BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Ansel Adams: A Biography

Ansel Adams: An Autobiography (as coauthor)

Ansel Adams: Letters and Images (as coeditor)

MARY STREET ALINDER

GROUP *f*.64

EDWARD WESTON, ANSEL ADAMS, IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM,

AND THE COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS WHO REVOLUTIONIZED AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA HAS BEEN APPLIED FOR.

ISBN: 978-1-62040-555-0

First U.S. Edition 2014

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Typeset by Hewer Text UK Ltd, Edinburgh
Printed and bound in the USA by Thomson-Shore Inc., Dexter, Michigan

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Always for Jim
and
our children
Jasmine and Aims
Jesse
Zachary and Amy
and our grandchildren
Alice and Eliza
Bayan, Kalista, Harley,
and
Wyatt

They told me about themselves, their colleagues, and their journey in photography—in both their prose and the interviews they gave me. I heard them when they lived, and I hear them still. After years of research and writing, it is time for Group *f*.64 to come into sharp focus.

Mary Street Alinder
June 2014

CHAPTER ONE

OCTOBER 1932

1. EDWARD WESTON

When he looked in the mirror, which wasn't often, Edward Weston saw lines of worry creasing his tan face. His well-trimmed mustache now sprouted as many gray hairs as brown. The pit of his stomach ached with an unsettling mixture of anxieties. At the age of forty-six, long after he'd achieved international recognition, Edward was about to see his first book of photographs go on press. It was October 1932, and the publishing date was set for November.[1] For the past three months he had held himself to the task of selecting and printing just thirty-six pictures from a lifetime of work. The process of elimination had been agonizing, and then he had toiled in his darkroom to make perfect prints. For the frontispiece, he had found a perfect quote to describe his philosophy, "If to live is to express the emotions of life, then to create art is to express the life of emotions."[2] Now he wrestled with his artist's statement. Each word he set down on the page in his looping, bold cursive carried ominous weight. Nothing he wrote seemed quite good enough.[3]

Because of the book, Edward had neglected his Carmel portrait studio. Summer was high season, the time to schedule sittings and to sell prints to tourists, who were scarce the rest of the year. He had made no sales during all of July and August. Since the first of September, his ledger recorded total earnings of $104. Barely solvent, he was rescued on October 6 when he opened his mail to discover a check for first prize in the *California Trees* photographic exhibition and competition at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco.[4] With the $100 boost to his bank account, he wistfully thought of getting away, if only for a day or two. Since he did not drive, he scribbled a quick note to his young student Willard Van Dyke offering to pay for the gas and food if Willard would drive down from Oakland and take him out to make new photographs.[5]

Money was tight. But then money was always tight. When Wall Street imploded in October 1929, the impact on Edward had at first been minimal: he owned no stock, no house—just the corduroy shirt on his back. Like most artists, he was used to living close to the edge.[6] By October 1932, though, the

economy had deteriorated beyond anyone's imagination, strangled by rampant, chronic unemployment. In 1930, 5 million people were out of work in the United States; by 1932 that number had nearly tripled, to 13 million out of a total population of 125 million.[7] The Great Depression worsened by the day. It felt as if it just might last forever.

Even the snug seaside village of Carmel felt the effects. In 1929 Edward had opened his studio there, finding inspiration for his work in the unspoiled natural environment, with its white sand beaches, rocky shores, and groves of twisted cypress trees. Behind, to the east, golden-grassed and oak-studded hills receded in endless, nearly unoccupied waves. Real estate developers had founded Carmel-by-the-Sea, its official name, in 1903, immediately advertising it as an artist colony. Following the San Francisco earthquake and fires of April 1906, many fled the city for this promised haven for the arts. Such an influx of writers and artists arrived that by 1910 it was reported that 60 percent of the village's residents had dedicated their lives to the arts. A bohemian group that included the writers Jack London, George Sterling, Mary Austin, Sinclair Lewis, and Ambrose Bierce and the poet Robinson Jeffers, residents lived cozily close together in small cottages.[8] The village boasted a unique downtown that would become a mecca of California art, studios and galleries opening one after another.[9]

Edward Weston was not the first photographer to plant his tripod on the sands of Carmel. His friend Johan Hagemeyer opened a studio in 1923, and before him Arnold Genthe, whose San Francisco studio was destroyed in the fire following the 1906 earthquake, worked there. Edward, whose intense charisma was on full display during the village's busy social season, was soon recognized as the undisputed captain of Carmel photography.

Even in good times Edward's studio had struggled financially, and by 1932 far fewer people had the means to commission a portrait by one of America's most famous photographers. He sold his creative photographs even less frequently. Although Edward believed that great art—his art—could give the viewer a rare glimpse into the deepest realities of life, most people seemed to think that what he offered was a luxury. He found the mass of humanity's insensitivity to art hugely disturbing.[10]

Edward Weston was born in Highland Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, in 1886. His parents were a prosperous couple, his father a successful obstetrician-gynecologist. But when he was just five years old, Edward's mother died of pneumonia. His lasting memory was of her intense eyes, burning with fever. His sister May, nine years older, became his very loving surrogate mother.

Photography claimed Edward in August 1902, when his father sent the sixteen-year-old to his aunt's farm in Michigan for a healthy vacation. He mailed his son a simple box camera, a Kodak Bulls-Eye Camera No. 2 loaded with one roll of film, twelve separate chances to record his experiences. Each negative measured 3 1/2 by 3 1/2 inches. Back home that autumn, Edward saved every penny, and that winter he prowled the city's parks with his new 5-by-7-inch view camera, much more serious equipment than the Bulls-Eye. He rigged up a simple darkroom. When his first image bloomed upon a sheet of photographic paper, he knew he had witnessed magic—magic that he had made. Proudly, he rushed to show the still-damp picture of a snowy landscape to his father.[11]

In 1903, after May married and moved to Southern California, Edward dropped out; school had long been a necessary bore, but he could stand it no longer. He took a job at the Marshall Field's department store to support his increasingly expensive and demanding vocation. His father, busy with a second family, didn't put up much of a fuss.

Edward ached with loneliness for May, hoarding his earnings until he finally had enough to finance a two-month visit in 1906. While in California he fell in love with May's best friend, Flora Chandler, a schoolteacher who was seven years older, big-boned, half a foot taller, and possessed of a strong personality. But how could he propose marriage without a career, without a job? A highly motivated Edward returned to Chicago and completed the Illinois College of Photography's nine-month course in just six months, although he was denied a diploma when he refused to pay the full term tuition.[12]

Family and commitments grew quickly: Edward wed Flora in 1909, and they lived in a simple cottage he had built on property owned by his new in-laws. Two years later he opened his own professional portrait studio in Tropico, a suburb northeast of central Los Angeles, also on land that belonged to his wife's family.[13] (In 1918 Tropico was absorbed into the city of Glendale.) Flora gave birth to four sons: Chandler in 1910, Theodore (known as Brett) in 1911, Neil in 1914, and the "Babykins," Cole, in 1919. While Edward thought Flora was an excellent mother, as a wife she was demanding, dramatic, and given to hysteria. She would "give you her blood when all you wanted was coffee."[14] He came to feel that she had no understanding of his internal artistic and sexual fires. The marriage foundered, but never his love and emotional support for his sons.[15]

Edward's vices were few—women, coffee, and cigarettes—but they drove him to constant self-criticism. Coffee and cigarettes were addictions he could ill afford. Although he remained married to Flora, he found other

women essential. He hoped to find happiness with just one woman, but after years of trying he had not reached that goal. With each new passion, he felt a surge of energy that recharged his creativity and enabled him to see more clearly every new object on which he focused his lens. Photography remained his first concern above all others. His priorities were clear: photography first, his four sons a close second, and women third.[16]

As a Pictorialist—the predominant photographic style during the early years of the twentieth century in both Europe and America—Edward excelled. His images and writings began appearing in the pages of the popular photo press as early as 1911. At San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915, a celebration of the completion of the Panama Canal and the city's rebirth from the devastating 1906 earthquake, he was awarded a bronze medal for Pictorialist photography for his portrait of a child.[17] In 1916 the magazine *Camera* dedicated an entire issue to his work, praising his pictures because they contained "the charm which an admirably painted portrait possesses."[18] In 1917 a British critic rated his photographs the best in the entire London Salon, where he was elected an honorary member, one of only six Americans in a total membership of thirty-seven. Increasingly showered with awards, Edward, with his growing fame, attracted new clients for portrait sittings.[19]

Pictorialism turned out to be a wrong turn for photography, but there were reasons for its prolonged popularity. Pictorialists proclaimed that through them photography would finally be classified as an art, a question that had been raised soon after August 19, 1839, when the French government gave the invention of photography freely to the world.[20] This momentous announcement described a difficult process invented by the Frenchmen Nicéphore Niépce and Louis Daguerre. The daguerreotype produced a single positive image, incredibly sharp and amazingly detailed—if viewed at the right angle, at least—on a thin, silvery, reflective metal sheet. Immediately photography was hailed as a miracle. Through the agency of light, images of the physical world and actual people could be fixed forever with stunning clarity and accuracy: a perfect marriage of science and technology.

Almost simultaneously in England, William Henry Fox Talbot devised a way to make photographs by using paper negatives. An infinite number of prints could be produced, but the opacity of the negative compromised the image's clarity. While the daguerreotype was the immediate hit, eventually Talbot's process evolved—to glass-plate negatives and then films—to become the dominant and then only photographic practice.

From the start, a few used their cameras to intentionally make a creative

image, to make art. Painters and others from the traditional arts charged that photography could never be an art because it was made with a machine. This schism began with the discipline's founders. In that same 1839, Daguerre wrote, "I have captured the light and arrested its flight! The sun itself shall draw my pictures." It could be understood from this that not the photographer but nature itself made the picture. At the very same time, Talbot expressed a far different opinion: "In what I have hitherto done, I do not profess to have perfected an Art, but to have *commenced* one; the limits of which it is not possible at present exactly to ascertain." Once begun, the debate about whether photography could be a fine art would not be quickly or easily won.[21]

The next decades saw significant improvements in the photographic process; late-nineteenth-century photographers reveled in the sharply focused prints they could make from their view cameras, which produced up to an 18-by-22-inch glass-plate negative. They would place the enormous negative in direct contact with light-sensitive printing paper, expose it to light, develop, and fix. The results were amazing—the world revealed through every precise detail as it actually was, or so it was thought. The viewer could almost walk into the scene, it was so real. In America during the Civil War of the 1860s, pictures from the front lines—bodies sprawled in the twisted, awkward poses of death—were posted in newspaper office windows, bringing the war searingly home.

After the Civil War, photographers presented the exploration of the western frontier to the public in images with attention-getting immediacy. The vastness of this country, with its endless miles of flat prairie that would become the nation's breadbasket; the spectacular Wild West, with its mountains higher and canyons deeper, its lakes, geysers, waterfalls, and herds of buffalo stretching for as far as the eye could see—this was a whole new world. Photography made it believable.

Today when we look at these century-old prints, we are impressed by the crisply focused compositions expressed in broad, rich tonalities. But few contemporaries praised these photographs as art, and none graced the walls of art museums. Accused of merely replicating reality, the images were defended by the English critic Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, who countered that photographs could interpret reality.[22]

In 1886 the British photographer Peter Henry Emerson gave a lecture titled "Photography, a Pictorial Art," proposing a style that he called "pure photography." He had come to believe that attempts at manipulating the negative or print would only result in "impure photography." For him, it was

imperative to record tonal relationships as they are in nature. The term Pictorialism, taken from his lecture title, became the chosen descriptive for art photography.

In 1891 Emerson published a pamphlet, *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, its cover bordered in the black of mourning, provoked vigorous arguments among serious photographers. Emerson had come to believe that a photographer could never reliably control tonal relationships as a painter could; because of that constraint, he posited, photography could never be an art.[23]

Many photographers were convinced that if photography were to be art, more must be required. Perhaps they thought the process had become too easy. Calling themselves Pictorialists, they believed that to be accepted as art, a photograph must directly reflect the hand of man, its negative or print obviously and conscientiously manipulated by the photographer. Pictorialists used soft-focus lenses, drew in the negative's emulsion, and chose processes such as bromoil or gum oil prints that simplified tones, all to gain the effect of a charcoal, pastel, painting, or etching.[24] The final results were often taken for anything but a photograph. To reflect the importance of this work, Pictorialist subjects had to be suitably serious. Romanticized historical characters and tableaux were seen as proper Pictorialist themes.[25]

In further imitation of painting, the Pictorialists called their exhibitions salons, in the nineteenth-century tradition of the French Academy. In this they copied a dying tradition that had lost its relevance to avant-garde artists beginning in 1863, when the Royal Academy's salon rejected Édouard Manet's paintings. Pictorialist salons showcased photography as art, not merely as examples of technical prowess or as a recording device. The ultimate recognition in Pictorial photography was to have prints accepted into a salon or, better yet, awarded a medal.[26] This was also the primary route to being published. In the time before photographers were honored with monographs of their work, their goal was to be included in photography magazines and pictorial annuals, which relied upon salon winners to fill their pages.

The basic problem with Pictorialism, as it was practiced in the 1890s, was that it intentionally denied photography's unique strength: its ability to produce a sharply focused, finely detailed lens-formed image. By 1900 some photographers had rebelled. The British photographer Frederick Evans wrote, "Personally I detest conundrums, and it does not seem worthwhile to have to wonder if an exhibit is a bad photograph or a worse chalk drawing."[27] Four years later art critic Sadakichi Hartmann wrote "A Plea for Straight Photography," recommending that photographs be made using little or no manipulation. Hartmann went so far as to suggest that each negative should be so well conceived that a straight print made from the negative must be its best expression.[28] Well into the twentieth century, though, Pictorialists and their salons dominated art photography, and photography was still not recognized as a fine art.

In truth, Edward Weston was a semi-Pictorialist. A number of his early images cast a definite mood, and he romanticized his prints by using a soft-focus lens and matte, textured, and warm-toned platinum papers. He did not otherwise alter his photographs, however. By 1916 he described his prints as "straight photographs without handwork, shading or manipulation of any kind," although he exempted necessary spotting—inking over the inevitable tiny white spots caused by dust on the negative—and for many years boosted his portrait clients' egos with judicious retouching of blemishes and wrinkles.[29]

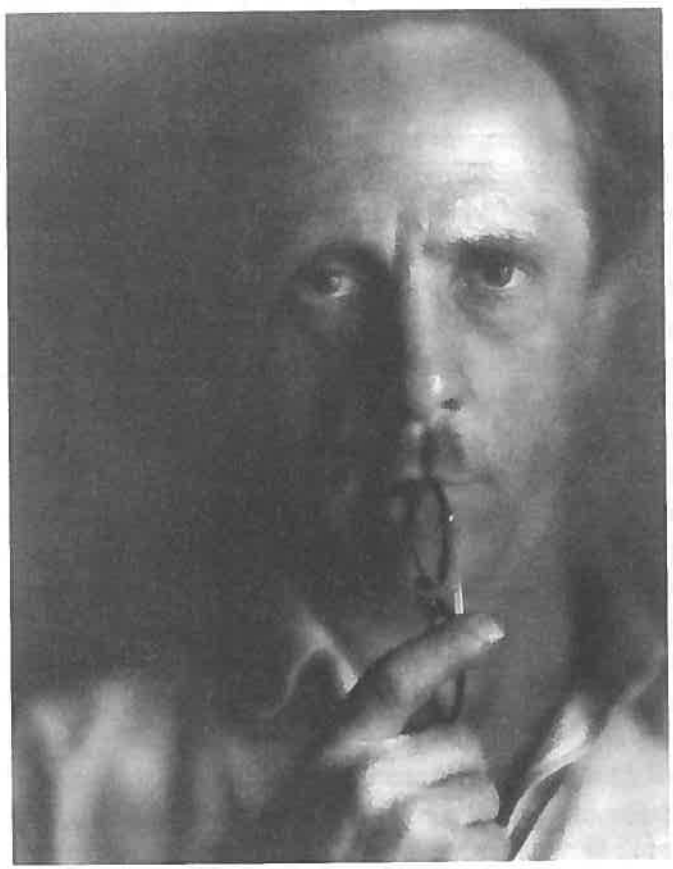

Figure 1. Margrethe Mather, *Edward Weston*, 1921

Yet Edward grew restless. When he visited the site of his triumph at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, he found that the photography exhibit had been excluded from the Palace of Fine Arts and placed instead in the Palace of Liberal Arts, amid such scientific wonders as a giant telescope and a fourteen-ton working typewriter.[30] Photographs had been defined once more as work produced by a machine, not created by humans.[31]

By 1914, Edward had begun a volatile relationship with Margrethe Mather, a brilliant woman and sometime photographer possessed of mercurial moods. Margrethe had made herself up—her name, her background, everything. Born Emma Caroline Youngren in 1886, she escaped her native Salt Lake City in 1907 to reappear in San Francisco in 1910 as Margrethe Mather, and then moved to Los Angeles. She earned her living as a prostitute, at least in these early years.[32] When Edward met her, she had cloaked herself in an aura of worldly sophistication, shrouding her past in mystery. A true nonconformist, Margrethe shook up Edward's life and introduced him to her social circle, the left-wing intellectuals of Los Angeles and Hollywood. Edward, dressing in his role of artist, tended a trim mustache, affected an ascot and cape, and smoked a pipe. He joined her in the formation of the Camera Pictorialists of Los Angeles, a camera club intended for serious, professional photographers, not amateurs, to promote photography as a creative means of expression. The group met monthly, eschewing the writing of rules or the collecting of dues but requiring each member to show a new print at every meeting.[33] Pictorialism with all its affectations ruled photography in California.

