Photographs and Narratives

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Imprint

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Text Lost Toys by Günter Krüger († 2009)

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Foreword

It often begins with a chance encounter.

A turnoff, a conversation by the roadside, a path modern man has long forgotten. And suddenly, it stands before you—something that shouldn't be there. A car, yes, but no longer recognizable as a mere machine. A silent, abandoned shell overgrown with moss and ivy; a chassis that holds its peace yet speaks incessantly of impermanence. Or perhaps, a few pages later, it is a discarded tin toy, dented and rusted, resting under the studio light.

What captivates me about these silent subjects is not photography alone, but the sense of lingering. It is as if something has stayed behind that should have long since followed the current of time. These former symbols of movement, speed, and boundless freedom—whether built to cross a continent or to roll across a living room floor—have now become quiet, melancholy sculptures. Humanity has moved on—hurried, driven. But the sheet metal remained, and with it the traces, the stories, the unasked questions.

This book is a journey through the lost, a story told in two scales. It brings together photographs of monumental, full-sized automobile wrecks in the vast American and European landscape with meticulously captured still lifes of vintage toy cars. The locations of the real cars are as far apart as the continents themselves—some named, others deliberately left in obscurity. Because the what is more important than the where: What remains when man has stripped away the last of his fervor? What does a rusty Renault tell us in a quiet French village, and how does it echo in the fractured lithography of a three-inch toy car whose missing wheels mirror the sunken Buick in the dust of Utah?

To bridge these two worlds, I chose a radical shift in perspective. While the real cars were captured within their sweeping environ-

ments, the toys were brought into the studio, shot with a medium-format camera and a 100-megapixel digital back. Using the precision of focus-stitching—sometimes combining up to forty individual exposures—the miniatures are rendered with an ultra-crisp, razor-sharp clarity from front to back. By granting a battered childhood toy the same monumental presence as a full-sized wreck rotting in a field, the boundaries of scale begin to dissolve.

Gasoline Blues is neither a documentary nor a wistful monument. It is a reverent attempt to make the act of vanishing visible. A quiet plea for the inconspicuous, an invitation to grant value to decay, just as nature is allowed its own silent course.

I myself am no devotee of the motorized world. I hold no lifelong passion for horsepower. And yet, I repeatedly find myself standing before them: these rusty chassis in the middle of nowhere and these forgotten playthings on the studio table. What draws me in is not the roar, but the silence. The slow, peaceful absorption of machinery into nature, and the weathered patina on a toy that survived generations. That very moment when an object ceases to be a mere means to an end and begins instead to become a sculpture—an icon of transience.

Gasoline Blues is an attempt to quietly witness this process. Through the camera, but also through the written word. It is a journey across continents and categories, a walk between still life and road movie, between documentary photography and literary miniature. The result is a visual diary of passing—not dramatic, but casual. Just the way things happen to pass.

I invite you to pause. Right where others rush past heedlessly, and to seek what lies hidden in the stillness.

Dieter Klein is an award-winning photographer and traveler. His work has been honored with the "Best Photography" award at both the discovery-days.ch festival and Austria's El Mundo Festival.

For *Gasoline Blues*—the sequel to his acclaimed book *Lost Wheels* (published by teNeues)—he journeyed across five European countries and drove over 45,000 miles through 39 U.S. states on four separate road trips, capturing the poetic equalizer of decay.











The Citroën

It all began near Cognac, on the edge of a small village in maritime Aquitaine. There she stood, between the gentle rolls of the hills: Rosalie, born in 1937—a Citroën delivery van, grown fast into an elderberry bush, as if a silent gardener of oblivion had planted her there. It was a moment in which time itself paused for a heartbeat, whispering: Look closely. The discovery of Rosalie was the prelude to a journey that has since taken me over 40,000 miles through heat, dust, fog, and mud.

What has accompanied me ever since is a strange contradiction: a car, the ultimate symbol of movement and freedom, standing completely still—rooted and forgotten. Yet, it was precisely in this stillness that it began to speak. I didn't think of owning such a car; to me, it wasn't a vehicle to be possessed, but a scene frozen in time—an illustration, perhaps, torn from the pages of an old fairy tale book. I have learned to touch nothing. Sometimes a vehicle only truly becomes itself when it escapes the meaning and purpose of utility. Today, people call these "Lost Places," but that misses the essence. To me, they are rolling ruins, moving monuments of silence.

Nature is taking everything back—silently, persistently, gently, yet relentlessly. What comes of this is no mere decay; it is a metamorphosis.

It is what I have come to call the "Gasoline Blues."





“Sometimes you don't descend into a room,
but into another time.”

The Grotto

Deep in the French Champagne region, hidden on the edge of a forest, lies a sandstone grotto. Damp, dark, and embraced by the roots of trees, it conceals thirty automobiles from the 1940s—stored away like forgotten toys in a chest that no one opens anymore. In this humid chamber, rust has been enjoying a feast for decades. The chassis are thoroughly permeated, as if time had devoured them from the inside out. Who put them here remains a mystery; the truth is written nowhere.

Inside, the darkness swallows everything instantly. Two high corridors lead into the depths, both lined with vehicles. Some still stand on their wheels; others have long since sunk down, the ground beneath them soft like an old cushion. For hours, this grotto became a studio of shadows.

When we finally stepped back outside, the daylight blinded us. I turned around one last time. The entrance looked smaller, and the darkness behind it felt like a memory already beginning to fade.





A November in Champagne

"You have to get to Polisot right away. The yard is being cleared."

Six hundred kilometers of gray highways beneath a sky that carried autumn in heavy clouds. When I arrived, the October rain had turned the ground into a deep mud that swallowed every step.

Here, completely hidden from outside view, lay a silent realm. To the left and right of the path stood Citroën Traction Avants, row after row, lined up so neatly it looked as if mobsters had parked them there one night and simply never returned. Five hundred cars stood on this property, dating back to 1928.

"I love cars," the old scrap dealer said simply when I asked him why there were so many.

For two days, I trudged through the rain. I see the water on the hoods, hear the soft sucking sound of the mud beneath my boots, and feel the density of a world that has since completely vanished. Places disappear. People disappear. But what we capture in the shadows remains.







The Silent Garden

Deep in the Swedish forest, where the birches grow thin and the shadows stretch long, time speaks a different language. Here lies a garden of transience. One hundred and fifty automobiles, left behind decades ago, stand in a silent procession of steel and memory.

This place is now a protected heritage site, destined to remain untouched until the year 2050. The official goal is simple yet poetic: nature is meant to reclaim what was once taken from her, allowing the relics to vanish naturally into the earth.

An Opel Olympia Rekord sinks slowly into the damp moss. Its metallic skeleton rusts away, the fading paint wrestling with the lush green of the forest. Smashed windows, rusted floorboards, stolen badges—none of it matters anymore. The vehicle has ceased to be a car; it has dissolved into the landscape, a mute witness to the poetry of passing.



Forest of Rusted Souls

A biting wind swept across southern Sweden as I chased a rumor. Fifteen hundred kilometers lay behind me—a blind pilgrimage driven by an intuition stronger than reason.

At the end of an unremarkable path, I found it: a meadow of rusting chassis. But the real spectacle lay past the tree line, where nature had reclaimed the land.

It was a dream shifting into reality. Hundreds of cars, some stacked three high, had become one with the earth. Trees grew through shattered windows; moss and ferns buried once-glossy paint.

This labyrinth was a monument to human ingenuity and inescapable decay. Established by the Johansson brothers in the 1950s to exploit a loophole in Norwegian smuggling laws, the site was abandoned to the forest once the law changed.

Walking through this maze of steel and timber, I felt a deep reflection of my own journey: the desire to find and honor beauty, even in ruin.

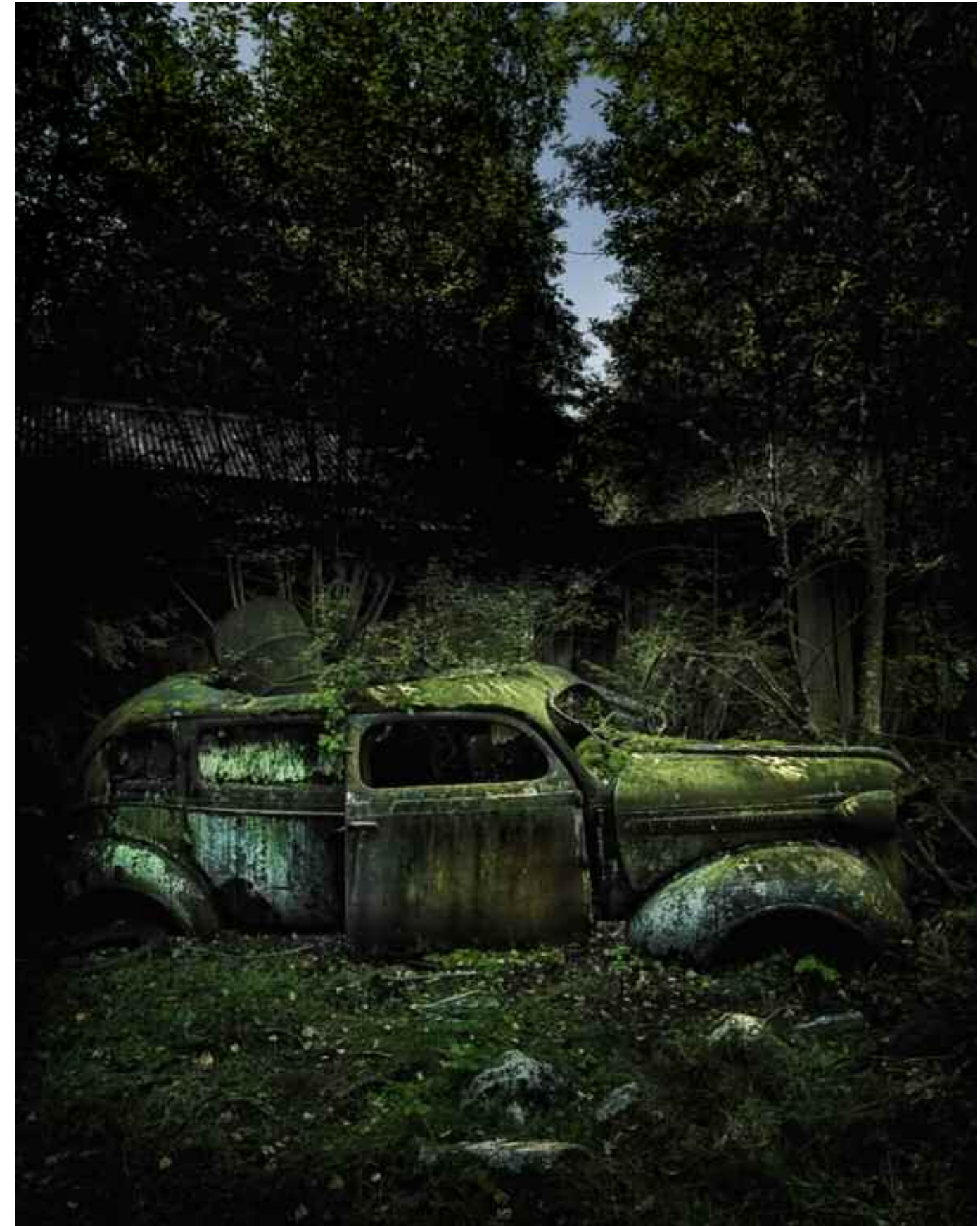




The Defeat

Back in Detroit, they knew nothing of this fate. No one could fathom that this machine, born on the assembly lines of the world's greatest automotive metropolis, would one day sink into the soft forest floor of a distant land. Silenced forever, windows blind and shattered.

