A Thousand Words

Left hand cradles the camera body and right hand guides the lens. Left finger slides the focus up and back, honing its sharpness. Right fingertip feathers the shutter button, biding its release. Left eye closes. Right eye composes. Now. Light caresses film and I've captured a moment in time. I am a chronicler of moments. And even a thousand frames later, I still seek those rare and random revelations exposed in an instant of honesty. The search is long and sometimes barren. But with patience and perception, the camera now leads me to a beauty I once overlooked.

I first sought Truth and Beauty through the landscapes of my youth. Pine silhouettes framed the sunrise glass of Lake Tahoe. Cactus sentinels guarded the oven of Death's Valley. I studied the majestic stillness and then shot. I like the results. Others did too. Arrangement, simplicity and balance blended well. And yet I found my pictures lacking. While the composition seemed complete, the image delivered little impact. I turned my sight to action.

Race cars and rodeos fueled my search for beauty's door. High-speed shutters froze the flight of both horse flesh and steel. Rapid-fire frames chased a sequence blurred in passing; each snap an opportunity to seize magnificence in motion. Often I did just that. And still, I sensed that the riots of propulsion were not enough. I looked again and the heart-sought beauty eventually appeared. I had arrived not in the action, but in the reaction to life.

A rainbow's beauty comes not from its color but from the first discovery of its existence. The wonder and surprise found in the face of a child's first circus tells all without uttering a sound. The warm dawning of a lover's smile offers volumes from a heart that needs no voice. Still-life scenery and non-stop deeds pale in comparison. After years of looking elsewhere, I find the beauty here—widened eyes, curving lips, subtle clues to timeless truths.

I am a chronicler of moments. With camera in hand and my heart for an eye, I trace the outlines of beauty in film. Each picture reveals a lifetime of detail.

--Jeff Brace