One man changed everything: a New Yorker named Alfred Stieglitz. Acclaimed as the "prophet and awakener" of photography, Stieglitz proved that, like a painter or sculptor, "with the camera too a man could select, and . . . the photographer too could carry about him in his mind the feeling of one object and express it through other ones."[34] He offered this concise autobiography: "I was born in Hoboken. I am an American. Photography is my passion. The search for Truth my obsession."[35]

As a seventeen-year-old in 1881, Stieglitz traveled with his family to Germany, where he studied engineering while gaining prominence in photographic circles by taking prizes at a number of salons and winning other competitions. In 1890 he joined the Vienna Camera Club, which promoted photography as a fine art through juried exhibitions and publications. Although he left Europe before Vienna's International Exhibition of Art Photographers of 1891, in which the criterion for entering a photograph was that it must strive to be art, he returned to America resolved to enlighten photographers about the artistic potential of their medium and to use camera clubs as his base.[36]

Cameras had become affordable and plentiful in the United States. Photography boomed as a hobby, and camera clubs were forming coast to coast, some, like the Camera Club of New York, building elaborate darkrooms for their members. The increasing number of amateurs constituted a ready audience for anything photographic, including magazines and exhibitions.[37]

Stieglitz became a leader of the Camera Club of New York, curating a number of its exhibitions. The club's quarterly, *Camera Notes*, became a serious journal under his editorship. He began exploring the essential strengths of the medium. Rejecting the commonly held belief that the soft-focus lens was necessary for photographic art, he chose lenses capable of sharp focus. Stieglitz preferred natural light to the traditional artificial studio lighting. With his viewfinder he framed uncontrived, unstaged compositions, repudiating another common Pictorialist practice.

While Stieglitz photographed primarily with a large view camera secured to a heavy tripod—the assumption being that this was what an artist used—he also pioneered outdoor work with a hand-held camera in inclement weather, a practice previously considered unfeasible. The weather could be felt in these images: New York streets deep in slush; air thick with swirling snow; the profiles of tall buildings, glimpsed through a veil of light spring rain.

Explaining his new aesthetic, Stieglitz was blunt and unyielding. Many of the New York club members thought what he preached to be disturbing and responded with hostility. After a five-year standoff, Stieglitz founded the Photo-Secession, a movement to secede from the status quo—in this case the Camera Club leadership and the popular Pictorialist salon establishment.[38] His goals were to promote photography as a respected and independent medium and to nurture an American vision of photography as art.[39]

From 1903 through 1917 Stieglitz produced and published fifty issues of the quarterly *Camera Work*, its elegant cover and typography designed by his early assistant Edward Steichen. With delicate, hand-pulled gravure reproductions tipped into each issue by Stieglitz himself, *Camera Work* was a profoundly beautiful magazine. During the years in which it appeared, this quarterly mirrored the great progress in creative photography, from the Pictorialist work of its earliest days to the rich, wide-ranging modernist vision of Paul Strand in its last issue. Strand chronicled the gritty reality of urban life but also made important abstract and Cubist-influenced images as early as 1915, simplifying forms into flat planes that emphasized the two dimensions of a photographic print.[40]

Selling issues for $2 each, Stieglitz aimed at a small, rarefied, and wealthy readership.[41] He insisted on printing a thousand copies of every issue, relenting only for the last two, which were printed in a run of five hundred. Initially the quarterly had 647 subscribers, but when it ceased publication, that number had dwindled to only 37.[42]

In 1905 Stieglitz opened the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession, a tiny fifteen-by-fifteen-foot attic room at 291 Fifth Avenue, forevermore known simply as 291. It is here that he introduced modern art to America. Stieglitz presented not only photographers but painters and sculptors as well. He was the first in this country to show the works of the top European modernists, Paul Cézanne, Auguste Rodin, Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, and Pablo Picasso. The faithful Edward Steichen, who was living in Europe, had discovered each of these artists and sent their work, certain that Stieglitz had modernist sympathies. The poet Marianne Moore described 291 as "an American Acropolis . . . with a stove in it," hung with "paintings seemingly without commercial value . . . [but] with respect, with sensitiveness and with intelligence."[43]

While wielding unrivaled power with his gallery and publications, Stieglitz also proved himself the greatest photographer in America. For Stieglitz, each print (he did not make many) must be a thing of supreme beauty, so he produced each with exquisite care and great regard for the subtle tonalities of a black-and-white photograph.[44]

He considered *The Steerage* of 1907 his finest photograph. Traveling with his family to Europe, Stieglitz loathed the pretensions of first class. He would gaze down from the advantaged top deck to the steerage class two floors below, wishing he could join those passengers, who interested him so much more. These steerage-class passengers were generally failed immigrants to America, returning to Europe. The visual relationships between the forms of the ship and these people fascinated Stieglitz, who would write, "I saw a picture of shapes and underlying that the feeling I had about life." He dashed back to his cabin to get his camera.[45]

The composition of *The Steerage* begins with the ship's massive framework: two crowded outside decks connected by a steep metal stairway, severed at the right by the picture's edge. A sunlit gangplank with chain railings projects in front of a thick funnel that thrusts vertically through and beyond the picture's frame. A large round metal housing anchors the photograph's left base. Within this structured arrangement, dense knots of passengers cluster: women wrapped in shawls and babushkas, warmly swaddled babies wearing knit caps, men in bowlers, berets, and fedoras. Not one head

Figure 2. Alfred Stieglitz, *The Steerage*, 1907

is bare. On the deck immediately below Stieglitz, a man gazes down on this mass of humanity. His bent neck offers the camera the flat, round crown of his bright white straw hat—the umbilicus that completes the picture.

When one critic proposed that Stieglitz made such compelling photographs because he mesmerized his subjects, he determined to demonstrate that he could make a great photograph of anything. To that end, in 1922 he began photographing clouds. He believed these images transmitted music, as if they were flutes, violins, or trumpets. They were his visual equivalent of a symphony. Stieglitz called his cloud pictures Equivalents, a term he used

for a photograph made to communicate "the underlying . . . feeling [he had] about life." They came to stand for what he saw as life's deepest, though normally unseen, truths.[46]

As immensely important as were his own photographs, his greatest impact during those early years of the twentieth century was as the ultimate tastemaker. In 1910 he curated the enormous six-hundred-print International Exhibition of Pictorial Photography at the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, a historic benchmark as the first exhibition of photography created for a major American art museum, and the first time such an institution began a serious collection of photographs.[47] Stieglitz's intention was to display a number of prints by each photographer, so as to better convey the evolution of the artistic vision of each. While almost all the photographers had been expressly invited to show by the Stieglitz-led judges, sixty prints were juried into the "Open" category. This one time, Stieglitz benevolently allowed all photographers who had the courage to submit work. The odds, evidently, were not good, but this announcement gave at least a veneer of democracy to the proceedings.[48]

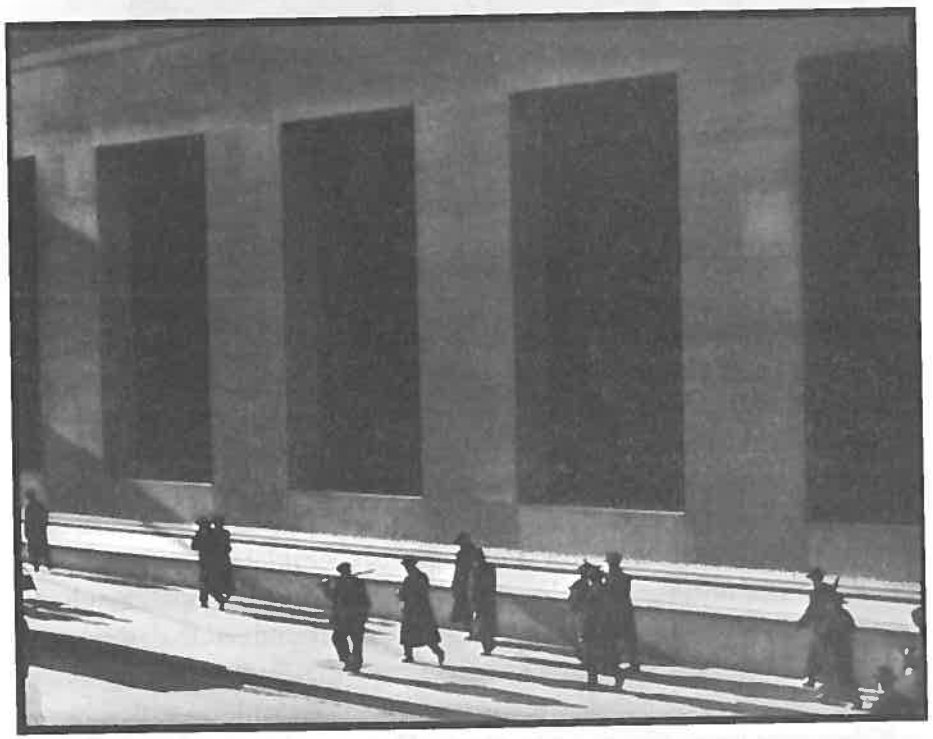

Figure 3. Paul Strand, *Wall Street*, 1915

If you were a serious photographer, you knew about Alfred Stieglitz. From the distance of the West Coast, Edward Weston hung on Stieglitz's pronouncements as if they had come directly from the Mount. Stieglitz never disabused anyone from that opinion. In 1917 Edward entered prints in the prestigious Wanamaker Salon in Philadelphia, where Stieglitz and Steichen were the judges. To emphasize their conviction that most photographers had little clue how to use their own medium, they accepted only fifty-five prints out of more than eleven hundred entries, angering hundreds of submitters and further cementing Stieglitz's reputation for arrogance. They awarded Strand the top prize of $100 for *Wall Street*, which captured the blank, unyielding granite face of the Morgan Bank, its ominous scale impervious to the pedestrians who pass before it. Edward was disappointed to receive only two honorable mentions, worth a total of $10, for two studio portraits. Even though his prints were among the few chosen for the salon, for him this was tantamount to rejection.[49]

Paul Strand was influential as both a photographer and a thoughtful writer, at a time when there was little of any worth published on the topic. His 1917 article "Photography" in the magazine *Seven Arts* was a lucid rebuke to Pictorialism. Edward, a great reader of anything serious written on photography, must have seen it: "The full potential power of every medium is dependent upon the purity of its use, and all attempts at mixture end in such dead things . . . in which the introduction of handwork and manipulation is merely the expression of an impotent desire to paint."[50]

In 1920, without remorse, Edward broke completely from his Pictorialist past. He scraped the emulsion off a number of his medal-winning glass-plate negatives, deciding they would be more useful as windowpanes. His new vision could no longer abide the romantic limitations of Pictorialism, and with that dramatic change, honors and articles dwindled, as did portrait sittings. He questioned what exactly photography could be, should be, must be.[51] Stimulated by Margrethe Mather's modernist photographs, with their vigorously graphic compositions, Edward adopted her use of slanting shadows and abstract areas of black against white. He co-opted elements of her style and then pushed them further, arriving at a more profound way of seeing.[52]

Unable to go to New York in 1921 to view a major exhibition of Stieglitz's photographs, Edward had consoled himself by reading the reviews. The critic Paul Rosenfeld found in the images an "affirmation of the majesty of the moment."[53] This statement resonated with Edward, who found it a true definition of photography—what it, and no other medium, could do.[54]

Invited to speak to the Southern California Camera Club in June 1922,

Edward found himself forced to succinctly explain his photographic aesthetic: "pure photography—unaided by the hand." He told his audience that when the photographer opens the shutter of the lens and then closes it, his purpose is to capture the core substance of the subject. While a painter can repaint, a photographer must live with the decision made at the time of the exposure. Echoing Paul Rosenfeld and Sadakichi Hartmann, Edward said that to achieve the "majesty of the moment," the photographer must determine how he wants the finished print to look before he exposes the negative. Years later Edward would call this "pre-visualization." The concept, if not his term for it, was firmly in place.[55]

Seeking a larger stage, Edward went on a pilgrimage to Stieglitz in New York City in November 1922. Since the end of World War I, Stieglitz had retracted his realm to present only works by Americans, mostly East Coast painters, excepting his own photographs and those of his disciple Strand. Edward brought only a few prints to show Stieglitz, one the angled ceiling and walls of an attic—triangle, rhomboid, and square, very Cubist and almost abstract, except for the fine head of a man in the lower right and an overstuffed pillow in the lower left. Edward's friend the photographer Imogen Cunningham had been deeply moved by this image, writing to him, "It is literal in a most beautiful and intellectual way." Stieglitz reacted with quick disdain, dismissing the detailed creases in the pillow as unnecessary.[56] Edward showed Stieglitz proofs from negatives he had just made at Armco Steel in Ohio. A factory was not yet regarded as an obvious photographic subject. (The East Coast painter and photographer Charles Sheeler would not make his much admired photographs of the Ford River Rouge automobile factory in Detroit until 1927. However, he was already making images of architecture that Edward found to be superb.)[57]

View camera photographers see the image projected by the lens—upside down and backward—on the camera's ground glass, with a dark cloth draped over the photographer's head and the ground glass. Edward moved the tripod an inch closer here, adjusting the camera's tilting front just so, focusing his lens to exact sharpness, until he filled his entire negative with powerful shapes described in tones of gray. Enormous concrete smokestacks pierced the picture's upper edge. A puff of steam punctuated the otherwise blank rectangle of sky.

Stieglitz praised the Armco proofs, remarking that if *Camera Work* still existed, he would publish a few.[58] He also singled out some nudes, including a single breast and arm, and a torso, its head and arms cropped, the legs raked by diagonal bars of light and shadow. Stieglitz advised Edward,

however, that he must achieve greater sharpness in all planes of his photographs, described as depth of field.

At the time of Edward's visit, Stieglitz was deeply in love with the painter Georgia O'Keeffe and had begun a transcendent photographic study of her every nuance. His purpose: to reveal the truth of one woman.[59] He showed these prints, pointing out how much better he had described the texture of skin. Edward sat quietly, confident that his own nudes were finer. Miss O'Keeffe was present for at least part of their meeting and commented positively on the Armco proofs.[60] In a classic four-hour diatribe, Stieglitz expounded on the disastrous state of photography, excepting his own work and that of a few he had accepted into his circle. Edward now understood the ways of Stieglitz with great fluency.[61]

There had been good reason for Edward Weston to seek recognition from Alfred Stieglitz. Stieglitz anointed few, but the international art world took serious notice of those. Edward presented himself as a candidate for exhibition and publication, but at thirty-six, secure in his abilities, he had no intention of being a follower. After a second meeting with Stieglitz, although he was offered nothing tangible, Edward left New York believing that he had earned the man's respect. He had gone seeking affirmation, not inspiration or guidance. He would follow no man. He returned to California resolved to continue blazing his own path.[62]

Figure 4. Brett Weston, *Self-Portrait*, 1928

Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Weston indeed came from far different worlds as well as different generations; Stieglitz was born in 1864, Edward, in 1886. Stieglitz had been raised in a family with money, and he had married money, while Edward had been on his own since he was a young man. Stieglitz had been sent to the best schools in New York and finished his higher education abroad in Germany, while Edward never graduated from high school. Stieglitz always had sufficient financial support; Edward lived on nearly nothing, and struggled most of his life to keep himself fed.