Time has no urgency, yet it always claims victory.
It dulls the steel, consumes the hinges,
and weights the roof until it caves.
How much time is left does not matter.
The battle was lost long ago.



Lost Toys

There it stood: a small cardboard box in the basement—dusty, slightly lopsided, yet packed with adventure. A few old toy cars sent Dieter Klein on a journey: first back to his own childhood, and then out into the mysterious world of forgotten playthings.

They were tin cars, brave veterans that had survived many a playroom battle. And as it goes with old favorites, once rediscovered, they immediately took command. Through online auctions, more soon joined the ranks—not pristine museum pieces, but everyday heroes sporting dents, scratches, missing bumpers, stubborn clockwork gears, and brittle rubber tires. Every single car told its own little combat story.

For decades, they had slumbered silently in basements, attics, or damp sheds—forgotten, but never thrown away. And suddenly they were back, this time on miniature stages: posed before tiny kiosks, toy gas stations, or model railway depots. Scale? Irrelevant! Imagination ruled the game, just like the old days.

These little speedsters do not speak. But if you look closely, you can almost hear them tell tales of living-room rallies, daring leaps over stacks of books, and endless summer drives.

So: start your engine of imagination, dive into the game—and ride along!



Ultimately, everything falls prey to use, decay, greed, or destruction. One thing perhaps, forgotten by accident, survives in a remaining niche. That is why the preservation of these final things, though questionable, is a sacred act. Not yet weary of the old world.

Liberated from any practical usefulness, these stranded objects are messengers—coming from afar, heading for afar. Creating meaning. But first, they enjoy being the glow beneath the ashes. Only in a storm will the phoenix be reborn: no longer in my time.



Not until the last things are displayed in a museum do we believe we know them. But we do not recognize them. Their world no longer exists; they stand there like dazed animals in a zoo. All exhibited things have been expelled from the network of their lives. That is why they need our affection and our interpretation. But many things remain uninterpreted: their being lies in that which is concealed. We know so little.



Meister Eckhart¹⁾ applied the name “thing” both to God and the soul. Everything that exists—that shows itself or can conceal itself—is a thing. The thing is that which has always existed, as well as that which has been conceived and created by human hands, used in the best sense of the word, and fully present while being used. But the saving things, which we have had to do without for so long in this era of the world’s destruction, remain absent; they are indifferent to our need. Every attempt to call upon them fails, because we have no word for what is absent. Because we no longer know of things that are absent.



















Oklahoma: The Guardian and the Friedrich Light

A shimmering highway led me deep into the Oklahoma prairie, straight into a sea of rusted metal—a graveyard of four thousand forgotten automobiles resting in the harsh sun.

The keeper of this realm was Rick, a man with oil-blackened hands and a serene smile. He granted me permission to drive through the endless rows of early 1950s models. It wasn't a scrapyard; it was a living museum of transience where vines entwined steering wheels and trees wrapped around chassis like silent sentinels.

Deep in the meadows, cars sat in a state of eternal rest. Standing twenty feet tall above the wreckage rose Paul Bunyan, the mythic lumberjack giant of American folklore, acting as the silent protector of these forgotten dreams.

As I set up my tripod, the sky tore open. A dramatic, piercing light broke through the clouds, mimicking the sublime canvas of a Caspar David Friedrich painting. For ten minutes, the celestial spectacle illuminated the landscape of steel and grass—before fading back into the quiet majesty of the prairie.







Pink Memories

Deep in a forgotten corner of Montana, guided only by intuition, I found it: a pink Dodge parked before a decaying wooden house, radiating a dignity that only time can forge.

The owner, an old man with the past in his eyes, told me its story. His father had parked the car there in 1977, shortly before his death. Since that day, nothing had been touched. It was a silent family legacy left to nature's care, a monument to the memory of a man.

I spent hours waiting for the Blue Hour—the magical instant when the light ceases to judge. I marked my tripod positions with stones, arranging the world by my own rules, hoping the clouds might turn pink to match the steel.

When the light arrived, twenty minutes flew by in an intoxication of composition and exposure. It was a dance with time, capturing a genuine melancholy that transformed this lonely prairie graveyard into paradise.



Things drift along slowly, but their days have already been numbered before they pass away. Signs of departed times, layer by layer, create history. They rear up in deep vaults of oblivion and the invisible.

The life of industrialized human beings, fast-paced and much too short, consists of constantly producing new objects. Piece by piece, they are using up the world. As the present disappears, history grows and future time shrinks. Everyone knows that, because it affects every one of us. Just as a flame eats up the fuse of your life. „The days of one's life are numbered.“⁽⁴⁾



*N*ight darkens things. Hence they shine more brightly from within, although they do not reveal their being quite so easily as that. Things are everywhere; they knock against one another in space. Where should they go? They have no other place, no other dwelling; they therefore remain here far from home. Things conceal their essence from us and rarely disclose themselves.

It is only when things are interpreted that they have a meaning for us: their being also lies in the development of a story that points to the future, whereupon we first understand our present. And anything that failed en route in the face of resistance and large movements must rise up again and ride along in the great current. The movement forward drags everything along ⁵⁾.



What is the origin of things – the past, the future? That which has been and that which is to come turns upon the moment, and often we don't even know what we're talking about any more. About things to come or things that have passed? Just as the past does not pass away, so are things that are still to come not lost. They appear – each one of them at its appointed time – and remain in departing.





Final Round in Wels

The call came from my longtime companion, Pascal: "Next weekend, Austria, near Wels. It's the last historic junkyard in Europe. The widow, Heidemarie, is dissolving the estate. Nobody wants to take it over."

I drove 700 kilometers south without hesitation, eager to witness a dying world before it vanished forever. When we arrived, Heidemarie greeted us warmly. Across the lot, 450 vintage cars were stacked three layers deep—mostly 1950s Opels, Steyr Fiats, Simcas, and Renaults. They had endured over fifty years of unprotected exposure to the elements. To many, it was a pile of ruined metal. To me, it was an Eldorado, rich with the poetry of decay.

I photographed relentlessly, desperate to capture the fading light. Heidemarie graciously allowed me to stay as long as I needed. As dusk approached, she quietly tidied the lot, gathering fallen branches and stray metal. "There must be order," she said softly, "even in a junkyard."

In that simple moment, the profound depth of her task became clear. She wasn't just cleaning up; she was preserving the dignity of a lifetime before it disappeared into history. I was merely a traveler, deeply honored to record its final, silent chapter.









The Dogma of Light

Lamar, Colorado. A forgotten spot where the past lingers in the details of the present.

Driving down Highway 50, a vast junkyard appeared in the high grass—a stranded leviathan of metal and broken dreams. As a storm brewed on the horizon, the light turned harsh and dramatic. Lightnings ripped open the grey canvas of the sky. My camera clicked, capturing the heavy tension in the air before the clouds dissolved into a brilliant blaze of purple and orange.

The next morning led me to a quiet residential street. For the fourth time, I stood outside an empty property. In an open garage sat an old Impala, resting on a bed of desert tumbleweeds. The sheer beauty of this decay was overwhelming. It shattered my resistance to trespassing. Driven by an unstoppable urge, I pulled into the driveway, heart pounding, every second filled with silent tension. For twenty minutes, the click of my shutter was the only sound. Then, the guilt became unbearable. I turned to flee.

Suddenly, my blood froze. A massive Great Dane stood nearby, rigid as a stone sculpture, watching me. I cautiously slipped to the passenger side, reached the door, and locked myself inside the car—gasping for air.

Then, the unexpected happened: the giant began to wag its tail.

Sitting in safety, my fear turned into profound shame. I had felt like a thief, yet this majestic guardian only offered friendliness. Is art more important than the boundaries we build to protect our possessions? Looking at the screen of my camera, the answer was clear. Yes. The images were worth it. True beauty often lies just beyond our fear.





The Silence of the Forest

For his 50th birthday in 2000, Michael gathered fifty cars—all built in 1950. Defying authorities and critics who saw only junk, he placed them in his wooded garden to create a sculpture park. His goal: let them age naturally alongside him, surrendering to moss and rust instead of freezing in a climate-controlled garage. Among them sits a Porsche that placed second in a 1984 historic rally, now resting humbly behind the Jaguar XK 120 that beat it. Photographing this sanctuary over the years, I found deep peace in its quiet, dignified decay.





The Whispering Shells of Gourgeon

A tip from a friend led me to Gourgeon, France, and a silent, forgotten workshop. Slipping through an open back door felt like trespassing, but what lay inside was a photographer's dream: twenty cars frozen in time, preserved under decades of dust and debris. Among them stood a dignified 1930s Renault Monaquatre and a dusty Peugeot. Right beside them, shrouded in cobwebs, rested a Fiat 500 Topolino—the legendary "little mouse" that looked exactly like Mickey Mouse's cartoon cabriolet. In that twilight stillness, the lost souls of these machines felt entirely alive.







How long does a moment last, how long a life, how long eternity? Why do we kill, love, investigate, remember? Why are we no longer afraid of something determinate; where does this bottomless dread come from that makes us rigid with fright? This oppressive emptiness to which we surrender, from which we wish to flee – but whither?

Things have become melancholy, they are affronted. To make them dance again – „it was my first and last, my most beautiful of dreams.“⁶⁾ Yet the wounded things no longer wish to rise up. There is no sign of life, not even from the Lord of Things.



A leaden sky weighs heavy on my land, „well-kept the sheep ...talking of the Cross, the law is ...dead.“⁽⁷⁾ Strange is the silence that lies over the land. Yet the silence is an illusion; we are in the midst of a storm. Distances collapse; near and far fall under the ruins. Everything is one and disappears in the maelstrom of the media.

That is the end of things. They no longer occur. They have drifted and fallen in the storm, leaving but pale shadows behind: objects, for sale or no longer usable, superfluously surplus. Nothingness stalks the desecrated world. Souls die slowly, bodies quickly.



*Uncoupled from the cosmos. A forgotten puddle
reflects the bloated facades of modern buildings.
All good things have gone to waste. Only evil remains.*

*The way is no longer prepared; each path emerges as
we walk along it. And each time, the path is another;
we never go the same way twice, and you, too, will be
another. And other things will accompany you.
Ash falls on my path. Things, steadfast like stones,
sink down like feathers. The landscape spreads out
every morning - how long will it still lure, „my heart
is weary ⁸⁾“.*



*Are things outside or do they flow through us?
 Something else: we only fully see what we seek. Do we
 also see what we know? Do we actually see, in this
 strange crouching position in the „automobile“, much
 more than a windshield? What else do we see from deep
 in the sofa, in front of the „television“, except for the
 screen? Light and shadow in a breakneck blur,
 and the eternal return of the same.*

*The world becomes a desert, things die of thirst.
 Another world, a new and artificial one, is already
 growing rampant, wherein the human being will
 disappear without a trace, more surely than ever.
 To plunge into this glittering artificial world and to
 inhabit it for a short while before disappearing
 without a trace: that is how it will be.*



*Leaving things be, to stand surety: friendliness.
Yet it is a dreadful escort through the slaughterhouses.
No hand, pressed however tightly to the ear, can keep
out the violence, the screams, the whimpering in the
face of mortal fear.*

*Things lose themselves; endless herds of animals
disappear unnoticed; human beings grow stiff from
staring, they get bogged down in appointments and
surrogates for life, unsatisfied and encumbered.
„His species is ineradicable like that of the ground-flea;
the last man liveth longest.“⁹⁾ Soon, the only thing that
the last men will encounter in the Internet or in the
concrete canyons will be themselves. It is then that the
things that were presumed dead will rise from the ashes.
To the amazement of all!*



Steffen and the Taunus

Far north of Kiel, Steffen ran a medical supply store—a quiet life dedicated to broken bodies and predictable routines. But when his father died, a fracture opened. It left behind a silent summons.

His father had left a project unfinished: the restoration of a 1939 Ford Taunus 39E. It was a modest vehicle, built for the hardships of its era, not for a museum. Instead of leaving it behind, Steffen stepped into his father's boots. Immersing his hands in oil and metal, he picked up the unspoken thread between generations.

The Taunus became a vessel where past and present merged. Soon, Steffen began collecting what others threw away—wrecks, discarded parts, fragments of vanishing histories. In an old country-side cowshed, far from prying eyes, these remnants now rest in dust and silence, like sleeping creatures waiting to be called.

When I first entered this shed, it felt like entering a temple. The dented chassis, the scent of old leather and oil, the shafts of light through the cracks—it was sacred. My camera became a tool of translation. I wasn't just capturing steel; I was photographing metaphors for what decays and what can be reborn.

Steffen is no mere collector. He is the keeper of an invisible flame. In his quiet gestures, something greater is preserved: the timeless human longing to wrest a fragment of eternity from the jaws of decay.





vThe Whisper of Gold

The desert wind along US Route 95 carries the dust and echoes of Goldfield. Founded in 1902, it once boomed with 20,000 souls driven by the rush for riches; even Wyatt Earp ran a saloon here. But by 1910, the gold ran dry, and a catastrophic fire in 1913 sealed its fate. Today, the town rests as a skeleton of its former glory—a monument to the transience of human dreams.

Among these ruins sits a small, weathered open-air museum. In front of it stands a 1908 Ford Model T, radiating a quiet dignity. Simple and elegant, it remains a vessel for early dreams of freedom. I spent days photographing it. Using my lightpainting technique in the darkness, I enveloped the car in a surreal glow, isolating its timeless form from the desert dust.

Behind the shacks lies a graveyard of forgotten machinery and spare parts. In their decay, these old vehicles sit like desert hermits, quietly reflecting on the rise and fall of human ambition.



In the Forest of Steel

Leaving Goldfield, I encountered a monument shaped not by time, but by aggressive human intervention: the International Car Forest of the Last Church.

Here, cars and buses are driven nose-down into the earth, standing at bizarre angles that defy gravity. This is not a place of quiet melancholy, but a visual scream in the desert silence. The sheet metal is covered in bright graffiti—vibrant wounds cutting across the aged iron.

The soul of these machines felt gone. They no longer bore the dignity of history; instead, they had been turned into art objects with meanings forced upon them from the outside. Where the old Ford in Goldfield whispered of pioneer dreams, these cars shouted the slogans of a restless present.

I didn't stay long. The wise, authentic silence of the desert was missing here, replaced by an artificial noise. My search remains one for the genuine—the fading, unpainted traces of the past left to the mercy of nature and the wind.





Rusty Dreams in Oklahoma

After publishing *Forest Punk*, a fragment of news caught my attention: on June 7th, the estate of Oliver Jordan was to be auctioned off in Enid, Oklahoma. Jordan, a stubborn farmer, had built his own world of vehicles in the 1940s. In 1953, refusing to comply with local regulations, he fenced the lot off and guarded it. For over six decades, time stood still. A historic sanctuary was about to vanish forever.

Driven by the urgency to capture this fleeting decay, I traveled to Oklahoma alongside my friend Peter and his wife, Moni.

The auction house granted us access days before the sale. Stepping onto the grounds felt like a pilgrimage. In suffocating 100-degree heat, I documented the essence of a rusted American Dream—lines that once spoke of movement and hope, now rewritten by the unstoppable forces of nature.

The day of the auction was a celebration of transience. Despite a torrential storm that turned the soil to mud, fifteen hundred buyers gathered. Two auctioneers called out vehicle after vehicle, drawing them out of decades of silence. Bids ranged from two hundred dollars to forty-six thousand for a 1930s Cord. Everything found a new owner.

In capturing this final awakening, I found something far deeper than mere images: a profound understanding of impermanence, and the sublime beauty of letting go.







The thing you will most reliably lose is the thing you seek with all your might. But there is another kind of searching. It comes from a long way off, and it seems to beckon to you. Not-searching is its name. Approaching a goal with all of your senses shut down. The secret knowledge finds its way by not-searching. By becoming one with the goal, your arrow finds its path. Only by not keeping a sharp lookout will you reach the goal.

At the end of your journey you will be the shipwrecked one. In the end you will realize that the goal was an illusion. As the swallow was deluded. She wanted to fly south, but she died in a storm in the north. She had made a mistake. Above her was the raging sea, below her was the sunken mountain range. Her searching became a fleeing, her longed-for goal became a curse. That was the pain of Odysseus at the end of his wanderings. At the end of his wanderings began the conflict.

*But in the midst of the conflict, hope returns:
Love is older than death.*



That was how they spent their days. And they saw not what they did, and they understood not what they feared, and they honored not what they desired. In this manner they ran around in confusion, together and then again apart, lost their way and went astray, or gathered together again on the main road. Hopelessly clinging to goals that misled them ever further. And they never again arrived, and they were finally so far removed from themselves that they no longer knew themselves. You could have bitten their hands and they wouldn't have felt the pain. You could have shaken them and shown them the abyss, and they would have smiled. One could have shaken them and shown them the abyss and they would have smiled. That is how we spend our days. And we see not what we do, and we understand not what we fear, and we honor not what we desire. In this manner we run around in confusion, together and then again apart, lose our way and go astray, or gather together again on the main road. Hopelessly clinging to goals that mislead us ever further. And we never again arrive, and we are finally so far removed from ourselves that we no longer know ourselves. One could bite our hands and we would not feel the pain. One could shake us and show us the abyss and we would smile.



***T**here are neither messages nor reports about the true world behind the world of commercial objects. Not the visible world but the hidden one is the real world. The world of silence. Your hidden wishes are your real wishes. Slowly, we who have been silenced find the path that leads to freedom: We must rebel against the false world that tries to deceive us with a fantasy life that remains foreign to us and destroys our being. The true essence of human beings is an abyss and it has been forgotten, it must be discovered again. We must stand up, lift ourselves up again.*



The world is becoming a desert. Life's final knowledge is carried away by the wind, and the long march through illusions comes to an end. We walk upright on crutches. When all of our wishes remain unfulfilled, blind cheerfulness holds sway. Scarcely a butterfly now takes wing. The sky is red, bombs and blossoms are falling. A steel-hard storm sweeps from West to East. The gods remain frozen, their faces turned away. This sky is dead; it belongs to the bombs of the last world power. Save the scraps that remain. When everything is over—will it ever be over?—bury your grandchildren, search the earth for the enemy's presents. At some point, you will reach the next beverage depot. You will toil even harder just so you can buy a Coca-Cola.