Even their environments were opposites, and that matters. A painter can paint anywhere; the subject can spring from the painter's mind. Photographers must be in the presence of their subjects. Stieglitz lived in and photographed a long-tamed landscape, from his skyscraper forests to the fenced pastures of his family's summerhouse outside the city. Edward could see the snow-capped San Gabriel Mountains from his front porch, and even Los Angeles had been wilderness not that long before.

Edward's talks with Stieglitz confirmed that above all else he must give precedence to his art. He would simplify his life as much as possible. His thoughts turned inward. He needed to remove distractions to allow full concentration as he moved forward. His first act would be to move out of his wife's house. Only then would he be fully free to pursue both the immense potential he sensed in photography and the other women he found so compelling. He loved his sons, but, he reasoned, he would be of little good to them if he remained so repressed and unhappy.

In 1921 he grew estranged from Margrethe. He had begun a torrid affair with Tina Modotti, a minor silent screen actress who was married to the artist Roubaix "Robo" de l'Abrie Richey. The romance between Edward and Tina began while he photographed her. With his camera, Edward's believed that he could discover the essence of a woman upon his ground glass. His models usually found Edward and his warm brown eyes irresistible. Tina's husband, Robo, moved to Mexico City in December 1921, and Tina was supposed to soon follow. Robo had been offered a teaching job and studio, and he planned to promote the batik cloths that he created. Tina dawdled in California, reluctant to leave Edward, but she finally did. Soon after her train departed from Los Angeles, she was handed a telegram from Mexico. Robo had contracted smallpox, literally while Tina was in Edward's arms. She arrived in Mexico City to find that she would not be allowed to see her husband because she might get infected as well. He died two days later.[63]

An exhibition at the National School of Fine Arts in Mexico City of Robo's batiks and Edward's photographs had been planned for March, and Tina insisted that it must open as a farewell to Robo. She supervised the installation and then hosted the exhibition's two-week run. Her magnetic personality, coupled with her great beauty, proved successful at attracting an audience. But it was Edward's photographs, not Robo's batiks, that captured the press and the public. They were viewed with great excitement, and garnered both critical acclaim and sales that had been largely absent in the United States for both men. The presence of the charming and beautiful widow sitting at a desk surrounded by Edward's photographs, some of her, caused a sensation, and her public reputation as a seductress grew.[64] Tina returned to California soon after the exhibition's close, bringing the money from the sale of many of Edward's photographs. Until then, only two of his creative prints had ever been sold.[65]

In late July 1923 Edward, with his eldest son, twelve-year-old Chandler, and Tina embarked for Mexico. The Mexican Revolution had ended only a couple of years earlier. Compared with its embattled past, Mexico's future seemed to hold great promise. Mexico City had become a vibrant center for the arts and artists, and Edward quickly found a circle of sympathetic artist friends, including the great muralist Diego Rivera. Inspired by his new friendships and by Tina, his model and muse, Edward thrived. Tina decided to become a professional photographer as well, and developed into one of Edward's most promising and dedicated students.[66]

When Edward physically left behind his old life and arrived in Mexico, he recognized that he had begun a personally significant odyssey of the mind. His brain exploded with ideas about art, aesthetics, and photography. Each day he awoke at 4:00 a.m. to faithfully chart his progress in the journals he called daybooks. In them he wrote about who he met, where he went, and what he photographed; and, more significantly, he chronicled his transformation from a man in search of everything to a man sure of what his art and life must be. He had begun recording his day-to-day life and thoughts in 1917, but little of that has survived. In Mexico, his daybooks became an important element of his experimental laboratory, which was composed of two projects: his photographs and his writing. He continued to record his thoughts until April 1934. Published during the 1960s, they provide a rare opportunity to follow the difficult but ultimately successful journey of a great artist.[67]

Provoked by his continuing poverty, and far from his major source of funds, wife Flora, Edward continued to pare away all but the essentials in his life so that as much of his time as possible was free to explore photography. He opened a portrait studio and, as would always happen, made just enough

money to get by. His life slowly evolved toward asceticism in most things. His photographic equipment was spare, only what he absolutely needed. But Edward knew he must heed Stieglitz's admonition to improve his images' depth of field. He purchased a lens with an aperture that could be set for an opening as small as *f*.64.[68] Now, with a long enough exposure time, he could achieve impressive depth of field, his pictures in sharp focus in every plane, from the near foreground to the far distance.

Enraptured by the ability his new lens gave him to photograph cacti, palm trees, clay bowls, and toy figurines in the dazzling Mexican sunshine, Edward captured every fine detail of every surface. His friends posed willingly, and he saw each head as heroic. He pruned every composition to make it visually simpler, bringing his camera closer and isolating his subject from its natural background. A Mexican critic declared, "The pupil of Weston's eye, circumscribed and clarified by his lens, is like a gun sight, and we have been presented with its conquests."[69] He expressed his developing aesthetic eloquently in his daybooks: "The camera should be used for a recording of *life*, for rendering the very substance and quintessence of the *thing itself*, whether it be polished steel or palpitating flesh."[70]

As for Tina Modotti, she wanted much more from life and from her man. She picked up a camera and learned from Edward, but that did not satisfy her. In Mexico, she joined the revolutionary activist movement and the Mexican Artists Union, which included the painter Jean Charlot and the muralists Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco. Her commitment to left-wing, antifascist causes intensified, and her work on their behalf moved her far from Edward's apolitical world.[71] He believed that an artist should not involve himself in the issues of the day but should seek a certain distance and seclusion so as not to be distracted from the internal introspection that is essential to discovering the deeper meanings of life.[72]

Edward's affair with Tina languished, and his yearning to see his three younger sons grew. He and Chandler returned to Glendale at the beginning of 1925, but Edward could endure life at home for only a short while. The boys' constant caterwauling made him long to plug his ears and run far, far away.[73] Dutiful Flora may have shared that wish. All through the years, she remained supportive of her husband. The primary parent, she worked full-time and sent money to Edward when she could, even though she must have known that it helped finance his life with his mistresses.[74]

Edward departed for San Francisco, looking for new business to subsidize a return trip to Mexico and possible reconciliation with Tina. When San Francisco photographer Consuelo (Connie) Kanaga offered him the use of her photography studio, he was incredulous. She also sent him whatever assignments she could, though she had few enough herself. He had never experienced such generosity.[75] Plugged into the Bay Area photography scene, Connie kept Weston abreast of worthy people and events. Here was a friend he could trust.[76] Connie had learned photojournalism in the trenches, covering labor strikes and chasing fire trucks while on the staff of newspapers in San Francisco and, later, New York City. Strong-willed and determined, she cut a dashing figure and had earned respect for her abilities in a world populated by men.

Having made a bit of money, Edward Weston sailed to Mexico in August 1925, this time bringing with him his rebellious second son, thirteen-year-old Brett. Edward saw much of himself in Brett and feared that, left in Los Angeles, his son would come to no good.[77] Brett, like his father, refused to be confined by school walls. In Mexico City, Edward soon gave up on a conventional education for his son and handed him a camera. Brett proved a natural, within six months making images that Edward acknowledged with his highest accolade: he would proudly sign the print as his own.[78] Relieved, Edward knew that when they returned home, his son would have a profession, for he was accomplishing more at his young age than Edward had at thirty.[79] Brett even taught his dad a few things. While Edward still printed his sharply focused negatives on matte papers, Brett, as a young teenager, preferred the increased detail and greater contrast glossy paper provided. Edward now began the process of leaving behind his final Pictorialist affectation.

Edward's own photography grew exponentially on his second trip to Mexico. Actual subject matter became unimportant: he could make a consequential photograph of literally anything. To prove his point, he placed his camera on the bathroom floor and focused its lens on the toilet. The resulting picture, titled *Excusado*, was a visual metaphor for Edward's photographic aesthetics. He had responded to the polished, curving form and celebrated its humble reality in a photographic print. Viewed from below, the subject was no longer looked down on, but up to, becoming quite regal. He was reading a series of essays by Havelock Ellis. Edward underlined "a sudden revolution by which something that was foreign suddenly becomes as it were native, something that was ugly becomes beautiful."[80] Although some who saw *Excusado* thought it scandalous to treat a toilet as art-worthy, his friend Diego Rivera remarked that it was the most beautiful photograph he had ever seen.[81]

In 1917 avant-garde artist Marcel Duchamp had shocked many when he displayed a white porcelain urinal in a New York exhibition. When Stieglitz

photographed it, he lit it slightly from the side to cast shadows and cropped it tightly, transforming it from a urinal to a mystical caped figure or, it was conjectured, the sexual organs of a hermaphrodite.[82] Whereas Stieglitz pursued the equivalent, the subject interpreted by the photographer, Edward sought realism to express "the thing itself," marking his own path ever more clearly as separate from that of Stieglitz.[83]

During the next year in Mexico, Edward worked diligently, but most of his time was concentrated on making a living. He signed a contract that would pay $1,000 to illustrate a book on Mexican popular art, agreeing to make four hundred negatives and three prints from each negative. Tina, who had developed into a very fine photographer and now saw herself as Edward's peer, joined him on this project and at the end was credited by their sponsor for producing many of the images. But Edward discovered that, after five months traveling to make the book illustrations, the $1,000 would only pay for the expenses for himself, Brett, and Tina, leaving him with nothing but bitterness at being exploited.[84] Then his view camera was destroyed when it accidentally fell onto a concrete floor. He was now so poor that it was an effort to find decent clothes to wear when he photographed a client.

While faithfulness was not a constant in his own conduct, Edward could not abide infidelity in his women. Tina enjoyed affairs with other men, and she and Edward again grew emotionally and physically distant, her escalating commitment to left-wing politics increasing their incompatibility. Edward had no time for anything but his art. He and Brett had been gone more than a year now, and given his deteriorating personal circumstances in Mexico, he could no longer ignore the obligations of family. Determined that Tina would no longer have a place in his life, he left for Los Angeles with Brett at the start of 1927.[85]

Soon after his return, Edward bundled up a few new prints he believed to be worthy and entrusted Connie Kanaga to carry them to Stieglitz, whom she considered a friend, as she passed through New York on her way to Europe.[86] Years earlier, *Camera Work*, and with it Stieglitz, had changed Connie's life. In its pages she saw photographs of such beauty that she realized photography could go far beyond what was possible in her newspaper photos. While living in New York from 1922 to 1924, she joined the ranks of Stieglitz worshippers, taking motivation and encouragement from Stieglitz himself. Determined to move beyond photojournalism, she established the practice of working as a journalistic photographer five days each week, reserving the remaining two days for her personal exploration of the medium. Her goal was to make photographs that would change the world.[87]

Connie also cared deeply for the physical beauty of each expressive print, seeking to achieve the fullest range of tonalities. If it took her fifty prints to make the perfect one, she said, it would be worth the work and monetary sacrifice, confessing that was probably why she would never be rich. Her friends in the California Camera Club, including Dorothea Lange and Imogen Cunningham, held her in high esteem.[88]

Connie took seriously her role as envoy between Edward Weston and Stieglitz. In May 1927 she wrote to Edward with stinging news, relating Stieglitz's reaction to the Mexican images without pulling any punches: the photographs were lifeless, without passion, and with no connection to today's world.[89]

Edward reacted with anger. He had kept Stieglitz on a pedestal, but now he felt that it was past time to pull him down. Stieglitz's comments, Edward believed, must mean he viewed him as a threat; what other reason could Stieglitz have had for such words? Edward knew his work was too unique and strong to merit this disdain. He grew more resolved. Stieglitz had it all wrong. Edward blazed with life; it was Stieglitz who was dead.[90]

Edward searched for an understanding peer with a knowledgeable, sympathetic eye. In April 1927 he found these qualities in Henrietta Shore, a Southern California painter of some repute. He saw Henry—his moniker for her casually masculine—as an equal, never a conquest. She made him see that a woman could reach great heights of creative expression, though he thought of her as essentially an anomaly. The first time he viewed her paintings, he recognized that she also distilled her subject by simplifying its forms. Like Edward, Henry filled her canvases with a single object, allowing each to clearly speak without interference. Since the isolation of the subject provided no sense of scale, each object became monumental.[91]

After viewing a solo exhibition of Edward's photographs, Henry wrote him an admiring letter, describing his work as utterly beautiful, without artifice of any kind. Thrilled, Edward felt he had found someone who truly understood what he was doing in photography.[92] That he thought highly of her paintings validated her opinion that his new work was what he believed.

As much as Edward Weston said that subject matter did not count, he could photograph the thing before him only if it provoked a visceral response. He found Henry's paintings of shells extraordinary, and felt it imperative that he too attempt shells. She loaned him some. His challenge was to make them his own, to bring them to life through his own abilities, which were both similar to and different from hers.[93]

Edward photographed a chambered nautilus shell so that it floated in black space. He positioned it not in profile, but set on end to expose the large

open mouth leading into its unseen spiral heart. While *Excusado* had been all about form, *Shell*, 1 S, was all about light defining form—light that seems to radiate from the object rather than from an outside source. Photography is the medium of light. Beginning with this photograph of a nautilus shell, Edward sensed that he was moving ever closer to the soul of photography. He gave much credit for his progress to Henrietta Shore.[94]

Shell, 1 S, made in 1927, quickly became Edward's best-selling print [see reproduction].[95] The first negative he made of a shell (thus the classification "1 S"), it evoked spirited reactions from his friends. While most savored the photograph's evident beauty, others considered it offensive, a thinly veiled depiction of a penis—not just any penis but one so perfect, so radiant, so potent, that it might be an object of worship. Tina, searching for words to describe its impact on her, called it "pure," "perverse," "mystical," and "erotic." Diego Rivera wavered, surmising that Edward was either sick or highly sexed.[96] At this time Edward concentrated on three subjects: the female nude, nautilus shells, and bananas, making himself an easy target. For years to come, viewers accused him of larding his photographs with sexual symbolism, but Edward rejected such interpretations as being due not to the artist's intent but to the mind of the beholder.[97]

Glendale was no longer a charming small town. To Edward's eyes, the moment he stepped out his door, all was ugliness. After a joint exhibition in San Francisco during the summer of 1928, Edward and Brett, now seventeen years old, decided to move there and open a studio together. They hoped to capitalize on the interest in their photographs the show had stimulated and find new candidates for portraits. They stayed almost half a year, an experience that left them dispirited. Edward lacked the spark of inspiration, and he made few negatives that excited him that year.