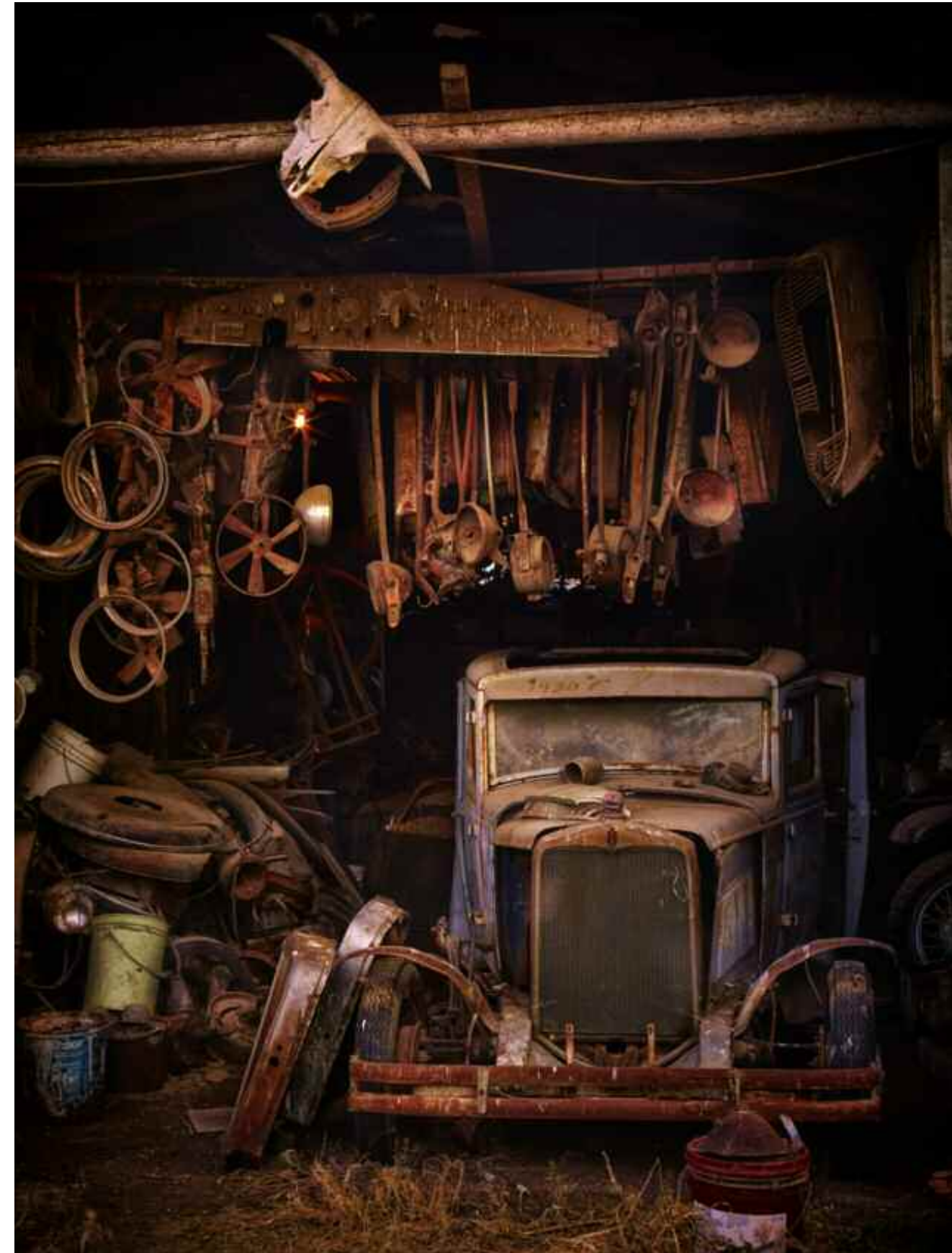
*Give me your strength, tree.
Give me your lightness, air.
Give me your cheerfulness, cloud.
Give me your great calm, white swan
on a shining lake. Give me your freedom, swallow.
Give me your devout night, O bat.
Give me your silence today, my angel,
I do not wish for more.*



Workshop of Lost Time

My search led me far from the political clamor of D.C. to the quiet expanses of Washington State. After months of tracing obscure digital rumors, persistence materialized into a forgotten scrapyard. Over a hundred cars, dating from the 1920s to 1954, sat assembled like a silent council. The keeper of this realm gave me but one gentle command: "Take a look around, just close the gates behind you so my goats don't escape."

Then I saw it: a red wooden workshop built around 1930. It was less a building and more a shrine. Peeking from its dark interior was the ghost of a 1932 Hupmobile, its elegant lines framed by an altar of suspended lamps, vintage radiators, and a weathered bull skull.





Alabama Still Life

The Tennessee River wound like a sluggish snake through the Alabama landscape, past tiny crossroads where lonely church steeples pointed toward the sky. Everyone had their own path to God out here, in the exact same godforsaken stretch of country.

But my eyes were on an old barn. Sheltered under a decaying lean-to stood a rusty-red '53 Chevy. The afternoon sun hit the dented sheet metal at an angle, bathing the weathered wood and steel in a warm, soft glow—a perfect still life of impermanence.

Across the road, I ran into two local mechanics in grease-stained coveralls. They had an incredible urge to talk, but their southern drawl was as thick as the humidity, turning their words into a cryptic rasp. I could barely understand a syllable, yet the warmth was unmistakable.

They felt like a missing link between the grit of Bukowski and the melancholy of Mercier. They belonged to this slice of America you only find when you pull off the highway and just look.



The Souls of the Machines

The roads to Wendell, Idaho, were paths into a forgotten past. At their end lay a kingdom of memories: a junkyard of 8,000 cars—rusted kings and dented princes whose glory had long faded into silent sculptures of transience.

Larry Harms, the octogenarian guardian of this realm, was a man of unshakeable conviction. He lived by his own laws, transforming this lonely plot into a steel labyrinth. Wandering through this sea of metal, I watched the twilight cast a warm light onto the weathered bodies. For a brief moment, the quiet machines seemed to come alive in a final, poignant brilliance.

Meeting Larry was a reminder that life is not about fleeting appearances, but the deep truth of one's own path. Leaving the yard, I understood that what we collect and create is never just matter. It is the stories we leave behind, the souls we imprint upon the world.







The Buicks in the Silence

A dusty gas station near Death Valley led me into a landscape of unpolished, harsh beauty. At the end of a punishing desert trail, they appeared like ghosts from a past era: two Buicks from the 1940s and 50s. Their bodies were riddled with bullet holes—the only canvases for destruction in this endless expanse.

When I stepped out into the 102°F heat, the world vanished. No birds, no wind. Only an absolute, overwhelming silence—an absence that spoke louder than any noise.

I set up my tripod, seeking the beauty hidden in transience. At twilight, as the barren mountains glowed in soft gold, the world stood still. I understood that this silence was not empty. It was filled with the unyielding power of nature that outlasts all human endeavor.



North Dakota – The Iron of Memory

After weeks of driving through endless oceans of fields, I reached North Dakota. Deep in the windswept prairie, guided only by half-forgotten coordinates, I found the place. From afar, it looked like an abandoned lot in the middle of nowhere.

A weathered farmer stepped from the shadow of his barn. "Photograph all you want," he said quietly, "just don't reveal the location. I don't want uninvited guests." He owned over a thousand cars, mostly Chevrolets from the 1930s to the 60s, lined up like soldiers of a forgotten parade. After we spoke of the seasons and the land, he smiled. "You wanna see some more?"

He opened the doors to a modern tin barn. Expecting tractors, I stepped into a silent cathedral of rust. Seventy Chevrolets from the 1920s stood in two long rows, untouched and un-restored, their grills facing inward like a congregation listening to an invisible preacher. It was a monument against forgetting.

The farmer left me alone with his treasures. Forgoing artificial light, I let the soft glow from the door illuminate the dancing dust and the tender contours of the steel. I photographed for hours in absolute stillness. In the endless expanse of North Dakota, I hadn't just found a barn full of old cars—I had found a chapel of memory, where the breath of the past was still audible.







Hell's Heat

The air stood perfectly still, as if the desert had forgotten to breathe. In Casa Grande, Arizona, "Desert Valley Auto Parts" lay like an endless sea of rusted iron. 104 degrees. No shade, no movement—only blinding light bouncing off old car roofs like glowing needles.

The junkyard felt like a ghost town. Rows of Fords, Chevrolets, and Oldsmobiles from an era when chrome meant pride stood like soldiers after a lost battle. Every chassis was an archive of disappearance. Carrying my heavy tripod and gear, I moved through the silence. Every hood radiated heat like a burning stove. I clutched my bottle of water, fully aware of how ruthlessly this landscape punishes hubris. I knew the tragic stories of travelers who underestimated the desert. Out here, you trust no one—not even yourself.

Yet, amid the decay, small miracles appeared: a sunflower growing through a rusted grille, the shattered glass of a taillight reflecting the fierce blue sky. I shot slowly, capturing the fading heartbeat of these objects.

By late afternoon, the heat turned thick and sluggish. I packed up and drove north through a vast terrain glowing like scorched gold. After 220 miles, I reached Williams, a small town carrying Route 66 in its bones. Here, the air was cool and crisp. The desert had released me—at least for today.





Heat, Iron, and Opinions

Deep into California's shimmering expanses, September brought a scorching 111°F. In this treacherous landscape, survival means a simple creed: full tank, full batteries, and eight gallons of water.

My destination was the "Cloud Museum" near Yuma. Today, "Cloud" evokes digital data, but here in the dust, it meant something entirely historic. When I arrived, the gates were locked for the summer heat. But a gut feeling made me linger, and soon a man emerged from a nearby bungalow. "Are you the one who left a voicemail?" he asked. "Then you must be Johnny Cloud."

It wasn't a digital cloud; it was a personal legacy. Johnny proudly showed me his life's work: an incredible collection featuring every Ford Model T built between 1920 and 1932. As we walked among the rusting relics, our conversation shifted to politics, guns, and global affairs. He couldn't fathom a country where citizens don't carry firearms. "What do you do if you have a problem with bad guys?" he asked. I replied that we call the police. Johnny burst into a loud, raw laugh that echoed through the desert silence.

Later that evening, his nephew opened the gates so I could shoot in the fading light. I had come for the abandoned steel, but I left with a story about a man, his passion, and a worldview entirely different from my own. Behind every piece of rust, there is a human truth waiting to be told.



White, Georgia – The Living Wreck

Six weeks, twenty-seven states, nine thousand miles. The numbers stand like monoliths in my memory. Yet, looking back, I feel only fulfillment. This was the birth of my project on abandoned automobiles.

My first stop was White, Georgia. There lived Dean Walter Lewis, a man who inherited his parents' junkyard in the 1970s. But Dean saw more than scrap metal. He stopped selling parts and began collecting, eventually turning the yard into an open-air museum. Over the decades, the forest embraced the site. Four thousand cars became slowly engulfed by roots, ferns, and moss.

I wandered for hours. In a quiet clearing, I found it: a 1937 Chrysler. Its engine was long gone; in its place, branches surged upward, reaching through the empty windshield toward the light.

On my first visits, the light was harsh and unforgiving. I returned eight or nine times, chasing the right moment. Finally, on a warm afternoon, the clouds softened the sun into a gentle breath. I pressed the shutter. In that instant, machine and nature merged into perfect, involuntary harmony—a silent testament to transience, and the secret embrace of life taking back what we abandoned.