Exhausted by the demands of city life, whether in Glendale or San Francisco, the two moved to Carmel in early 1929. Each new year seemed to find Edward hungry for change. He hoped that he had now found what he needed for his commercial and creative work. He immediately delighted in the quietude of Carmel. The ocean, where he took an occasional bracing plunge, was but a short walk away, and he and Brett hiked the nearby hills. It was a healthier life, mentally and physically. Once more he hung out his shingle, trolling for tourists.[98]

Soon after their arrival in Carmel, on the morning of March 21, Edward accepted Brett's invitation to photograph at Point Lobos, four miles down the coast, a dazzling landscape of rocky coves lapped by turquoise water, sandy beaches strewn with garlands of kelp torn from the ocean, rocky cliffs,

and hills held together by the thick brush of poison oak. He found great joy in the wind-ravaged cypress trees. An endless supply of challenging, stimulating subjects was now right at his doorstep: "I am an adventurer on a voyage of discovery, ready to receive fresh impressions, eager for fresh horizons, not in the spirit of a militant conqueror to impose myself or my ideas, but to identify myself in, and unify with, whatever I am able to recognize as significantly part of me: the 'me' of universal rhythms."[99]

The cypresses captivated Edward. "I want the *greater mystery* of *things revealed more clearly than the eyes see.*"[100] He concentrated on the massive exposed roots of the trees, polished nearly white with age, sunlight disclosing the finely patterned wood grain as the roots bent and turned and wove together and moved apart. Edward worked with the greatest excitement he had felt in months. He visually cropped each negative with extremely careful framing. The resulting prints projected a tremendous abstract presence. These images held little of the romance of his shells or even of *Excusado*, but they told the story of each cypress root. Though Edward rarely gave descriptive names to his photographs, he called his first cypress negative *The Flame*. Later he would explain that when he made the exposure, the cypress had made manifest to him "The Flame of Recognition," the sense of deep wonder that he experienced in the presence of a subject that demanded to be photographed.[101]

Later that afternoon, while Brett rode horseback, his mount stumbled and fell on him, and his leg was shattered. He was hospitalized for over a month. Despite the generosity of Edward's friends and his two most important benefactors, Albert Bender and Merle Armitage, the publisher of his book, both of whom helped with the medical bills, it was a particularly rough patch financially. Because Edward didn't drive, his daily trips over the hill to the hospital to be with his boy proved an ongoing logistical challenge.[102] Luckily, Brett was a strapping young fellow blessed with a hearty constitution. Edward nursed his son tenderly, carrying fresh fruits and vegetables to the hospital and choking down the hospital food himself, convinced that it would hinder Brett's healing. Edward believed that during times of illness the body needed a rest from food; fasting had long been his cure-all.

Edward worried about Brett's "great problem in life. How to overcome carelessness, to create order, without which no one can reach great heights as an artist, or anything else. Brett loses everything he touches, breaks things right and left, is forever hurting himself. All symptoms of a disorderly mind. And art is based on order! The world is full of sloppy 'bohemians,' and their work betrays them."[103]

Figure 5. Edward Weston, *The White Iris* (Tina Modotti), 1921

With the assistance of Edward's new girlfriend, Sonya Noskowiak, Brett finished recuperating at home, where he began carving wood into small sculptures, often modeled after photographs that he had made. Sculpture became his second art.[104] Soon after, Brett again hoisted his camera and tripod over his shoulder. Returned to full strength, Brett found there was no room for both him and Sonya in the house. She had staked out her territory—the kitchen was hers. In May 1930, after a tearful good-bye to his father, Brett left to set up his own studio in Southern California.[105] In the years that followed, he would bounce back and forth between independence and the steady welcome of his father's home. Brett was Edward's favorite son; that never changed.

By October 1932 Sonya had lived with Edward for three and a half years. For a while, he'd found her waifish charm enchanting; he enjoyed the fact that she was five and a half inches shorter than him, a petite five feet. The top of her dark head softly brushed his chin when they danced. Edward's body was lean, wirily muscled, and well proportioned. As a youth, he had done well in his sport, track. He might be forty-six and she thirty-two, but he still had the stamina to run a marathon. How else could he wake before dawn, write in his daybook, rustle up breakfast for the household—his fourteen-year-old son Neil, Sonya, and himself—open his portrait studio, schmooze with the few tourists who happened in, photograph at every spare moment, develop negatives, and also make prints? Added to all these responsibilities were his women. He had been faithful to Sonya for a good amount of time, but no longer, and he worried about keeping his new affairs secret. He liked having Sonya around; she understood him, and shouldered as much of the housework as he did and more of the cooking. She was turning into quite a good photographer, as well. If only she and Neil would stop their incessant bickering. She was no longer the woman he had originally found so compelling.[106]

Sonya had been a real help in winnowing down the images for his book, a second set of keen eyes. And Henry Shore, who had moved to Carmel in 1930, had provided advice as well, arguing with him to the point of raised voices, something he rarely allowed himself. He struggled to remain calm when she insisted on removing one of his strongest pieces, to be replaced with another he deemed not as necessary to the whole.[107]

But still he lacked the artist's statement to finish the book. If he didn't send it soon, it would be delayed. "Man is the actual medium of expression—not the tool he elects to use as a means," Edward began.[108] He knew what he wanted to say: photography is a valid art form when it creates a picture that cannot be made as well by any other medium; the photographer must fully grasp its strengths and its limitations. He had expressed this idea before. But the intellectual pressure of writing this statement for his own book, something that would endure, he found almost unbearable.

On October 10, 1932, in a moment of burnout and deep frustration, Edward wrote to Willard Van Dyke. After months of demanding work, he desperately needed a change of scenery.[109] He needed to breathe new air, to party with friends, dance, and get *borrachito*—just a little bit drunk. Willard wrote back, agreeing to pick up both Edward and Sonya and drive them to his Oakland studio. He would throw a little shindig in their honor and invite a number of their photographer friends. This party would prove to

be consequential for many who attended, made more so because of the presence of Edward Weston.

II. SONYA NOSKOWIAK

They had fallen in love while dancing. Now, after three years, he sometimes sought out other partners. Every few weeks Edward Weston required the release of a party, and if no one else was giving one, he could be counted on to open his studio/home for an evening of dynamic conversation, drinking, and dancing under dim lights to music played on his phonograph. They had first discovered each other at just such a Saturday-night party. To the delight of both, from the opening bars of the first rumba, they discovered that he was a marvelous dancer and so was she. They fit well together.[1]

On Monday, two days after they met, Sonya Noskowiak stopped by Edward's studio. Following his usual routine, he seated her on one chair and then sat before her on a stool, beside a print easel. Slowly, deliberately, at a deliciously sensuous pace, he showed her his photographs. She was familiar with his work but had not really seen it as she did now. Edward placed one print, then another, before her. He liked her quiet intensity. He decided that she was the best thing that had happened to him in a long time. He pulled out his photograph of two shells and inscribed the verso in pencil to her, commemorating the date, April 15, 1929.[2]

Although Sonya could rightly be described as shy, she grew confident when performing onstage in the Carmel community theater, where she achieved modest local success. "Sonia [sic] Noskowiak," wrote one reviewer, "in her playing of Arlette, slightly overacted as to movements, but shows an unmistakable flair for the stage. Her voice gives meaning to every word, and her vividness gives a lift to whatever scene she is a part of."[3]

On Tuesday she invited Edward to dinner. She cooked simply, and that pleased him. He ate it all. She had no wine, no alcohol of any kind to serve, but he felt content. She sang songs of yearning in her native Polish. They talked of his life-changing years in Mexico, and she serenaded him in fluent Spanish that she hoped would excite him. Yet he made no move toward her. He smiled but never laughed. His dark eyes held her gaze.

At midnight Edward stood to leave, begging exhaustion while pulling on his coat for the short walk home. Sonya rose, slipped her own coat around her shoulders, and said she would walk with him. She linked her arm through his. She was the guide. Without stopping at his place, they strolled

together down the hill to the glorious white sands of Carmel Beach. There they nestled in a protected spot, where he now took the lead. They watched the moon sink into the Pacific. Pulling her to her feet, he kissed her slowly and deeply. He took her hand, and they climbed back to her home, her "playhouse," where they warmed themselves with sips of hot, strong coffee. Their lovemaking resumed till dawn. Sleep seemed completely unnecessary.[4]

Sonya Noskowiak had come a long way to get to this place and this man. Although her parents were Polish, she had been born in Leipzig, Germany, on November 25, 1900. The family soon moved to Chile, where she added Spanish to her Polish. When she was nearly fifteen, the family immigrated to the United States. Like many children of the time, she wanted a camera. When she was sixteen, she bought her first with her own hard-saved money, a Kodak Box Brownie. Photography began to hold great interest for her.[5]

Sonya was determined not to be trapped in a predictable life. In 1927, she and a girlfriend spent seven months in California's Sierra Nevada, camping, subsisting on fish they caught, berries they gathered, and the occasional luxury of canned goods. They slept under the stars, protected only by their blankets and the ax at Sonya's side. The girls worked for three months in Yosemite to keep themselves going—one made beds, the other sold postcards. When she arrived in Carmel in 1928, Sonya became a figure of note when the local paper published a chatty, detailed account of her brave Sierra adventures.[6]

Soon after that first spectacular evening Sonya and Edward spent together, Brett Weston returned from the hospital to convalesce. His father desperately needed a helpmate, and Sonya stepped into the void and never looked back. She clerked in his studio, allowing Edward to work in the darkroom or to photograph at Point Lobos. He taught her to spot prints, the most time-consuming, meticulous, and thus disliked job in photography, to be palmed off on someone else whenever possible. Edward gave her a professional camera, a 4 1/2-inch-square format with a 5-inch rectilinear lens, but no film, telling her to first practice seeing.[7]

Sometimes when he went out photographing, Sonya came along. She was patient and blessedly quiet. She watched his every movement, making mental notes. She set up her camera and made her pretend exposures. Edward did not tell her what to do. He gave her as much technical information as she asked for, believing that one could learn how to photograph only by photographing.

Early the next year, 1930, he announced that she was ready to expose film. It had taken her more than eight months to reach that step. Sonya had

observed Edward often in the darkroom and had learned how to develop film. Hesitantly, she showed him her first negatives. She surprised Edward. She had an eye. She might make a real photographer. He singled out three images: one of his son Neil's hands, another of a chair back, and a third of half a red cabbage. He bestowed his customary highest blessing, saying that prints from these negatives would be good enough for him to sign.[8]

Since 1927, Edward had photographed vegetables—squash, eggplant, even cabbage—but he had always left them whole. Essentially a vegetarian, he shopped for groceries as if on a treasure hunt for particularly interesting specimens, to be consumed first by his camera and then at the table. Sonya's halved cabbage piqued his interest. She had shaped her subject to discover its convoluted strata. She had not taken it as it was. This idea simmered in his mind.

In August 1930 Edward found himself happily swamped with work and with life. In October his first solo exhibition in New York City would be hung at Alma Reed's Delphic Studios. Prints must be made. His eldest son, Chandler, Chandler's wife, and Weston's adored namesake, his five-month-old grandson Teddy, were due for a visit. The peace necessary for his work would be disturbed for some time.[9]

Edward set up his 8-by-10-inch view camera on a tripod so that he could make long exposures, some of them for hours, while attending to studio work. He was ready to take Sonya's idea and make it his own. He sliced a red cabbage in half and set it on the table, where bright sunshine disclosed every contrasting vein and leafy curl. He brought his camera close, framing the cabbage to deny its rounded exterior, settling instead on its core.[10] His picture demanded, "Look at this everyday miracle!"

Sonya had a gift for discovering noteworthy vegetables. When she foraged for wild mushrooms, she brought the best to him. A trip to Big Sur yielded a fine bunch of chard. His discerning eye searched for ways to allow each vegetable to speak for itself.

On August 3, 1930, Edward selected a particularly provocative green pepper that Sonya had just brought him from the local grocery store. For support, he nested it in a funnel that reflected light on the pepper and isolated it visually. The exposure lasted four and a half hours.[11] He called this image *Pepper*, No. 30; his thirtieth negative of a pepper. It was like his shell of all shells—here was the pepper of all peppers, with perfect, smooth skin and voluptuous curves. Edward had transformed a mundane object into a thing of wonder. "I have on occasion," he explained, "used the expression, 'to make a pepper more than a pepper' . . . I did not mean 'different' from a pepper, but a pepper *plus*—an intensification of its own important form and texture,—a revelation. Photography as a creative expression . . . must be seeing *plus*."[12] He gave the first print to Sonya. His inscription acknowledged her as the discoverer of the pepper, and he signed it, "with my love—/Edward."[13]

Sonya's relations with Edward's sons were rocky. They saw her as competition for his attention.[14] While she knew that Brett was his father's crown prince, she and Brett clashed.[15] Long his father's driver, he took the car (when they had one) whenever it pleased him and for as long as he liked, with no reprimand. Sonya felt that she had no control over any of the boys and commanded no respect. They tauntingly called her "Scrawny Bitch."[16] Put Neil and Cole together, and within minutes they would be rolling on the floor in an all-out fight. They piled up dirty dishes, ignored their own mounds of soiled laundry, devoured her meals with little thanks, and left the toilet seat up. When Edward was gone, it was she who waited up past midnight for the teenage Cole to come home.[17] She would take it and take it and then just explode, a passive-aggressive trait that irritated Edward.

In June 1931 Edward broke off his friendship with Johan Hagemeyer, his Carmel landlord, when Hagemeyer raised the rent on his studio from $60 to $75 a month, an amount Edward thought usurious. He gave up the lease, moved, and took a second-floor studio, where he installed a single bed for himself, as well as renting a small cottage a block away.[18] He had long believed that sex was one thing, sleeping another.[19] Sonya and whatever sons were

Figure 6. Edward Weston, *Sonya*, 1933

around bunked at the cottage. She grew jealous, doubting that Edward really was alone every night.[20] He grew remote. When she returned from a trip, he welcomed her back more as a friend, less as a lover.[21]

By 1932, in the eyes of Carmelites, Sonya Noskowiak had become Edward Weston's wife, and a good one at that. No longer his muse, she made herself as indispensable as she could. She worked hard to improve her photographic technique and became such a fine darkroom technician that he asked her to make the prints for many of his portrait orders. The tensions of the book must have worn her out too. She yearned for a chance to drink a little wine with Edward, sing him a song, and dance a little dance.

III. WILLARD VAN DYKE

Willard jumped into his old Chevy roadster that he had bought for all of $10 and sped down to Carmel.[1] Arriving in the sleepy hamlet, he paused under the ground-floor sign, "Edward Weston, Photographer: Unretouched Portraits/Prints for Collectors," and then bounded up the stairs, taking two at a time. Willard did not tiptoe through life; he plunged enthusiastically ahead. He and Mary Jeannette Edwards had a party planned in Edward's honor.[2] Edward's $100 prize money would make him feel less guilty about closing his studio on a weekend.[3]

A close friend of the family gave Willard his first camera when he was twelve, soon after they had moved to Oakland, California. He had been born in Denver, Colorado, on December 5, 1906. His father, always looking for his big break, moved the family nearly every single year, searching in vain for success. This itinerant childhood perhaps explains Willard's eternal restlessness; like his father, he was always searching, but for an intellectual ideal, rather than the next job.[4]

The Van Dykes finally settled down in Oakland. Willard met Mary Jeannette in drama class at the East Bay's Piedmont High School. They became sweethearts, with every intention to someday wed.[5] He entered the University of California, Berkeley, but dropped out after a couple of years. His excuse was that the university required all young men to attend two years of ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) training, and he was a pacifist, but it is likely that he flunked out; he later confessed that he'd had difficulties with math and physics. He found what he believed to be ideal work as the night shift attendant at a Shell gas station, leaving the daylight hours free to photograph.[6]

Willard spent a lot of time at Mary Jeannette's house. Her father, John Paul Edwards, was an accomplished amateur photographer and a leader of Bay Area Pictorialist photography. An engineering graduate of the University of Minnesota, John Paul was employed as a buyer for Hale's Department Store in San Francisco. Although he had to deal with the daily ferry commute, in sunny Oakland he could tend a garden that would never have thrived in San Francisco's foggy climate. He was serious about his hobbies, gardening—he was an expert on roses and fuchsias—and photography. His technical expertise and expressive imagery had won acceptance into the world's top photographic salons. He thrived in meetings and served in leadership positions as a member of the California Camera Club and the Pictorial Photographers of America, where he was elected as vice president of the national organization in 1923.[7]

Willard knew something about photography. Among his many careers, his father had worked photographing babies, capturing their attention by lighting a roll of newspaper on fire and holding it above the camera. John Paul's work was very different. He encouraged young Willard in photography and lent him the use of the darkroom in his garage. While his prints washed

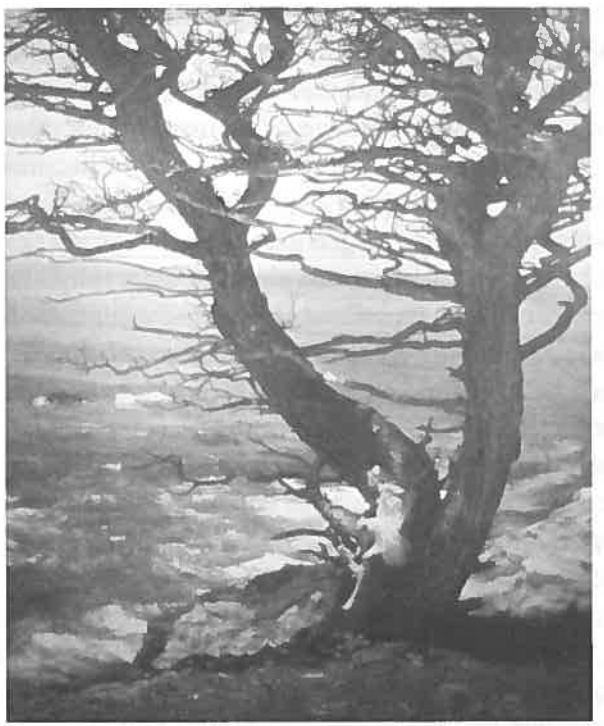

Figure 7. John Paul Edwards, *On the Coast*, 1920s

and dried, Willard thumbed through the piles of photographic magazines stacked along the walls, learning technique by following the advice he read there. He tried to keep in step with the images he saw published and those of John Paul Edwards, almost exclusively using a soft-focus lens. Under the tutelage of John Paul, a master of the bromoil process, he proudly produced prints that looked like charcoal drawings, with the requisite artfully smudged lines.

Willard became intrigued with the work of a particularly fine photographer often reproduced in the magazines. Imogen Cunningham was her name, and she lived right there in Oakland. John Paul placed a call of introduction on his behalf, and on a Sunday afternoon in 1927, Willard Van Dyke knocked on her door, a portfolio of prints under his arm.

Imogen Cunningham answered the knock to find before her an earnest twenty-one-year-old, nattily attired in a pressed white flannel suit and white turtleneck sweater. He was precious from the top of his blond, curly head to his feet, shod in black-and-white saddle shoes. She held back her normal biting comment and bid him enter.[8] Her red hair escaped its bun in untidy wisps. Her pale, plain face was clean of makeup; her dress was homemade. From the backyard he could hear boisterous shouts and hoots. Imogen directed Willard to a chair, remarking that he should disregard the ruckus coming from her sons, eleven-year old Gryff and ten-year-old twins Ron and Pad. Willard looked about him at the walls hung with photographs and etchings. Imogen's husband, Roi Partridge, an etcher of some fame, taught art at Oakland's Mills College. Since 1925 he had also directed its gallery, developing it into one of the few showcases for innovative modern art in the Bay Area.[9]

After pouring them both cups of tea, Imogen gave Willard's prints her full attention. She did not believe in talking much about photography; the prints spoke for themselves. Even though she said little, her concentration on his work meant a great deal to him. Imogen Cunningham was a real working photographer, not a hobbyist, and she'd found him worthy enough to spend her afternoon with. He left, promising to return when he had something new to show her. She closed the door and sighed, thinking, "He'll never make it. He's too pretty to be a photographer."[10] This was the beginning of an unlikely lifelong friendship.[11]

Willard found himself welcome at the Cunningham-Partridge home at any time. If Imogen was down in her basement darkroom, tucked into a corner beside the laundry, he could enjoy the books and the art. The dining room table was always crowded, between their three kids and friends that her husband brought home, but Imogen cooked in great quantities, and

Figure 8. Imogen Cunningham, *Willard Van Dyke*, c. 1933

there was always room for one more. When Willard confessed to her that he and Mary Jeannette longed for privacy, Imogen told him to use her house the next Sunday afternoon. They'd all be off to the ocean so Roi could sketch. Willard was both surprised and thankful that forty-four-year-old Imogen understood his romantic predicament.[12]

John Paul Edwards seemed to be acquainted with everyone in Bay Area photography. In 1928, when well-known Pictorialist Anne Brigman needed lantern slides made of her photographs, he sent Willard over to her Oakland studio.[13] An inspiration for many Northern California photographers, Brigman's images had been published in *Camera Work*, and she was a fellow of Stieglitz's Photo-Secession, the only photographer west of the Mississippi to achieve that honor. She was known for her female nudes, which were photographed outside in nature, not in the studio, as was the norm. Brigman celebrated the strength and energy of a woman's body, vigorously posed in a rugged landscape. In *The Soul of the Blasted Pine* (1907), a naked woman (the soul of the title) bursts forth from the hollow of an ancient pine snag. Her head is flung back, and one arm, glowing in sunlight, reaches up to the stormy skies above. Excited to be around such an accomplished photographer, Willard did not admit that he had never made a slide. He went out to the Edwards' garage, found a magazine with all the instructions, and followed them carefully. The slides came out just fine. Brigman continued to call on him for help, and Willard happily obliged.[14]

On Sunday, September 16, that same year, Willard picked up the Edwardses, father and daughter, to attend the opening of the International

Invitational Salon at San Francisco's Palace of the Legion of Honor, a Pictorialist exhibition. John Paul had served on the organizing committee. The museum was mobbed with people, most paying more attention to each other than to the photographs. Willard ambled along the walls, dismissing print after print after print, "Boring, boring, boring." But suddenly the head of a man brought him up short. Willard stood riveted. Next to that hung an equally compelling image of a nautilus shell. Both shone out like beacons: sharply focused, minutely detailed, and so real that he thought the man might speak out.[15]

Willard recognized the name of the photographer, Edward Weston. His photographs appeared often in the photo magazines, and Willard would have read his article, "Photography—An Eighth Art?" in the June issue of the *Argus*. In this piece, Edward had separated himself from the Pictorialist pack and declared himself for pure photography. He demanded photographers see "the beauty in an honest photograph"; that is, an unmanipulated negative and print. "The lens reveals more than the eye sees," Edward wrote. "The most delicate textures, the most evanescent forms, can be rendered by photography . . . impossible to the human hand."[16] Here were the impressive examples of Edward Weston's philosophy, directly in front of the stunned Willard Van Dyke.

Noticing Willard's agitation, John Paul asked him if he liked these photographs. He didn't quite know, Willard said, but he found them captivating. John Paul remarked that Edward Weston and his son Brett were standing just over there. With Willard in tow, John Paul crossed the gallery, coming to a stop before a slim man with a receding hairline, a mustache, and brown eyes set in a freckled face.[17] Willard blurted out that the salon was mostly a sham except for Edward's two prints. Tired of milling around in the crowd of weekend hobbyists discussing rules of composition, a total waste of time as far as he was concerned, Edward welcomed the praise, but personally singled out the photographs by Imogen Cunningham as standouts.[18]

A year later, in October 1929, Willard attended a lecture given by Edward at the Berkeley Art Museum. Willard soon drove south to Carmel to show his prints.[19] Most of Willard's photographs were still soft-focus, but he hoped his intent would shine through the haze. Edward did not react to any of those, instead singling out two newly made, sharply focused prints. As with his son, Brett, and Sonya Noskowiak, he praised them with a slight riff on his standard: "I would have been proud to do these."[20] Willard followed every crumb that Edward laid along the path.

Meeting Edward Weston and viewing his prints was life-changing for Willard Van Dyke. He saw his future: he would take up his camera and follow the way of Weston.[21] He inquired if it might be possible to study with Edward, who demurred, citing a mountain of work he had to address. But he offered to contact Willard when he had some time to spare.[22]

Realizing what he must do to be worthy, Willard returned home and immediately put away his soft-focus lens. Having bought an 8-by-10-inch view camera with a lens that could focus acutely, he began looking at everything about him with fresh, searching eyes. He stopped making bromoils and carbon prints, sticking to plain gelatin silver.[23] It was not long before he received a note from Edward inviting him for a week of photography in Carmel. Stuffing a bedroll in his car beside his view camera, tripod, and lenses, he was more than ready.

The first morning—Friday, November 15, 1929—Willard drove Edward to Point Lobos, where he set up his camera and tripod and went about his work. Willard studied closely, remembering the choices Edward made and the great care he gave to each exposure. Edward Weston was always frugal, and each sheet of 8-by-10-inch film was expensive. Edward lifted his dark cloth and beckoned Willard to see what he was framing.[24]

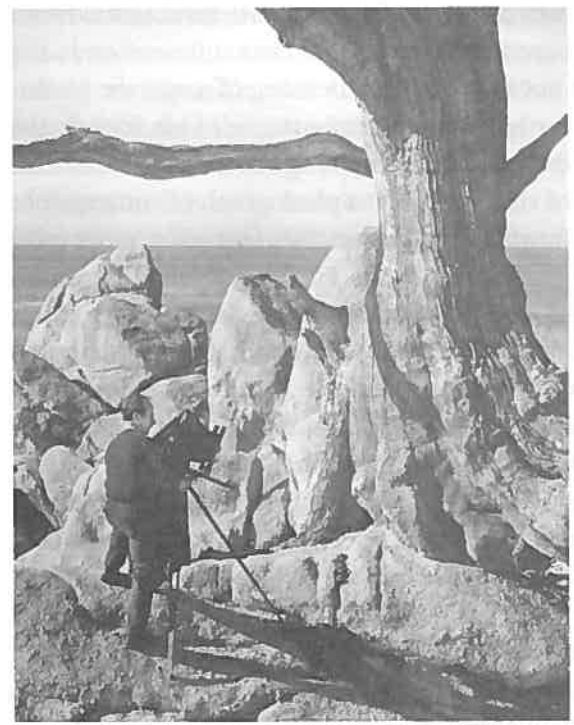

Figure 9. Willard Van Dyke, *Edward Weston at Point Lobos*, 1930

Willard slid out the legs of his tripod and latched them tightly. He secured his camera to the tripod's head and began to picture Point Lobos for himself. Edward was available to answer questions, but he found that Willard was already technically quite competent. The day was a good one for Weston. He returned home satisfied.[25]

On Monday, Edward, Brett, and Willard photographed the ancient cypresses and tumbled boulders of Pebble Beach, the community immediately north of Carmel. They persevered for six hours straight, the equivalent of running a marathon for a large-format photographer. Edward made nine negatives, feeling that eight would be keepers.[26]

That evening, Edward opened his mail to find comments from the judges of a salon in Portland, Oregon. With great misgivings he had entered five photographs. He had been told that this salon would be different, and he needed the prize money. Instead he received a rebuke. His "flame" of cypress root, his first exposure at Point Lobos earlier that year, earned the comment "Interesting as Natural Subject, but where is picture?" A nude was judged "Interesting but fails as work of art." Edward swore to never again submit his work to a salon.[27]

Here was Willard Van Dyke's rich, unorthodox classroom: the real ups and downs of an artist's life. Willard witnessed the absolute thrill that Edward experienced when he made an exciting negative, and later culmination in the finished print. Edward might not verbalize the meaning of a specific photograph, but he could expound for hours on the importance of his friends, the Mexican muralists, why Bach spoiled him for anything else in music, and what photography should be. Edward counseled that a photograph of consequence could be made from just about anything. Subject matter, in itself, was not critical. The understanding of the photographer was. He did not tell Willard how he should proceed; instead, he offered the example of his life: keep all as simple as possible so as not to divert the mind from what is truly important—creative work. Edward's approach was very Zen. He required freedom from distractions so that through meditative concentration he might earn a profound personal insight into each of the subjects he photographed.

When the weather was good, they went out with their cameras. Willard also joined Edward in the darkroom, learning by watching. At week's end, Willard asked what he owed, and Edward replied, "Nothing." Wisely, Willard commissioned his mentor to make his portrait.[28]

So began a pattern. Willard put in his hours at the gas station and drove to Carmel every weekend he could get free. He became a fifth son to Edward, and saw Edward as his "spiritual father."[29]

Still living with their respective parents, Willard and Mary Jeannette could not wait for the rare times they could use Imogen's house. Freedom appeared when Anne Brigman moved to Los Angeles in 1930, and agreed to rent them her Oakland studio at 683 Brockhurst for $12 a month.[30] At the same time, Willard reentered the University of California, Berkeley. A small exhibition of his photographs of gasoline storage tanks—very industrial, very contemporary, very modernist—was displayed in a local bookstore window. In a bit of serendipity, one day in Willard's creative writing course the professor announced that Preston Holder had written the best essay in the class. He had awarded it a triple A plus and read it aloud to the class. The subject was the intelligent magnificence of Willard's prints at that bookstore. By quirk of fate, though they did not realize it until then, photographer and writer were enrolled in the same course. Willard Van Dyke quite naturally believed that Preston Holder was brilliant. The two young men became close pals.[31]

Willard brought Preston to meet Edward Weston in mid-March of 1931. Edward saw the future of America in these two bright college boys.[32] Preston loved to talk, and so did Willard and Edward; Sonya remained in the background. On their way to Carmel, the students stopped at a hillside vineyard south of Oakland run by an old Frenchman, who sold what they judged to be good red wine for a buck a gallon, if they brought their own jugs. The boys arrived at Edward's with their arms loaded with the contraband vino—Prohibition was the law of the land—plenty to enliven a couple of nights. Unless Sonya came to the rescue and cooked dinner, food was a simple meal of Triscuits, Edward's favorite cracker, with a bit of cheese and dried fruit. They were soon sprawled out on the floor of Edward's studio, where they schmoozed long into the night.[33] Willard and Preston soaked up Edward's words and learned a great deal about the larger world of photography. Edward was open about his divided feelings about Alfred Stieglitz:

> Maybe Stieglitz is a Napoleon of art. Napoleon was a great man—to the masses—a spectacular figure to anyone. The popular tendency has always been to idolize spectacular leaders,—ruthless, selfish climbers, while the really great, the noble, but less dramatic are passed unnoticed. Even a Christ is forgotten unless his end is theatrical,—nailed to a cross, or somehow headlined.
>
> No—Stieglitz, who has, or had, idealism could not in justice be so labeled. But it has come to me of late that comparing one man's work to another's, naming one greater or lesser, is a wrong approach.

The important and only vital question is, how much greater, finer, am I than I was yesterday? Have I fulfilled my possibilities, made the most of my potentialities. What a marvelous world if all would, could hold this attitude toward life.[34]

It should not be surprising that Preston, stimulated by the lively discussions with Edward and by his photographs, picked up a camera as well. Always an individual, he began his own unique journey in photography, often pairing his images with his own poetry.

Although they might be feeling a bit dicey in the morning, ready or not, Edward got the coffee perking early, roused the boys from sleep, packed them into the car, and directed them to Point Lobos. At least one morning, it was all a bit more than Preston could take. He spread out a striped towel on the rocks, stripped off his shirt, and lay soaking up the sun until he fell asleep. Edward guided his camera downward to find Preston's handsome profile in total repose, the only visual activity the rumpled stripes of his shirt. Along with Willard Van Dyke, Preston Holder became a fixture at Edward's over a number of weekends during the next few years.[35]

When Willard came to scoop up Edward and Sonya that autumn day, October 14, 1932, for a weekend in Oakland, they knew by evening they would be toasting their toes in front of the fire at 683 Brockhurst, eating takeout from the Mexican joint around the corner, and staying up into the wee hours discussing the state of everything. They happily anticipated Saturday night's party, a convivial gathering of their friends, photographers all, with one compelling issue on every mind: straight photography.[36]

Figure 10. Edward Weston, *Preston Holder at Pt. Lobos*, c. 1930

IV. IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM

A night out with other photographers—this would be a welcome occasion. At the time of the October party at 683 Brockhurst, Imogen Cunningham had recently emerged, from eighteen long years of servitude to husband and sons, back into the light of her chosen profession, photography. She had never given up photography, eking out every moment for it she could in a life consumed by domestic obligations.

At 683 Brockhurst she could catch up with old friend Edward Weston. That young twerp Ansel Adams should be there too. She had a bone to pick with Ansel—his review of her solo exhibition at the de Young in the San Francisco journal the *Fortnightly*.[1] He had found that "the quality of *light* in her prints is unconvincing," and suggested that she use glossy, gelatin-silver coated printing paper instead of the matte-surfaced platinum paper she still preferred. The charge that her sense of light was lacking was a serious blow to an artist whose work is light-dependent. While platinum prints did not produce optimal image detail and sharpness, their rich, soft tones of gray were visually enticing and luscious.