Berlin, Nevada

Past Winnemucca, where civilization thinned into a distant echo, the road led me into the isolation of Gabbs. It was a town falling into a deep sleep, its motel a weathered relic. I spent the night in a simple four-room outpost, shielded from the desert wind.

The next day, a punishing thirty-kilometer gravel trail brought me further into the past—to a ghost town named Berlin. Founded by miners who wanted to leave a monument to their distant homeland, it sat silent in the infinite expanse of Nevada. Among the decaying wooden shacks stood a 1918 Dodge pickup. Weathered by decades of unrelenting sun and wind, it rested there with a strange, forgotten dignity.

I waited for hours as dark storm clouds gathered, changing the harsh desert sun into a magical, filtered glow. I caught the light just before the rain fell. The evening sun struck the rusted metal of the truck and bathed the lonely wooden houses in a soft, warm radiance.

I set up my tripod and captured the image I later named *The Longing*. The strangeness of the scene—the name Berlin in a place of total solitude, the decaying truck as a metaphor for transience—explained itself. It became an image of absolute silence, melancholy, and a deep yearning for what has been lost to time.



Gasoline Ghosts – Petrified

The highway thinned out into a minimalist canvas of desert, stone, and gnarly shrubs as I reached Petrified Forest National Park. Here, where the modern road crosses the historic path of Route 66, the ancient world and the recent past collide.

Over two hundred million years ago, a forest was buried here, mineralizing under the immense pressure of sediment. Today, these massive stone trunks lie scattered across the desert, shimmering in impossible shades of red, blue, and purple—a beauty born of deep time and decay.

But right on the path to these ancient trees sat a quieter, more recent monument: a 1932 Studebaker. Wheelless and resting on stone blocks, it had been stripped bare—no windows, no handles, no headlights. A fallen warrior of the road marooned in the desert.

Yet, it felt right. The car was no longer just a vehicle; it had become an organic part of the landscape. As the rumble of modern semis echoed from the distant highway, this hollow shell stood as a monument to impermanence, binding yesterday to today.



The Carrier of Echoes

Ten glass bottles, barely the size of a heartbeat, sit in the open bed of a 1932 White truck. This metal relic from St. Louis is a vessel not just of soda, but of time itself. Crafted in the depths of the Great Depression, it was an ambassador of a sweetness that the world could only afford in small, precious doses.

Now, resting on the cold, corroded surface of a rusted plate, the red paint has surrendered to the relentless patience of oxygen and moisture. It is a monument to the mundane made monumental through the lens. By isolating this tiny freighter, the grand ambition of the industrial age is reduced to a fragile, static cargo. It carries no weight anymore, save for the silent testimony of a century that has left its haul behind. The trucks on the highway have turned to dust; the tiny bottles remain, forever waiting to be delivered to a customer who has long since left the store.



The Illusion

Five inches of pressed steel, worn down to ghost-traces of red paint. This Wyandotte model was once a child's treasure; now, it rests on a sheet of rusting iron beneath the blurred canopy of palms and papaya trees.

Balanced at the boundary of two scales, it breaks the illusion of size and distance. Stripped of its purpose, the miniature carries the exact same weight of transience as a four-ton wreck. It is the moment where the horizon shrinks to the palm of a hand, and the world stops moving.



The Workshop: Archive of Silence

Step into a space that has almost forgotten how to breathe—an abandoned workshop frozen in time.

On the workbench rests a heavy, pressed-steel car. It is no longer a toy; it has fused with its surroundings. Every tool, every oil stain, and this small steel vehicle have found their final, permanent placement.

The silence here was so absolute that the click of my camera shutter cracked like a pistol shot. Dust lay across the metal with undisturbed perfection, as if untouched since the 1930s. This is not a fleeting transience; it is heavy, motionless, and absolute.



Joshua Tree

The highway cut through a shimmering heat veil toward Twenty-nine Palms, where the gray mountains lay like sleeping animals. In the desert, the bizarrely branching Joshua trees stood like ancient creatures. The Mormons named them for arms pointing toward heaven—but to my eyes, they weren't praying; they were the prayer.

Deep in the park, along the Wall Street Mill Trail, lay the silent witnesses of old gold miners. Under a blazing sun, I found them: rusty, dented, and half-sunken in the sand.

I returned at twilight with my tripod and an LED panel, waiting for that hour between light and night to soften the land. As the blue faded from the sky, I worked with intense, reverent focus, light-painting the steel against the sharp edge of the desert silence.

Back at the motel, backing up the files, it felt clear: every abandoned chassis is a reflection of ourselves. We stand exposed to the wind and the sun, slowly fading, yet in the right light, possessing a quiet, resilient beauty.



The Forgotten Road to Darwin

The road to Darwin, a mere line in the dust past Death Valley, led to a place where civilization dissipates. No gas station, no store, no cellular network. It was a refuge for hermits, artists, and souls who had pulled the plug. Crooked houses stood as monuments of entropy, watching through the dusty eyes of broken windows.

In this gallery of oblivion, vintage American steel stood in clusters. But my eyes fell upon a red Renault Dauphine—a small, lost foreign body in the vast American desert. Its red paint was bleached pale by the sun. The interior was empty, save for a tattered seat and a single comb left on the dashboard.

An old man weathered like leather watched me from a porch. "Photographer?" he rasped. "Go ahead. But leave the church alone." It felt less like a literal instruction and more like a metaphysical boundary.

At twilight, I began long exposures, circling the Renault with an LED panel to light-paint its contours into the dark. The little French car glowed, as if remembering Parisian rain one last time. I slept in my car beneath millions of stars, leaving the next morning with a single truth about the desert: There's nothing here—except everything that's missing.



Florida Dream

In the sweltering expanses of Florida, the air is thick with sea salt and the heavy scent of palm trees. I was driven by that inner restlessness, searching for a rumored sanctuary—a stronghold of the past where the souls of Porsche 356s lived on.

My inquiries were met with a blunt refusal: Sorry, nothing here. Yet a resistance to this finality smoldering inside me. Driven by a buried spark, I found myself standing before a high chain-link fence, hidden at the end of an inconspicuous alley.

The keepers of this place had one strict rule: no photography. But as Margret, an artist herself, flipped through my first book, a quiet testament to my own soul, she looked up and said: "I like this. You can shoot here." In that sparse permission lay a profound recognition.

"You have to come back in the first morning light," her husband added, handing me the responsibility to truly see.

The next morning, before the first trace of dawn, I stepped into the stillness of the breaking day. Dozens of Porsche 356s, a Mercedes 190 SL, and old Beetles stood in the tall, dry grass, surrounded by the loud chirping of crickets. I stayed until the light faded, painting my own traces onto the vintage bodies. I hadn't just taken pictures; I had found a place where my own soul found a home.





The Traveler and the Timeless

Landing in Los Angeles was a sharp, glaring strike to the silence of my soul. Seeking the vastness that allows the heart to rest, I escaped into the Mojave Desert. Just before the desert's edge, an unassuming workshop caught my eye. Turning around, I stepped into a graveyard of automotive dreams—where, surrounded by high desert grass, a brilliant red Edsel sat fading under the unforgiving California sun.

As the shadows grew long, I met the master of this realm: Gene Winfield. Lean, grease-stained, and bursting with life at 89 years old, he led me into a hidden shrine of memories. He showed me relics of his mother's 1946 gas station, models from Star Trek and Blade Runner, and a vibrant yellow guitar freshly custom-painted for ZZ Top. A nameless traveler, I was granted two hours with a visionary who had outsmarted time itself.

Before I left, he showed me what happens when decay meets his genius. There it stood, just finished: a 1930s Buick, customized into a rolling sculpture of gold-orange metallic. In the fading light, the paint gleamed like liquid fire. It was the ultimate proof that here, in the middle of the desert, the old world wasn't dying—it was being reborn.





A Swan for Tucumcari

The wind carried prairie dust over the rooftops of Tucumcari, where Route 66 wrapped around the town like an old scar. On the edge of this oblivion sat a garage—a relic from another time surrounded by thirty automobiles untouched by the rush of restoration. Inside, I met Danny Ellis, a man in the late autumn of his life. He sat among friends in an atmosphere of old leather and gasoline, guarding a display case filled with stylized birds and swift stags. They were the stolen souls of his cars, corralled and preserved from night-time thieves.

When I asked to take photographs, Danny smiled and offered to put the hood ornaments back onto the cars to restore their dignity. Pointing to a 1932 Studebaker outside, he told me it was a gift from a dying neighbor. Shortly after the neighbor passed, the car's centerpiece—a flying swan—was stolen. Danny tracked it down 150 miles away. Confronting the thief, he faced a choice between legal retribution and the law of the heart. He chose the latter. He paid the thief 250 dollars, looked him in the eye, and simply said: "Now you have to live with that."

When I left Tucumcari that evening, my camera held the image of the swan upon the radiator, but my heart carried the weight of Danny's magnanimity. He was a man who did not just restore old steel, but the lost dignity of things and the souls of people. It was a wonderful day in a place on the edge of time, where the spirit of the past still had a voice.