Ansel wrote the truth as he found it, although if he could have restrained his youthful hubris, he might have reconsidered. "Her prints could have been produced only by a woman, which does not imply they lack vigor. All her photographs brim with a restrained strength typical of keen decisive feminine energy."

In an age before it was popular, Imogen retained her family name, never adopting her husband's last name of Partridge. She struggled to maintain her career as a professional photographer in the face of the demands of children and home. Ansel demeaned her photographs, she thought, by defining them as female, thus not in the exalted male category.

Clearly conflicted about her work, Ansel continued: "Miss Cunningham's art easily dominates in her exceedingly fine technique of visualization: she knows what she wants to do and succeeds in doing it well within the limitations of her medium." His review concluded with this glowing summation, "Her work is very beautiful and sincere."[2]

Perhaps Imogen would pardon his transgressions, but she'd carried grudges for lesser slights.[3] By the autumn of 1932 she had achieved commercial and artistic success. In her opinion Ansel Adams—nearly twenty years her junior—was a greenhorn in photography, while acetic acid had flowed through her veins for nearly thirty years.[4] Maybe that was why she'd grown so tart. If Ansel had earned a tongue-lashing, that was an area where she excelled.[5]

Nothing came easily to Imogen. Her husband, Roi Partridge, had a solo exhibition at the de Young at the same time as her own exhibition there. While a local art columnist swooned over him—"His mastery of line, his virility where strength is required, and his delicate touch when subtlety is called for"—she mentioned Imogen's show only in a demeaning aside, as a "collection of photographs by Mrs. Partridge (Imogen Cunningham) [who] has a special fondness for mountains and trees."[6]

Imogen's father had raised her to believe that she could do anything she set her mind to. He was what was known at the time as a freethinker: against organized religion in any form and attracted to the ideal of a utopian society. There were ten children in the household, and Imogen, born in Portland, Oregon, in 1883, was her father's favorite. Although her father was entirely self-educated, he was well read and intellectually curious. But her mother never made a peep, selflessly cleaning, cooking, and raising children. While she loved her mother, Imogen resolved to be the very opposite; she would not settle for her mother's life. Her father agreed.[7]

Imogen grew up in Seattle, in 1903 entering the freshman class at the University of Washington. She paid her own way, working when she wasn't studying. While there, she became enamored of photography. Two years later she purchased her first camera, along with a mail-order course of study from the American School of Art and Photography. She bravely began with a 4-by-5-inch view camera that required a tripod and had a lens that she could manipulate. A soft-focus lens must have been standard equipment with her camera; her earliest images can hardly be seen through the artistic fog.

Most at that time started with the popular Kodak Box Brownie. Advertised with the slogan "You Press the Button, We Do the Rest," the Brownie sold for a dollar, was very simple to operate, had a fixed lens, and used a roll of film that made a 2 1/4-inch-square negative. It made photography possible for the masses.[8] Imogen, however, wanted to understand the deepest capabilities of the medium. When she graduated from the university in 1907 with a major in chemistry, her senior thesis was titled "The Scientific Development of Photography."[9]

That same year she was leafing through a new issue of the *Craftsman* when she came upon a reproduction of Gertrude Käsebier's photograph *Blessed Art Thou Among Women*. The image of a gracefully posed mother sending her bright-eyed child out into the world struck a deep chord in Imogen. This was what she wanted to do: make pictures that would move people.[10]

For two years she worked in the Seattle photography studio of Edward Curtis, famous for his romantic images of the American Indian. By the end

of that time, Imogen had become adept in the darkroom, and was especially skilled at platinum printing. She won a fellowship from her sorority to study in Europe, enrolling at the Technische Hochschule in Dresden, where she continued the photographic chemistry research that she had begun at the University of Washington. In that city she visited the 1909 International Photographic Exposition, a huge assemblage of prints dominated by the Pictorialist style, which crossed all borders. She personally awarded first place to the American contingent of photographs, which she found both technically and artistically superior.[11]

On her way home to Seattle in 1910, Imogen brought her work to the British photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn in London and visited both Alfred Stieglitz and Gertrude Käsebier in New York. While Käsebier had been welcoming, Stieglitz ignored her. Timidly, Imogen huddled in a corner of his gallery, content to simply overhear whatever he might say.

When she returned to Seattle, Imogen opened a portrait business that flourished. At the time, the few socially acceptable professions for women included teaching, nursing, and portrait photography. Imogen lugged her view camera on streetcars and buses to photograph her subjects in their homes, in gardens, and in parks. She termed this environmental portraiture, an unusual and imaginative departure from the normally stilted studio setting.

For her own creative work, Imogen began a series of soft-focus, allegorical images inspired by her reaction to Käsebier's work and the Pre-Raphaelite poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris. With friends costumed to act the parts, she attempted to portray the poets' verse in photographs. Enacting Morris's "The Wind," Imogen staged an outdoor scene with a draped female figure, her gauzy veil apparently wafted by a breeze.[12] A practicing Pictorialist, she was convinced that photography must conjure up a mood, a place, or an event. With figures nude or clothed, indoors or out, but always in soft focus, each photograph told a story using special effects, although without the handwork on the negative or print employed by many Pictorialists.

Imogen took pride in her election as a charter member of the Seattle Fine Arts Society, its only photographer. Salons accepted the prints she submitted, and magazines published her work. She sent a portfolio to esteemed American photographer and educator Clarence White in New York City, and he replied somewhat cryptically that he liked the ideas behind her photographs more than the prints themselves.[13] Imogen persevered; in 1914 she enjoyed solo exhibitions at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences and the Portland Art Museum in Oregon.

Her strongly feminist essay "Photography as a Profession for Women"

was published in the *Arrow*— her sorority's magazine—in 1913, though sadly the *Arrow*'s readership was small. In it she wrote:

> And who shall say from the records women are making every year in their professions that they are unfitted for them, that they should still be brought up with only the three Ks (Kirche-Church, Kuche-cooking, Kinder-children) . . . Photography is . . . a craft or trade to which both sexes have equal rights . . . If photography needs any new recruits, it needs only people of good taste who know the fitness of things and have a sense of the limitations of the medium. And with this good taste should be combined the hand of the skilled mechanic, the eye of an artist, and the brains of a scientist.[14]

Imogen's continuing correspondence with Clarence White paid off. He recommended her images to the editor of *Wilson's Photographic Magazine*, where an illustrated article praising her efforts at more natural portraiture appeared in 1914.[15] That same year, her photographs were selected for exhibition at New York's International Exhibition of Pictorial Photography. In 1915 she was invited to show at San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition, where Edward Weston also exhibited.[16] During their visits to the Exposition, although they did not meet, surely each became aware of the other's photographs. Imogen Cunningham had built a thriving portrait business in Seattle and now was becoming known in photographic circles about the country for the excellence of her work.

In 1932, as Imogen's career was finally reestablished, her marriage was falling apart. She had met her husband as a pen pal in 1913. At the age of thirty, she had begun an innocent correspondence with a young Seattle artist who was studying etching in Paris. Imogen wrote a good letter, and Roi Partridge became enchanted by this very independent woman. She sent him examples of her work that he found lovely. She mailed him soft-focus self-portraits that he preferred to the one sharply focused one she courageously included. Brett Weston later described Cunningham as "homely as a mud fence."[17] Roi proposed in a letter, and then in another, and yet another. When he arrived back in Seattle in late 1914, undaunted, he proposed again. She accepted. The marriage took place in February 1915.

Roi set up his etching studio next to Imogen's photographic studio, sketching directly from nature and then returning to the studio to etch the plates for printing. Sometimes she came along with her camera, and he obliged by modeling. Her nudes of Roi, set in the rugged landscape of the nearby mountains, were considered scandalous when she exhibited them in Seattle. The female nude had long been deemed appropriate in photography, but not full frontal shots of a naked man, husband or not.[18]

Imogen became pregnant one month after her marriage. Gryffyd was born in December, and Imogen quickly returned to work. She became pregnant soon again at the beginning of 1917. This pregnancy was different. She grew enormous and exhausted. Between keeping up with Gryff and maintaining some sort of work schedule, she found it at first difficult and then impossible to cope. In the middle of this pregnancy, Roi went off to Carmel for four months of sketching. Past her limit, she wrote him that she had closed the studio, broken all unnecessary glass plates, and was moving to San Francisco with Gryff. Roi could meet them there. Although he quickly found a job at a San Francisco advertising agency, he never forgave her for her presumption. He admired her spunk, but not when she aimed it at him.[19]

Imogen Cunningham had been trumped by biology and by the roles that she and her husband assumed. The children circumscribed her life for the next years. Roi proved to be a cold, reproachful father and husband. Wily Imogen devised a strategy. She refused to learn to drive. She did not go to the grocery store; she telephoned, and they delivered. She could not take the boys to school, music lessons, or even for new shoes. Imogen was the parent of record, at home day in and day out. She cooked their meals, but as soon as they were able, she expected the boys to do the cleanup; the valuable time she saved every day for her photography preserved her sanity. While Roi disappeared into his attic studio, Imogen pulled up the trapdoor stairs in the kitchen and descended to her basement darkroom. They worked at opposite ends of the house, and the emotional distance between them increased as well.[20]

In early 1918 Imogen and Roi became acquainted with another new arrival to San Francisco, Dorothea Lange, a portrait photographer who had worked in Arnold Genthe's studio and studied with Clarence White, both in New York. Born Dorothea Nutzhorn in 1895 in Hoboken, New Jersey, the birthplace years earlier of Stieglitz, Dorothea had worked to reinvent herself. She was stricken with polio when she was seven years old, and her right leg and foot never fully recovered. She hid their misshapen condition with stylish panache under long, full skirts or loose pants. Her parents divorced when she was twelve. Rarely seeing her father, she felt angry and abandoned. When she came to San Francisco, she started her new life by taking her mother's maiden name, Lange.[21]

Figure 11. Edward Weston, *Dorothea Lange*, 1920

In San Francisco, Dorothea clerked in a store that sold photographic supplies, developed film, and made enlargements.[22] She met Roi when he came to pick up some work by Imogen. Dorothea remarked on its fine quality, impressing Roi as being visually discerning. He brought Dorothea into their social circle and introduced her to Maynard Dixon, a western illustrator and painter. Dorothea and Maynard married in 1920, and Imogen and Dorothea became best friends.[23]

That June at a party at Dorothea's studio, Imogen and Roi met Edward Weston.[24] Imogen was suffering from photographer's block. She had not made an image of consequence for quite some time—understandable, given that she had three children under the age of five at home. Not long after their first meeting, Edward sent Imogen and Roi a selection of his prints and some by his then lover, Margrethe Mather. The photographs hit Imogen hard. She wrote Edward that they made her realize how insignificant her own accomplishments in photography had been thus far.[25]

Roi and Imogen began to buy occasional prints from Edward. Their support meant a great deal to him. As difficult it was for him financially, early in their friendship, Edward bought an etching from Roi for $10. A few years later, hard up for cash to make a car payment, he sold it for his original purchase price.[26]

Perhaps seeing Edward's and Margrethe's photographs provided the catalyst Imogen needed, because 1920 is the year that she began to evolve to a much higher level as a photographer. Edward had intentionally simplified his lifestyle, and he had begun to apply that philosophy to his imagery. Driven by

Figure 12. Edward Weston, *Imogen Cunningham*, 1922

the strength of his examples, Imogen boldly changed her visual expression. She stopped inventing ready-made visions to set before her camera—her staged, costumed tableaux—and began seeing as a camera does. Her images had been inclusionary. Now her lens filled the negative with only part of the subject, using the edges to abruptly crop the subject in a way the eye never does. Frequently she now chose a sharp lens to hold every detail.

On her short household tether, Imogen found subjects in her everyday life. In 1920 the arcing curves of the Mills College amphitheater became a study of form, pattern, and tone, contrasting dark against light. A trip to the zoo with the boys brought a zebra to her attention. She captured the curves of its belly and flank, naturally accented by its very photographic striping of black, white, and gray. As they grew, her sons appeared in many endearing portraits that gave little hint of the redheaded hellions they actually were. In 1921, eight years before Edward, Imogen photographed Point Lobos, producing frame-filling cypress roots, her images emphasizing texture while Edward's first concern was form.

During the summer of 1922 Imogen and Roi motored to Southern California and dropped in at the studio that Edward and Margrethe shared.

Figure 13. Imogen Cunningham, *Edward Weston and Margrethe Mather*, 1922

The photographers took turns photographing each other, while Roi sketched his hosts. Imogen heeded the advice of her professor in Germany to ask her subjects to think of "the nicest thing they know."[27] Her softly lit, moody portraits captured a confidently assured Edward commanding his space, while Margrethe remained elusive, her eyes avoiding the camera.

Edward's picture of Imogen, shot in profile, is in stark contrast. The sinews of her neck strain with the effort of holding her head so high that she appears to look down her nose. Perhaps this mannered pose was all her own, but it seems forced, suggestive of her discomfort on the other side of the lens.[28] This portrait must have been made before Imogen photographed Edward and Margrethe. Hers are intimate pictures reflecting a high level of trust between sitter and photographer that is not present in the unflattering picture of Imogen. But it is also true that many photographers affect an unnatural pose when they know their picture is being taken.

Inspired by her visit with Edward and Margrethe, back home in Oakland, Imogen investigated different photographic techniques and studied what other photographers were doing. As early as 1923 she was one of the first to make intentional double exposures, a method she used successfully for many years. She had maintained a correspondence with Alvin Langdon Coburn—the first photographer to make intentionally abstract photographs, which he called "Vortographs," using mirrors to deconstruct an image—since she met him in 1910. In 1923 Imogen began exploring abstract imagery herself, photographing bright sunlight as it broke through the leaves of a tree, producing complex and unidentifiable patterns.[29]

Imogen's backyard provided more new material. If she set up her camera to encompass a wide view, her garden's small area would yield a limited number of images. But very close, each plant became an individual; every flower acquired a personality. Before her were hundreds of potential subjects.

Imogen began photographing magnolias in 1923, culminating in her 1925 *Magnolia Blossom*—the perfect white inner petals spread wide to offer their inner treasure, the sumptuously ornate stamen and pistils, a tower of jewels.[30] Imogen's extreme close-ups of plants were made before Edward's first attempts in 1927. She denied being influenced by Georgia O'Keeffe's series of flower paintings, which had started in 1919, stating that she did not see that work until 1934.[31]

Each plant Imogen photographed spoke with its own power. She silhouetted a spiky agave before a graphic background of triangular black and white shadows. Calla lilies slightly unfurled into a single helix, their pale swirls contrasting against a dark background, the same device that Edward, a bit later, found helpful in isolating his shells and vegetables. A simple grassy stem of flax cut vertically across a white wall that effectively highlighted the flax while also offering its soft gray shadow. Many of Imogen's images were just shy of full abstraction.[32]

Imogen Cunningham had become a photographic pioneer. Her photographs offered the promise of the new and the modern. They were cutting-edge, except for one limiting feature: she treated each of her florals as precious objects, a quality she accentuated by printing them on expensive platinum paper, with its rich tones of cream to dark gray. As Ansel Adams was to complain in his 1932 review, platinum paper was redolent of Pictorialism, and its use sacrificed the optimal sharpness of her negatives.

Imogen and Roi held dear their friendship with Edward. They wrote to him in Mexico in 1924, enclosing money for a print, his choice. Apologizing that they could afford but one at this time, they continued to offer him the best kind of help: praise coupled with a sale.[33]

Florence Swift, a Bay Area painter, arrived in Mexico City in late 1925 with a letter of introduction from Imogen, who was worried that Edward and Brett were starving. Mrs. Swift found they almost were. She generously brought them boxes of food that Brett devoured almost as quickly as they could be unpacked.[34] Edward squired Mrs. Swift around town, undoubtedly selling her some photographs in the process.[35] Mrs. Swift arrived home so excited about photography that her husband decided to take it up himself.