In the Shadow of Silence

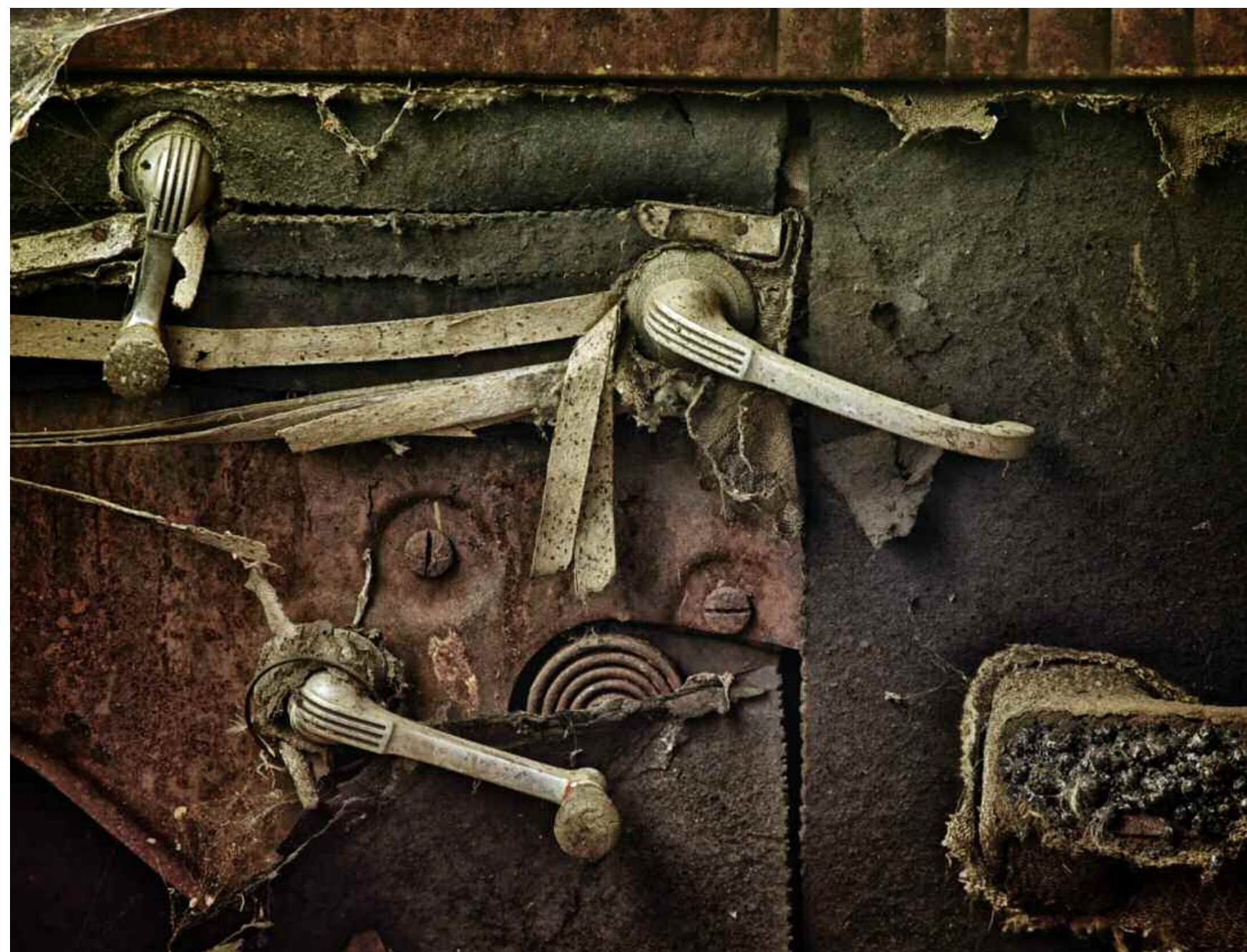
The sky was heavy when I came upon an abandoned gas station, its fuel pumps staring like rusty, blind eyes into the distance. Gnarled bushes fought their way through the cracked asphalt with the slow patience of the desert. Driving further south through the nothingness, I found another monument to isolation: a few automotive skeletons standing around an above-ground tank, and a sign that read Motel. I decided to stay, determined to capture these stranded vessels in the evening and morning light.

My room was part of a five-unit shack where a 1926 Oldsmobile sat right outside the door. In the attached diner, dollar bills were stuck to the ceiling like business cards of countless passing souls. The innkeeper was a tight-lipped man of few words. When my alarm went off at three-thirty the next morning, it was bitterly cold. My hands shook, but the camera captured the skeletal cars glowing in the first, delicate dawn—images of profound melancholy and beauty.

At breakfast, I poured a mug of what looked like pale, light-brown tea. When I asked the taciturn innkeeper for actual coffee, he just stared at me in silence. "That is the coffee," he finally said. I knew I hadn't made a friend, but the pictures were safe. I paid and drove on toward a place called Berlin, my heart filled with the silence of the night, the rusty steel, and the strange, imperfect encounters that define the essence of the road.









The Clearing

“There are places man leaves, and time enters like a silent guest.”

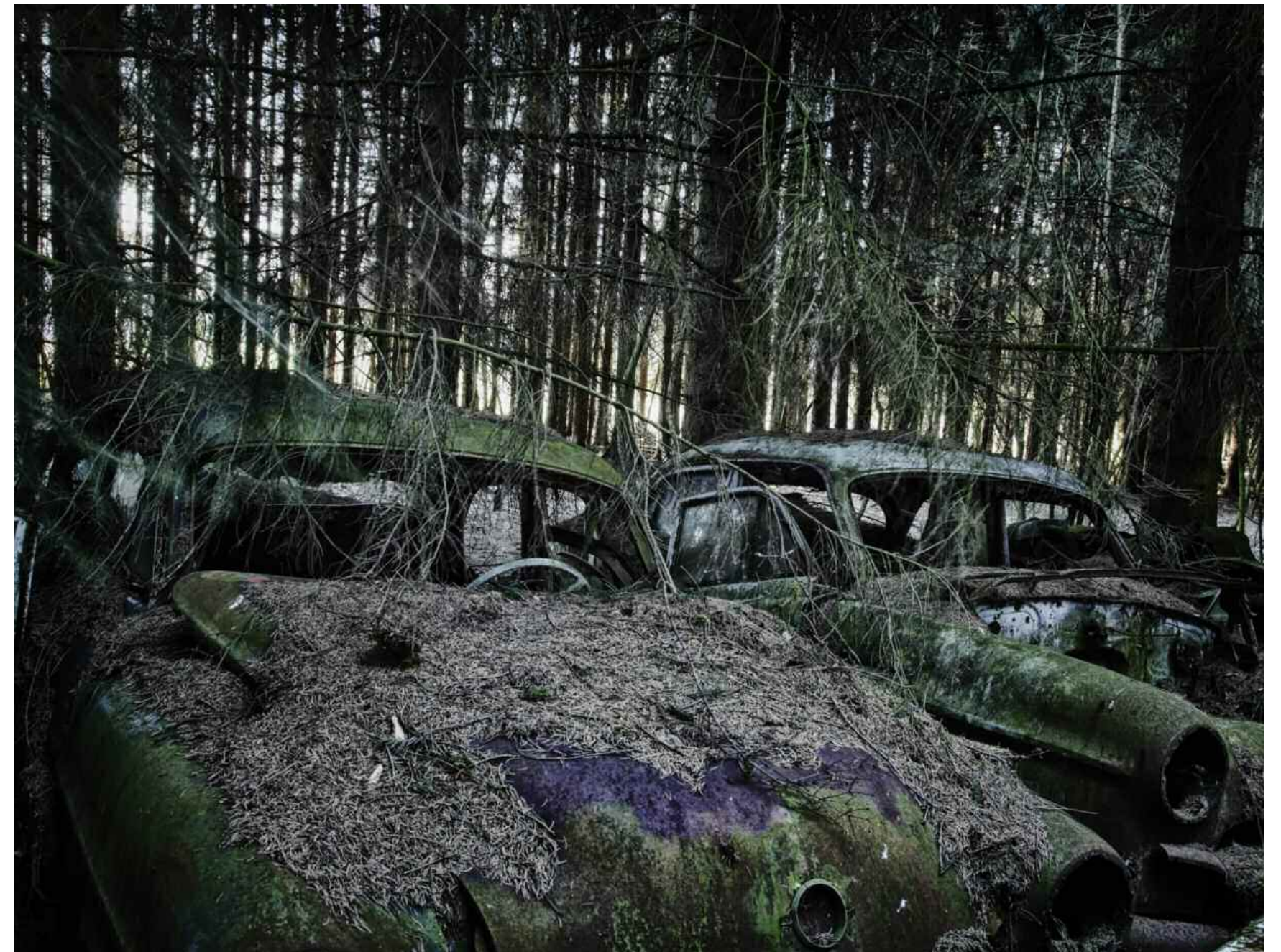
Some places cannot be sought; they can only be found when you are not looking.

Deep within the forest stood over two hundred cars, untouched for half a century. No longer metal, but matte and muted—cooled by rain, bleached by the sun. Young birches grew from within the chassis, embraced by moss. The forest had reclaimed its territory, acting as the true owner.

I touched nothing. I only entered this sacred space as a guest in a broken, fragile world that chose to confide in me. A museum without admission, without labels, suspended in a singular heartbeat.

Then came the intrusion. The world outside spoke the name of this hidden place aloud—a sacrilege for the sanctuaries of ruin. Crowds arrived, followed by those who steal, shatter, and destroy.

Today, the clearing is empty. The cars are gone, swept away like unwanted memories. Yet, within the photographs, this place endures. Still untouched. Still holding secrets that no one left alive can tell.



A Deeper Look

“A landscape of transience. The sun laid soft gold upon the roofs of the cars, and a stillness stood there that held the dignity of ancient cathedrals.”

Stepping above the height of everyday life, the world begins to shift. From above, confusion reveals a hidden order. The graveyard of machines is embraced by the gentle, unstoppable grasp of nature.

In the undergrowth, a vehicle rests. Its paint has long succumbed to the breath of the forest; its lines have lost their sharp edge. It is no longer a car, but part of the earth, like a fallen tree that now bears roots of moss.

How gentle the end can be when left undisturbed—how dignified the return to that silence from which everything originates.

This journey brings a profound reminder: one day, we too will be like these vehicles. No longer what we were built for, but at one with the world we came from. In this, there is no loss—only a homecoming.





Sprague

“A light that does not expose, but veils, bringing forth the hidden soul of things.”

In the endless expanse of northern Washington lies a sanctuary of transience. Behind an open gate stands a silent assembly of vehicles from the 1920s to the 1950s. They rest unrestored, etched by rust and time, yet holding an imperishable beauty. Here, the past is not buried; it is displayed in all its dignity.

Amidst this quiet crowd stands a 1940 Packard Woody. Legend whispers it was once driven by Ansel Adams—the great master of black-and-white photography whose vision shaped my own. Even if unproven, the mere thought touches the soul. It becomes a symbol of the invisible thread connecting photography, time, and the art of decay.

I captured the stories of these mute witnesses until dusk approached. This is the hour when the world loses its sharp contours, dissolving into a haunting, enchanted glow.

I had found a place where time does not pass, but simply stands still. The search for beauty in the ephemeral never ends.



The Final Stop

"Everything is finite. That is the ultimate law of the road."

My journey ended in the arid hills of California, at a yard that served as an open-air sanctuary for dead British sports cars. There I met Winston, a caretaker forged of light and shadow, bearing the deep scars of a near-fatal accident. Surrounded by rusty transience, he had found his purpose among the wreckage.

We spent hours talking into the warm night, finding a rare, silent connection in the face of impermanence. When we parted, Winston handed me a small, worn object: a wooden shift knob with an enameled MG inlay.

"I used to squeeze this tightly in my moments of greatest distress, just to feel that I was still here," he told me.
"I want to give this knob to you, to bring you luck.
After our talks, I don't need it anymore."

In that moment, the drive to photograph more cars vanished. The journey was complete.

But transience leaves nothing untouched. Before I could even take a final photograph of the shift knob, it was stolen. At first, it felt like a cruel irony, but then the truth of it settled in. The artifact was gone, proving the very law I had spent years documenting: nothing lasts.

It became my own personal Gasoline Blues.

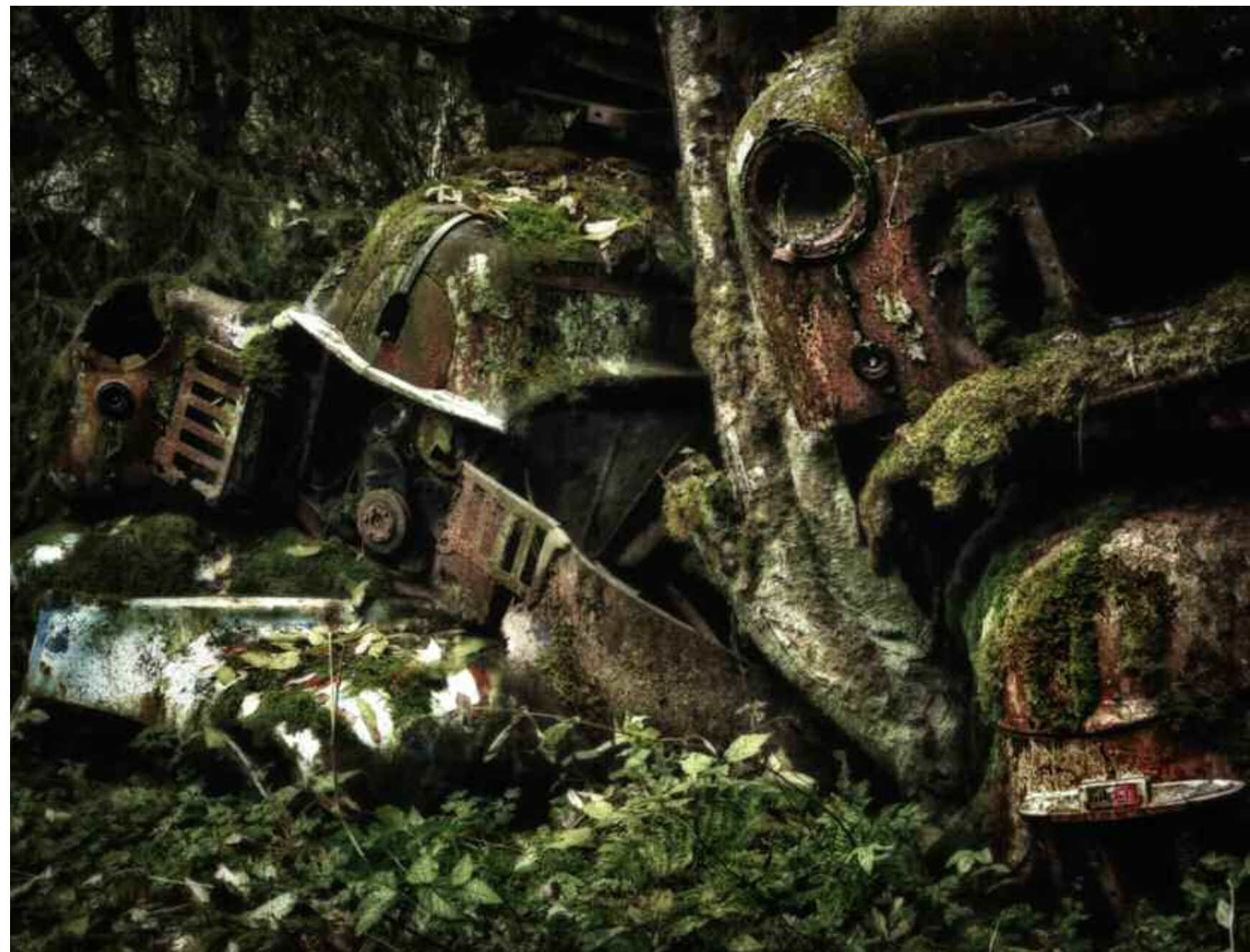












Notes

- 1** Eckhart, also known as Meister Eckhart (various spellings), mystic, ca. 1260 - 1329. "To be a master means seeing with your own eyes what everyone can see, and recognizing the beauty in things that seem all too ordinary to others." Auguste Rodin
- 2** Gustav Mahler, Das Lied von der Erde, 2nd movement, "Der einsame Herbst"
- 3** Karl Marx, Capital, Chapter 1, "Commodities"
- 4** Hildegard of Bingen, mystic, ca. 1098 - 1179, "The Soul and Its Canopy"
- 5** Cf. Ernst Bloch, Atheism in Christianity, 18/5
- 6** Friedrich Hölderlin, Hyperion, Part 2
- 7** Friedrich Hölderlin, "Mnemosyne," 1st version
- 8** Gustav Mahler, Das Lied von der Erde, 2nd movement, "Der einsame Herbst"
- 9** Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, "Zarathustra's Prologue," Part 5





Title
1937 Chrysler Imperial
White, Georgia



Page 15
Peugeot 404
by Joustra
Jouvet de Straßbourg
1961–1965



Page 27
Chrysler Airflow (Wyan-
dotte), Renault Celtaquatre,
Renault Novaquatre
(Industrial Toy Company
CIJ) Panhard Dyna, ~1935



Page 38/39
1934–57 Citroën
Traction Avant
Polisot, France



Page 49
1937 Dodge D5
Båstnäs, Sweden



Page 61
1946 Cadillac Serie 75
Ramona, California



Page 8/9
Cadillac 1953
Near Branford, Florida



Page 20
1937 Chevrolet
Okatan, South Dakota



Page 29
1935 Citroën 7U Serie B,
„Rosalie“
Pons, France



Page 41
1928 Peugeot TYP 190
Polisot, France



Page 51
U.S. luxury roadster
(in the style of a Chrysler
Imperial / De Soto) ~1954
Barrels, Märklin,
Germany



Page 62
Chevrolet 210, 1957
Chatillon, Belgium



Page 10
1956 Buick Century
1957 Chevrolet Bel Air
Fresno, CA



Page 22
1978 Chrysler
New Yorker
Brenda, Arizona



Page 31
1935 Citroën 7U Serie B,
„Rosalie“
Pons, France



Page 43
Opel Record Olympia
1953–57
Ryd, Sweden



Page 53
1937 England
Limousine
(Model 1920's)
Mettoy, England, ca.
1937 (?)



Page 63
1936–55 Simca/Fiat
500 C Topolino
Ars-sur-Moselle, France



Page 11
1954 Cadillac
Near Ramona, CA



Page 23
Hupmobil 1932
Toppenisch, Washington



Page 33
1928–32 Citroën C4
Mussy-sur-Seine ,
France



1952–54 Ford Vedette
1938 Hudson 112,
1949–53 Ford
Prefect E493A,
1951 Ford Taunus 39A
1954–56 Fiat 1400A
1940–67 Ford
Anglia E494A
1949–53 Ford
Prefect E493A
1948–60 Peugeot
Berline 203
Båstnäs, Sweden



Page 55
Gas Station, Louis Marx
Toys & Co, ~1930
Limousine ~1940
SPIRO, Germany
1948–1950



Page 64
Cadillac Sedan DeVille
~1960
Bandai & co ltd, Japan



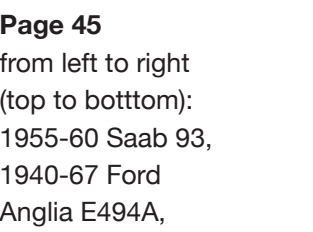
Page 12
1951–1956 Austin A30
1949–1956 Saab 92
Båstnäs, Sweden



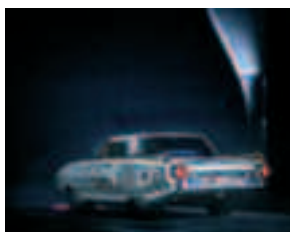
Page 24
1947 Pontiac Chieftain(
1936 Chevrolet-Master-
Deluxe
Bosler, Wyoming



Page 34
1928 Citroën C4
Mussy-sur-Seine ,
France



Page 45
from left to right
(top to bottom):
1955–60 Saab 93,
1940–67 Ford
Anglia E494A,
1938–39 Ford Eight 7Y,
1952–55 Ford Taunus
12M „Weltkugel“



Page 57
Ford Thunderbird
(Coupé), ca. 1960–1964
Ichiko, Japan or KBN,
Germany



Page 65
Cadillac Coupe DeVille
1959
Mojave, California



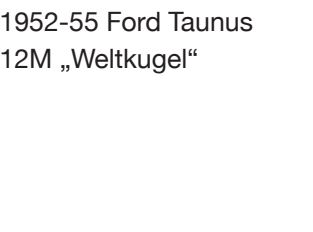
Page 13
Austin 1956 A35
Båstnäs, Sweden



Page 25
Dodge 1960
Pioneer
Madoc, Montana



Page 35
1928 Citroën C4
Mussy-sur-Seine ,
France



Page 37
1928 Ford with a woo-
den carburetor
1926–28 Citroën B 14
with a Renault hood,
1926–28 Citroën B 14
Ford 1928
Polisot, France



Page 47
1954–1957 Austin A50
Cambridge
Båstnäs, Sweden



Page 58/59
Renault Ondine, Joustra
JOUet der STRAssbourg
~1960 - 1965
France



Page 66
1954 Cadillac Series 62
GAMA (Gebrüder Mans-
feld, Fürth, Germany)



Page 14
1931– 44 Renault
Primaquatre
1934–38 Renault
Celtaquatre,
1928 Citroën C4
1936–48 Simca 5
934–38 Renault
Celtaquatre
Mussy-sur-Seine , France