When Edward returned from Mexico, Henry Swift became a paying student. Time and again, Imogen and Roi proved to be steadfast friends.

In 1928 it was Edward's turn to reciprocate with a letter of praise. He and Brett had seen the annual Pictorial photography salon at the Los Angeles Museum. The pictures were so bad they were comical, especially to Brett, and their expressive titles only made matters worse. Trees in mist were called *But Only God Can Make a Tree*; a coy nude—just turned away enough to be in "good taste"—*Bashful Model*; a factory in fog *Sorrow of Soul in Toil*. The two Westons stood in the middle of these pitiful attempts at photography and laughed so hard their sides ached.[36]

As Edward wrote to Imogen, he found the entire experience horrendous until he came to one photograph, *Glacial Lily*. It made him stop dead in his tracks. A chill ran up and down his spine. It was by Imogen Cunningham. He told her that hers was the best print in the entire exhibition and predicted that if she continued at this level, she would soon be recognized as one of the best photographers in the country.[37]

Imogen's perspective on Edward's letter is both telling and sad. At this point in both their lives, he was a much better-known and respected photographer. His letter was generous. Imogen saw things another way. She was three years older than Edward, and she had been a professional photographer for nearly twenty years. Since her adulatory letter in 1920, she had come a long way, and all by herself. To her eyes, his letter was unredeemed arrogance.[38] Where had he been these past years that he did not know that this was but one of a great number of important pictures she had made? (He had a good alibi, Mexico.) Although she still held him in great respect, she would find an opportunity when they were next together to set him straight. Imogen Cunningham was in no way as sweet as her pictures.

Edward soon redeemed himself. The architect Richard Neutra, who emigrated from Austria to Los Angeles in 1923, met him at a party, and they had quickly become mutual admirers and friends.[39] In 1929 Neutra asked Edward to select a collection of contemporary photographs to represent the American West for the upcoming *Film und Foto*, a gargantuan exhibition in Stuttgart that examined the current state of both cinema and photography. In Germany, the primary engineer behind this monumental event was the Hungarian photographer and painter László Moholy-Nagy, who had taught from 1923 to 1928 at the Bauhaus, the famous German school of design. *Film und Foto* would be the first presentation of modern American photography in Europe, and Neutra's invitation was an enormous recognition of Edward's international importance.

In addition to his own twenty prints, Edward sent the work of only three photographers: his son, Brett; Roger Sturtevant, an uncommonly fine architectural and advertising photographer; and Imogen. (He had invited Tina to participate, but she refused.) This would be the most important exhibition that each of them had ever been in, and the first consequential display of Imogen's work in fifteen years.

Edward requested that she send her botanicals. She actually exhibited eight of those, but also one nude and an unusual view of a water tower, the camera aimed steeply upward at a disquieting angle. In Stuttgart, Imogen Cunningham's work was praised as cutting-edge.[40]

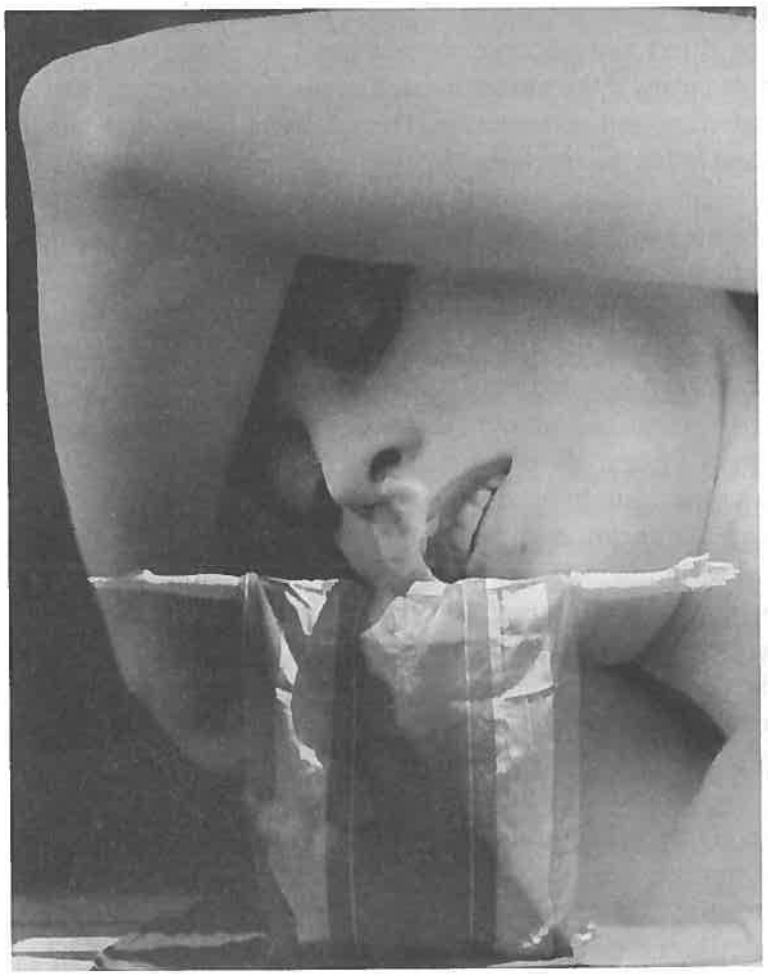

Figure 14. Imogen Cunningham, *Martha Graham*, double exposure, 1931

Neutra invited Edward Steichen to select photographers from the East Coast. Along with his own work, he chose that of Charles Sheeler, Berenice Abbott, Paul Outerbridge, and Ralph Steiner. Stieglitz had been asked to contribute, but he said no; he shared nothing aesthetically with the others. Sheeler had broken with the supportive relationship he had with Stieglitz in 1923. Heavily influenced by the Cubist art that he had seen at the Armory Show years before, Sheeler photographed and painted machine-age images, described with incredible precision under bright light, while Stieglitz's photographs held to a romantic vision of the world, out of step with the modernist views of the 1920s.[41]

Neutra gave the honor of writing the foreword to the catalog that would speak for all the Americans to the other Edward, Weston.[42] "I have written of photography as 'direct, honest, uncompromising,'" he wrote, "and so it is when used in its purity, if the worker himself is equally sincere and understanding in selection and presentation. Then it has a power and vitality which moves and holds the spectator."[43]

Traveling to cities across Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Japan, *Film und Foto* made quite a splash. Its impact on the understanding of contemporary photography was enormous.[44]

A combination of propitious events, including the growing independence of her teenage sons, had begun to boost Imogen's career as well. In 1931 she collaborated with the eminent modern dancer and choreographer Martha Graham on a series of portraits, exposing ninety Graflex negatives in one afternoon.[45] Imogen's photographs render a commanding woman caught in striking poses, sometimes heightened by double exposure. Publication of two of these portraits in *Vanity Fair* led to an extended assignment to photograph "ugly" male Hollywood stars. Long Imogen's favorite magazine, *Vanity Fair* offered a rare place to see excellent commercial photographs. Finally, too, she was recognized at home with the de Young Museum's large solo exhibition of her photographs in January 1932, the very show that fledgling critic Ansel Adams wrote about.[46]

Imogen and Edward remained close friends, valuing any time they spent together. He knew how constrained she had been by her duties as a housewife and mother, and recognized that as these lightened, her photography would mature. Edward also foresaw a major threat to her marriage. Imogen was clearly the more important artist, and a rising threat to her husband's ego.[47] Edward had lately written in a newspaper review,

> [Cunningham] uses her medium, photography, with honesty—no tricks, no evasion: a clean cut presentation of the thing itself, the life of whatever is seen through her lens—that life within the obvious external form.
>
> With unmistakable joy in her work, with the unclouded eyes of a real photographer, knowing what can, and cannot, be done with her medium, she never resorts to technical stunts, nor labels herself a would-be third-rate painter.
>
> Imogen Cunningham is a photographer! A rarely fine one.[48]

In October 1932, at the age of forty-nine, Imogen had finally come into her own. After supper on Saturday night, the fifteenth, she would have ordered the boys to wash the dishes and then, with Roi most likely behind the wheel, climbed into the car. A party with Edward, Ansel, and dear Willard—now this could be fun.

V. ANSEL ADAMS

Any way he looked at it, his life was a yo-yo. Yosemite to San Francisco. San Francisco to Yosemite. Back and forth he bounced, making his negatives in Yosemite, then going down into his basement darkroom in San Francisco to produce the prints that earned him a modest living—outdoors to indoors, sunshine to darkness.

For a full month in the summer of 1932, Ansel Adams had hiked in the southern Sierra with his comrades of the trail, some two hundred members of the Sierra Club, during its annual Outing. He served as the official photographer and as the "Keeper of the Lost and Found." His Outing fee was waived, and he was also paid a stipend to plan the daily itinerary, which he chose for its photographic possibilities as much as anything else. In his backpack, he carried his 4-by-5-inch Korona view camera, tripod, holders, and lots of sheet film. In the High Sierra, Ansel was in his element. To photograph the rugged granite and icy lakes of his chosen Eden all day long, and then to return to a blazing campfire, a hot dinner, and the company of good friends—this was his heaven on earth.

Now thirty years old, Ansel happily believed that a significant life in photography lay before him. He had grown to be the man he was because of the abiding support of his father, a loyal patron, and the motivation he found in Mama Nature, as he fondly called it. Born in 1902, the only child of a wealthy family, he grew up in a sturdy house surrounded by gardens on the

northwestern edge of San Francisco, where the air was clean and the views of the Golden Gate magnificent. Nature was at Ansel's doorstep.

A hyperactive child, Ansel brimmed with unfocused energy. He could not sit still in a classroom, his mind racing far ahead of the lesson being taught, while his body longed to be outside, exploring the small creek that wandered past the Adams property to end at Baker Beach, a half mile distant. The family doctor diagnosed emotional instability and sentenced Ansel to two hours' rest in a darkened room every afternoon, an unbearable punishment for such a live wire.

Following his graduation from eighth grade, Ansel was homeschooled by his father, who he called Carlie or Pops, and his mother's sister, Aunt Mary. Ansel's mother, Olive, a chronically unhappy and critical woman, played a less active role in her son's rearing. Carlie's personal hero was Ralph Waldo Emerson, the nineteenth-century poet, philosopher, and founder of the Transcendentalist movement, whose central tenet was that every living thing shares a universal soul. According to Emerson, man's most direct route to the eternal is through the natural world. Aunt Mary set store by the philosopher Robert Green Ingersoll, a nineteenth-century "free thinker" and orator known as the Great Agnostic. Echoing Emerson, Ingersoll taught that the natural world was a window into the divine, and "the interpreters of nature are the true and only priests."[1] While the Adams family attended no church, Ansel was brought up with resolute beliefs based on the ideas of these intellectuals. He was taught that the real cathedral of worship could only be found in the great outdoors.

Emerson's writings spoke directly to Carlie about Ansel, this unusual, very scattered son. Emerson counseled that each person is born with a piece of the divine that must be kept alive by encouraging individual freedom and nonconformity. Ansel's education was modeled on such Emersonian ideals. His father faithfully fanned the spark of genius that he knew burned in his boy. Urging him to always follow the highest moral standards, both father and aunt also exhorted him, quoting Emerson, to "hitch your wagon to a star." Ansel grew up believing that life held no limitations.[2]

At age twelve Ansel heard his sixteen-year-old neighbor, the musical prodigy Henry Cowell, play the piano. This experience was an epiphany. He pledged himself to a career as a classical pianist and began serious study with a succession of teachers. Before he discovered the piano, the world had seemed chaotic and bewildering, but the discipline of music gave him a strong sense of structure, order, and purpose. In the study of music, he found himself.

On his thirteenth birthday Ansel's parents gave him a one-year pass to

the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Ansel split his time between his musical studies and the rich delights provided by daily visits to the fair. He saw it all and exulted in the experience. At the exposition's Palace of Fine Arts, Ansel viewed what was presented as the "best and most important collection of modern art that has yet been assembled in America." The implication that the West had outdone New York's famed International Exhibition of Modern Art of 1913, known as the Armory Show—largely based on the fact that this was the Futurists' first appearance in this country[3]—was definitely overreaching. The Armory Show, in which beautiful but relatively conservative paintings by Americans shared space with the groundbreaking work of European artists such as Pablo Picasso, Vincent van Gogh, Marcel Duchamp, Henri Matisse, and Paul Gauguin, had "dropped like a bomb," exploding American ideas of what art should be.[4]

Ansel's favorite haunt at the exposition was the Underwood Typewriter Company exhibit in the Palace of Liberal Arts, near the Pictorial Photography Exhibition, where prints by Edward Weston and Imogen Cunningham were on display. As an adult he had no memory of the photographs, although he surely saw them, but he recalled that he had liked the Futurist paintings and disliked the sculpture. At home, young Ansel attempted his own Futurist-influenced crayon drawings, which he gave to his father and sent to a distant cousin in Maine. These are the first evidence of his visual awareness.

But then the Adamses fell on permanently hard financial times. The family-owned lumber company, Washington Mills, failed. Sawmills burned, ships were lost at sea, and there had been no insurance. The business was heavily mortgaged, and when loans were called due, they could not be met. Carlie invested the last of his money in a venture with his brother-in-law, Ansel Easton, son Ansel's namesake, and lost it all, convinced that Easton had double-crossed him. Carlie, who confessed he was a poor businessman, yearned to be an astronomer but was condemned instead to futile attempts to recoup the family's fortune. Responsible for a household that included his wife, her sister, their father, and Ansel, Carlie found employment as a traveling salesman. For the rest of their long lives, Ansel's mother bitterly blamed her husband for their downfall. She couldn't forgive him.[5]

Ansel was susceptible to every illness. When he was sick in bed in early 1916, he persuaded his parents to plan a family vacation to Yosemite, a wondrous place he had read about. Despite his gravely reduced income, Carlie tried to make sure that his boy would not suffer. He made sacrifices to fulfill Ansel's wish to see Yosemite, seeing this as an essential part of his son's Emersonian education.

Figure 15. Cedric Wright, *Ansel Adams and Mule*, Sierra Nevada, c. 1930

An amateur photographer, Carlie gave Ansel his first camera, a Kodak Box Brownie, to record their trip. Thus Ansel's two passions—for Yosemite and photography—were born together and remained forever inseparable. When Ansel nearly died during the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918–19, he insisted that a visit to Yosemite would cure him, and it did. Yosemite became his wellspring for physical and mental health, and his personal cathedral.

At twenty-four Ansel struggled to realize his dream of becoming a concert pianist. During most of the year, eight months or so, he took lessons, practiced with dedication, and taught piano, charging $10 for ten lessons.[6] He continued to live at home. He held the summer months sacred for Yosemite and his hobby of photography, but he knew he did so at the expense of his music. When concerts were not forthcoming, he formed the Milanvi Trio, composed of violinist Mildred, pianist Ansel, and modern dancer Vivienne. A review of a rare performance pronounced the pianist a failure—so loud the violin could not be heard, and playing at a faster tempo than the poor dancer could keep up with. Ansel blamed genetics, convinced that his small hands were better suited to the violin. Receiving only faint local recognition, he felt doomed to obscurity.[7]

In addition to his caring father and the emotional and physical sustenance he found in nature, in October 1932 a patron, Albert Bender, helped bring Ansel to the brink of real success. They met at a Sierra Club party where Ansel had displayed a selection of his Sierra photographs. Impressed, Albert invited Ansel to come by his office. A patron was especially important to a photographer; there was virtually no market for creative photography, only for portraits and other commercial work.

Born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1866, Albert had arrived penniless in America in 1883 but went on to build one of the most successful insurance agencies in San Francisco. Moderately wealthy and without a family, he had become a leading supporter of the arts. If he liked an artist and that artist's work, he could be counted on for financial support, and in addition he would rally the Bay Area's philanthropic community. As a collector he specialized in Asian art, fine printing, and California artists working in all media, and he donated pieces to many local museums, institutes, colleges, and universities.[8]

Albert Bender was a short, stocky man, his face dominated by an assertive nose and brooding eyes. He carried himself proudly, and the lapel of his immaculate suit jacket always bore a fresh flower. His pockets jingled with trinkets that he bestowed on those who crossed his path. Yet he was a solitary man. He collected artists both to stanch a fundamental melancholy and to chauffeur his car. Although he owned a fine one, he did not drive.