Page 26
2x Mercedes-Benz 220
SE W111
Bandai & co ltd, Japan
1960's



Page 67
1954 Cadillac Series 62
Tonopah, Nevada



Page 60
1976 Triumph TR6
1959 MG MGA Race Car
Ramona, California





Page 68
Citroën, 1928 (?)
Charles Rossignol,
France



Page 69
Citroën, 4C 1928
Mussy, France



Page 70
Ford Taunus 12M
Båstnäs, Sweden



Page 71
1946 Chevrolet
Style- master
Båstnäs, Sweden



Page 72/73
1936 Dodge
Nelson, Nevada



Page 75
1954 Chevrolet
Aline, Oklahoma



Page 76
1947 Chevrolet
Fleetmaster
Aline, Oklahoma



Page 77
1935 Plymouth PJ
Aline, Oklahoma



Page 78/79
1960 Dodge Pioneer
Madoc, Montana



Page 81
Dodge 1960
Pioneer
Madoc, Montana



Page 83
Gas Station: Marx Toys
Car: MEMO-GUTMANN,
M 506
Hotchkiss 686 Berline (?)
France, ~ 1948–1950



Page 85
White King Express
Metalcraft, St. Louis
~ 1935–1938



Page 87
Wyandotte Toys
right: Chrysler Airflow
1934–1935
left: Wyandotte Toys
1930's



Page 88/89
left to right:
1958 Chevrolet Bel Air
1949 Chevrolet Master
1950 Chevrolet Master
Deluxe
1954 Chevrolet Bel Air



Page 91
1948-53
Steyr Fiat 1100
Wels, Austria



Page 92
1949-50 Fiat 1100 E
1949-55 Fiat 500C Giari-
niera
1953 Fiat 1100/103
Wels, Austria



Page 93
1950-53 Opel Olympia
Wels, Austria



Page 94
1947 Chrysler Windsor
1956 Chrysler Imperial
Shaniko, Oregon



Page 95
1937 Graham-Paige
Ridgefield, Oregon

1953 Chevrolet Bel Air
1966 Mercury
1965 Dodge Coronet 440
1962 Studebaker Lark
Cruiser Sedan
1963 Plymouth Fury
1966 Plymouth Fury
1951-52 Ford F 1
1969-70 Ford Galaxie
500
1954 Plymouth
Cranbrook
Pampa, Texas



Page 96/97
from left to right:
1931 Chevrolet Master
1961 Ford Falcon
1957 Dodge D100
Townpanel
1960 Chevrolet C10
1962 Chevrolet Impala
1965 Mercury Monterey
1954 Lincoln
1961 Mercury
Lamar, Colorado



Page 99
from left to right:
1962 Ford F 100
1961 Buick Special
1956 Plymouth
Belvedere
1951 Buick Special
1959 Chevrolet Impala
1951 Chevrolet 3100
1967-68 Chevrolet C10
1959 Chevrolet Corvair
1939 Dodge Truck
Lamar, Colorado



Page 101
1958–1964 Chevrolet
Impala
Lamar, Colorado



Page 103
P1948–1965 Porsche 356
Neandertal, Germany



Page 105
1948–1954 Jaguar
XK 120
Neandertaler, Germany



Page 107
1948-1960 Peugeot 203
1936-1955 Fiat 500
Gourgeon, France



Page 108
Renault Monaquatre
1931–1935
Gourgeon, France



Page 109
1955-1967 Peugeot 403
Gourgeon, France



Page 110/111
All Metal Products
Company
Wyandotte, 1930's



Page 113
Renault Ondine,
JOUSTR Jouet de
Straßbourg
1961



Page 115
1934 Kingsbury Airflow
Wind-up Toy Car



Page 117
Gas Pumps, Dinky Toys,
1934–1954
Car: Part of Georg
Fischer, Gas Station
Modell 224, 1946–1952



Page 119
Gas Station by Marx
Toys
Wyandotte 1930's



Page 121
Model race car ~ 1930s,
manufacturer presuma-
bly Arnold/Nuremberg



Page 123
1939-43 Ford Taunus
G93A
near Kiel, Germany



Page 125
Ford 39E
Båstnäs, Sweden



Page 127
Shadow of 1907 Ford
Model T
Goldfield, Nevada



Page 129
International Car Forest
Goldfield, Nevada



Page 131
1940 Packard 180
Custom
Auburn, Washington



Page 133
1939 Oldsmobile, 1941 Buick, 1941 Chevrolet, 1940 Desoto 4Dr Suicide Enid, Oklahoma



Page 145
Lindström Tool & Toy Co. Mickey Mouse Racing Car 1935 Gas Station by Marx Toys 1930's



Page 156
1961 Ford Thunderbird 1970 Chrysler New Yorker Wendell, Idaho



Page 169
1981- 1963 Lincoln Continental Mark VI Casa Grande, Arizona



Page 183
Wyandotte 1930's



Page 196
Custom Car by Gene Winfield Mojave, California



Page 134
1936 Cord 810 1937 Cord 812 Enid, Oklahoma



Page 147
Wyandotte 1930's Citroën, 1928 (?) Charles Rossignol,



Page 157
1960 Ford Thunderbird Convertible Wendell, Idaho



Page 171
Mercedes 190 Bandai & co ltd, Japan



Page 185
Wyandotte 1930's



Page 197
1958 Ford Edsel Mojave, California



Page 135
1948 Buick Eight Enid, Oklahoma



Page 149
Hupmobil 1932 Toppenisch, Washington



Page 158/159
1955 Buick Roadmaster Panamint Spring, California



Page 173
1926 Ford Model T Bard, California Cloud Museum



Page 187
1924 Dodge Brothers Truck Joshua Tree Park, California



Page 199
Studebaker 1932 Tucumcari, New Mexico



Page 137
1952-54 Oldsmobile 88 Enid, Oklahoma



Page 150
Ford Model T Toppenisch, Washington



Page 161
1955 Buick Roadmaster 1941 Buick Model 66s Century Sedanette Panamint Spring, California



Page 175
1937 Chrysler Imperial White, Georgia



Page 189
Renault Dauphine 1956-1968 Darwin, California



Page 201
Gas Station Winnemucca, Nevada



Page 139
Ford Ranchero Bandai & co ltd or Yonezawa, Japan ~ 1958-1962



Page 151
Dodge, 1926 Toppenisch, Washington



Page 163
Chevrolets 1920's near Lisbon, North Dakota



Page 177
1918 Dodge Bothers Berlin, Nevada



Page 191
Porsche 356 1948-1965 near Crawfordville, Florida



Page 203
1926 Plymouth Middlegate, Nevada



Page 141
Citroën 1920's Jouets André Citroën



Page 153
1952 Chevrolet Anderson, Alabama



Page 165
1959-64 Chevrolet Impala near Lisbon, North Dakota



Page 179
1932 Studebaker Petrified Tree National Park, Arizona



Page 193
Porsche 356 1948-1965 near Crawfordville, Florida



Page 205
1937 Pontiac Six Cologne, Germany



Page 143
Mercedes 190 Bandai & co ltd, Japan 1960's



Page 155
1948 Dodge Panel Car Wendell, Idaho



Page 167
1950 Chevrolet 1947 Oldsmobile Chatillon, Belgium



Page 181
Coca-Cola-Truck White Motor Company Metalcraft Corporation, St. Louis, Missouri 1932



Page 195
Gene Winfield Mojave, California



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1953 Buick Super Riviera
1949-54 Chevrolet
1956-57 Opel Olympia
Rekord Car-A-Van
1955 Ford Zephir/Zodiak
1955 Plymouth
1955 Chevrolet
1955 Chevrolet Master
1952 Citroën 11
(Traction Avant)
Chatillon, Belgium



Page 215

1940 Packard Woody
Sprague, Washington



Page 225

1941 Chevrolet
White, Georgia

Note on Locations and Preservation

Most of the European sites documented in this book have since been cleared, repurposed, or dismantled. Consequently, these photographs now serve as the sole remaining record of those specific environments.

The Rosa Dodge featured as the title image of Lost Wheels serves as a poignant testament to this transience: following a brushfire that consumed the surrounding homestead and outbuildings in Montana, this composition is now impossible to recreate. The sites depicted in this volume no longer exist as they appear here; they have migrated from the landscape into the quiet of these pages.

This record is therefore not a guide for travelers, but a memorial to places that have vanished.

Note on identification

Where branding or original markings have succumbed to natural decay, manufacturers have been identified through distinct stylistic features. These attributions represent the most probable origins, honoring the anonymity that time has granted to these objects.

Note on Methodology and Ethics

The documentation in this volume follows two distinct approaches:

Regarding the Automobiles:

The photographs of the automobiles were captured in situ, exactly as discovered. No objects were rearranged, staged, or cleaned. This commitment to non-interference ensures that the decay recorded here remains an authentic metamorphosis, untouched by the hand of the observer.

Regarding the Still Lifes:

In contrast, the still lifes of the vintage toys were meticulously arranged. Here, the creative intent was not to document a state of decay, but to honor the objects as 'messengers' through careful composition. These scenes represent an interpretive act—a tribute to the objects and the philosophical reflections they inspired.



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1953-1954 Opel Olympia
Chatillon, Belgium



Page 219

Limousine ~1945-1948
Gescha (Gebrüder
Schachenmayr)
Barrels by Märklin,
Germany



Page 229

Burnett Limited
(1914-1939)
Lithographed sheet steel
1940's



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amongst others:
1957-62 Opel Rekord P1,
1953-55 Opel Kapitän,
1953-57 Opel Olympia,
1951-56 Austin A30,
bottom right (Fragment):
1950-51 Ford
Tudor/Victoria
Båstnäs, Sweden



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1930's Body
New Germany,
Minnesota



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Abandoned gas station
ESSO
Cyprus



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1957-60 Ford Taunus P2,
1951-56 Austin A30, 3
1959-67 Ford Anglia
105E
1952-56 Morris Minor II
1956-59 Austin A95
1947-58 Volvo PV 444
Båstnäs, Sweden



Page 222

1960 Cadillac
Coupe DeVille
White, Georgia



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1947/8 Opel Olympia
Båstnäs, Sweden



Gasoline Blues is an attempt to give these silent relics a voice—through the lens and through words.

The stories were born on the road: in the blinding light of Nevada, the dust of Route 66, the shadows of abandoned homes, and in conversations with strangers who refused to remain strangers.

It is a project about passing—and about what decay brings to light: form, color, and ultimate meaning. Between every photograph lies a moment of silence. Between every story, a pause where memory begins to speak.

Perhaps this is all just rusted iron.

Or perhaps these are mirrors. For what we leave behind—and for what we take with us, whether we want to or not.



To those who helped me navigate this wilderness of steel
and memory: my deepest gratitude for your guidance and
companionship along the way.

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