With great anticipation, Ansel entered the Bender Insurance office at 311 California Street at ten o'clock on a Monday morning, April 12, 1926, to a general hubbub. Albert sat behind a desk piled with a mess of papers from which he would magically fish out whatever he needed. Other visitors arrived. Albert dealt with them and took phone calls. Despite the bustle, when Albert looked at Ansel's photographs, he took his time, and declared them worthy of a portfolio.[9] He picked up the phone and began selling the portfolio, which he had quickly priced at $50, in multiples to his friends. By lunchtime Albert had sold over fifty nonexistent Adams portfolios. He handed Ansel a check for $500 and told him to make a hundred portfolios, plus ten artist's copies. (When it was published, it was in an edition of 150.)

That morning's proceedings shocked Ansel, not just because he had yet to make a single print for the portfolio. Albert Bender gave him confidence in a career in photography. He had struggled for years to become a classical pianist, practicing indoors for eternal hours; as much as Ansel Adams loved music, photography fit him better.

Figure 16. Ansel Adams, *Lodgepole Pines, Lyell Fork of the Merced River, Yosemite National Park*, 1921 [soft-focus]

Unsurprisingly, Ansel began as a Pictorialist, but he used a soft-focus lens and the bromoil printing process for only a short time, soon abandoning both Pictorialist affectations.[10] Although he never made allegorical images, he did employ other Pictorialist traditions such as printing on matte, textured paper. Hints of his artistic potential can be seen in his photographs of the mid-1920s: straightforward landscapes, the frame filled by a mountain or a waterfall. But though Ansel believed his soul was one with the Sierra, he was frustrated; he could not always express what he saw before him in a finished print. He attributed any particularly successful image to luck. From his study of the piano, he knew he needed more practice, and photographed intensively until he had achieved a rare, probably unique, fluency in his craft.[11]

In April 1927, with the deadline for the portfolio near, Ansel decided he must make one more image of Half Dome, the spectacular climax to the eastern end of Yosemite Valley. This photograph must reveal the essence of that matchless granite mountain. Earlier, from a location on Glacier Point, he had used a long-focus lens to both isolate and fill most of his negative with Half Dome. He gave a print of this to Albert Bender.[12]

With time for thought, Ansel realized that while this picture of Half Dome was strong, he could make it stronger. The answer was before him in that negative. The first problem was that it had a completely white sky. He knew that he should have used a yellow filter to absorb the blue of the sky, reduce atmospheric haze, and to slightly darken it in the print. Because films are overly sensitive to the color blue, filters are commonly used in black-and-white landscape photography to adjust the contrast. Also, the angle of Half Dome seen from Glacier Point was too severe. He needed a more direct view. To the right of Half Dome was the Diving Board, a thirty-four-foot slab of granite suspended over three thousand feet high above the valley floor. He reasoned that he could achieve the image he was now imagining if he made the exposure from that location. However, it would be an arduous six hour climb from the valley floor with snow still on the ground.

Early on a chilly Sunday morning, he hiked the off-trail route to the Diving Board with a few friends. He stuffed his backpack with his 6 1/2-by-8 1/2-inch Korona view camera, lenses, glass plates, and a few filters and strapped it on, adding a heavy wooden tripod tied on with rope to complete his necessary equipment. (The Korona was an early-twentieth-century view camera that used glass-plate negatives rather than the sheet film that was becoming popular.) Nattily attired, he wore a worn leather jacket, Levi's, sunglasses, his preferred climbing shoes of dark leather high-top sneakers, and a fedora to protect his already balding head.[13]

When they reached the Diving Board, 3,500 feet above the valley, Ansel found a sufficiently level spot to place his tripod to fully capture the looming hulk of Half Dome, an awesome view: its sheer cliff face, carved by an ancient glacier, stood almost straight ahead, while the Sierra Nevada spread out to the east. Since he was so close to Half Dome, Ansel chose a slightly wide-angle lens, this time fitted with the K2 yellow filter. He calculated the exposure, set the lens, inserted the glass-plate holder, removed the dark slide, and then gently squeezed the cable release.

At that instant, standing before Half Dome, Ansel experienced a moment of intense clarity, Edward Weston's the Flame of Recognition. Ansel realized that he had captured the literal subject as it stood before his camera. He did not need to go back to his darkroom to know that this negative still did not hold the information he required to make the much more dramatic finished print he foresaw. Understanding what he came to term "visualization" enabled Ansel to make that essential leap from a craftsman to an artist on that April day in 1927. Although he believed he had originated this concept, Sadakichi Hartmann, Edward Weston, and even John Paul Edwards had earlier expressed the essence of this same idea.

With only one glass plate remaining, Ansel placed a deep-red filter over the lens to increase the tonal contrasts, shifting the pale sky into thunderous black and the dull snow to crisp white, and released the shutter. Applying the concept of visualization, Ansel achieved his first masterpiece: *Monolith, the Face of Half Dome.*

By framing Half Dome against a cloudless sky and then altering the contrast between mountain and sky with a filter, Ansel used isolation to raise Half Dome to a new glory, producing in the print the hyperreality he saw as

he gazed upon the scene. Such expressive use of a filter was not Pictorialist, nor was it within the normal parameters of what was considered straight photography. It was a radical step. This was new territory, explored by no one but Ansel Adams.

Both Imogen and Edward were using isolation to intensify the subject, but they achieved it with a dark background, not a filter. Imogen did not maintain records of when she made her negatives, but at some time in the 1920s many of her prints were of plant forms surrounded in deep tones. One month after Ansel made *Monolith*, Edward began using this technique with his splendid nautilus shell that seemed to float in the black void of outer space. And when he photographed that pepper in 1930, Edward isolated it visually by placing it in a funnel that provided its own night.

With his photograph of *Monolith* secure, Ansel was ready to make the prints for his portfolio. In August 1927, sixteen months after his meeting with Albert Bender, he released *Parmelian Prints of the High Sierras*.[14] It earned him enough money to marry his longtime sweetheart, Virginia Best, in Yosemite that winter. Ansel took out a full-page ad in the 1928 *Sierra Club Bulletin* to announce the opening of his photography studio in his parents' home, demoting music to an avocation. He offered "Portraits and Special Photographic Studies Made by Appointment," in addition to prints of "Mountain Subjects—chiefly of the High Sierra."[15] "But Ansel, the camera cannot express the human soul," his mother wailed when she learned of his defection. "But Mother, perhaps the photographer can," he replied.[16]

Proud of his new protégé, Albert introduced Ansel to Bay Area society, and through these influential people he met more of their kind. He became known for his impromptu piano performances at parties. A local magazine ran his picture with the caption, "Mr. Adams is a San Franciscan of unusual abilities in several professions. Already he is a musician of acknowledged ability and a great social favorite."[17] Thanks again to Albert, he was offered commercial photography jobs for catalog illustrations and advertising for, among others, the premier San Francisco department store Gump's.

Albert had an unusually sophisticated eye, and he championed many photographers, including Edward and Brett Weston, Imogen Cunningham, Connie Kanaga, and Dorothea Lange, providing them with important contacts as well as purchasing their photographs. With his diverse connections, he was able to introduce Ansel to the who's who of contemporary Northern California photography.

One day in 1926 Ansel drove Albert to the library at Mills College in Oakland to deliver some books he was donating. They stopped so that Albert could pay his regards to Imogen and to introduce his new phenom, Ansel Adams.[18] In the autumn of 1928, Ansel met Edward and sixteen-year-old Brett at Albert's apartment. They each showed photographs, and then Ansel performed on Albert's piano. Both Westons thought Ansel a much finer pianist than photographer, and Ansel thought as little of their work as they did of his.[19] Albert Bender proved himself a constant friend to these three photographers, who felt great loyalty to him, though Dorothea Lange described him as little more than an unattractive, loudmouthed clown who trained his artists to toady to his rich friends.[20]

Following the death of Albert Lavenson, Albert Bender's good friend and fellow supporter of the fine arts, Albert paid his respects to the family in Oakland. Lavenson's daughter, Alma, whom Albert had known from her childhood, was now a woman of thirty-three. She had been very close to her father and was clearly suffering from his loss. Albert sat with her, and they talked. A quiet, shy person, she told him about her hobby of photography. Impressed by her soft-focus images of boatyards and factories—unlikely subjects for a prim young lady of the day—Albert suggested that she show them to three important people: Edward Weston, Imogen Cunningham, and Consuelo Kanaga.[21]

For all her honest modesty, Alma had been making a name for herself. She had already experienced success in exhibiting her photographs in many salons. In 1927 one of her photographs from Zion Canyon in Utah was selected for the cover of *Photo-Era*.[22] Her work thereafter was reproduced frequently in that magazine and in *Camera Craft*, the monthly Bay Area journal that every West Coast photographer read cover to cover, and the official organ of the Pacific International Photographers' Association—the Pictorialists.[23] But she had not met with the top photographers who lived around her. With letters of introduction from Albert, Alma plucked up her courage and first brought her work to Imogen, who responded with maternal warmth and invited her to photograph, something they began to do quite often. They soon added Connie Kanaga as their third.[24]

Alma had pored over photo magazines for years. As in the case of Willard, they had been her education in photography. She was very much aware of the famous Edward Weston. Only after relentless prodding by Imogen, who told her that Edward was a man of rare sensitivity, did Alma drive to Carmel.

Figure 17. Consuelo Kanaga, *Albert Bender*, 1928

Edward took the portfolio from her trembling hands and carefully placed the prints, one at a time, on his easel, just as he showed his own work. He could see she had a discerning eye. He praised a composition of a ship's funnels and masts but asked why she veiled their hard, polished steel with a soft-focus lens. Steel should look like steel. If she switched to a good, sharp lens, he suggested, she would be amazed at the power she could express.

Alma balked at the criticism, stoutly defending her $2 lens with a defiance that surprised Edward. He didn't think she had it in her. When she returned to Oakland, however, Alma put aside her soft-focus lens and pulled out a sharp one, long hidden in a drawer.[25]

Albert Bender opened consequential doors for Alma, as he had for so many others. And with the counsel and friendship of Imogen and Connie, and heeding Edward's advice, she began finding her own way to photograph, her efforts earning admiration from her seasoned mentors.

Albert played an even larger role in the life of Ansel, who became his favorite chauffeur, driving him in his shiny new Buick to Carmel to meet Robinson Jeffers, and to the American Southwest, where Ansel became friends with the writers and painters of New Mexico.[26] These trips introduced Ansel to a whole new world, its people, and their landscape.

During Ansel's first trip to Santa Fe in 1927, Albert presented him to the writer Mary Austin, convinced that the two of them should collaborate on a book. *Taos Pueblo*, published in late 1930, bound together twelve original

photographs by Ansel and fourteen pages of letterpress text by Austin. The artists claimed to have worked completely independent of each other, but their contributions, when combined, formed a unified whole.[27]

Returning to Taos for his third visit during the summer of 1930 to make the final images for the book, Ansel shared the two-bedroom guesthouse of the heiress Mabel Dodge Luhan with Paul Strand and his wife, Becky. Ansel was immensely impressed by Strand, who generously shared his recent 8-by-10-inch film negatives. One by one he passed them to Ansel, who held each with his fingertips before a sunlit window. He was transfixed by what he saw—to his eyes each exposure was faultless, every composition ideal. Strand's negatives solidified aesthetic decisions Ansel had already made, and their talks confirmed that photography could be a respected and worthy pursuit. On the spot, Strand converted Ansel to glossy paper from the matte he had long used. Unfortunately, matte paper was already in process for the printing of the Taos book. Ansel now realized that no matter how straight the vision or fine the focus, the textured, warm-toned paper of *Taos Pueblo* carried the echoes of Pictorialism.

The year 1931 continued as another year of firsts for Ansel. A *Washington Post* review of the Smithsonian Institution's exhibition *Pictorial Photographs of the Sierra Nevada Mountains by Ansel Adams* described his images as "portraits of the giant peaks, which seem to be inhabited by mythical gods."[28] Although Ansel had had annual solo exhibitions at the Sierra Club since 1923, this was his first at a museum, though one better known for science and history than for art. He gasped at the museum's title for his show; he had intentionally left Pictorialism behind, and did no one at the museum know that the Spanish word *sierra* meant "mountains"?[29] Here again was the same mistake perpetrated on his Parmelian portfolio.

Also in 1931, for a short time Ansel became the only dedicated critic of photography in the Bay Area. It happened because of Lloyd LaPage Rollins, who had been hired in May 1930 as director of San Francisco's Palace of the Legion of Honor. A native Californian, Rollins grew up in San Francisco in his parents' boardinghouse for men.[30] He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, followed by a master's degree in museum practice from Harvard, where he served as the head tutor at the Fogg Art Museum. Graced with grants, he traveled annually to Europe. Rollins began work in September 1930, and four months later added the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum to his directorial responsibilities.[31] The de Young's collection and exhibition program had long relied on the castoffs of wealthy local supporters, who had filled its storerooms and lined its

galleries with what was at best second-rate material. One art critic vilified it as "the most disgraceful museum in the world."[32] Rollins undertook a vigorous housecleaning. He removed all existing permanent exhibitions, in the process alienating many of the institution's financial supporters.[33]

Rollins grew so enthusiastic about the exciting quality of local photography that, showing great courage, he began to exhibit photography on a regular basis, even though many still questioned its legitimacy as art. Unwavering, he started a personal collection of what he called "modern photographs."[34] During his tenure as director, at least one exhibition of photographs was usually on view at the de Young. Beginning in July 1931, the museum presented a succession of solo photography shows by Margrethe Mather, Eugène Atget, Edward Weston, Brett Weston, Imogen Cunningham, Ansel Adams, László Moholy-Nagy, and Willard Van Dyke.[35]

No other museum in the world had made such a forthright stand for photography. Although an annual Pictorialist salon took place in many cities, there were otherwise few opportunities to view photography. Painters and sculptors expressed outrage at Rollins's change of direction, believing that wall space rightfully belonging to them had been usurped. That was true.

The cognoscenti of San Francisco, however, began responding positively to the changes at the de Young. "If anyone had predicted a few years ago that the time would come when we should really enjoy visiting the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, we should have been incredulous. But that institution has recently developed [such] a live, vital spirit under Lloyd Rollins' direction that it . . . might easily soon become one of the most important institutions of its kind in the country—that is, if Rollins is allowed to continue, without interference."[36]

The time was ripe for Ansel Adams, photography critic. Brimming with a proselytizer's zeal, Ansel preached the gospel of straight photography from his column's pulpit in the *Fortnightly*, a short-lived San Francisco review of literature, music, and the arts.[37] Challenging himself to write "from a strictly photographic point of view," he made his aesthetic concrete.[38] Ansel, who had no education in art history, and thus had neither the aid nor the impediment of a ready-made analytical vocabulary or the definitions and symbols generally used by critics, had to devise his own way to discuss the aesthetics of photography. He was blazing a new trail.[39]

From November 1931 to May 1932, Ansel wrote eight articles. Of the four that were published, the first was on the French photographer Eugène Atget. When Atget died in poverty in 1927 at age seventy, he left thousands of negatives and prints of his life's work: an encyclopedic record of Paris made in a clean, straightforward style. Many of the old buildings were being torn down to make way for the new subway system. Atget made it his personal responsibility to document a Paris that was disappearing. He was a modest man, and his studio sign can be translated as "Photographs of Works of Art." He intended his prints to be used as models by painters.[40]

At the very end of Atget's life, the American Surrealist painter and photographer Man Ray, who lived close by, discovered Atget, appreciating his objective and unpretentious imagery. One of Man Ray's assistants, Berenice Abbott, another American, found Atget's dead body at his apartment in August 1927. Worried about the future of his oeuvre, she purchased the contents of his studio and shipped it back to New York. A first exhibition at the Weyhe Gallery in New York and a monograph, *Atget, photographe de Paris*, soon followed.[41] Atget was all the rage on the East Coast.[42]

Edward received a copy of the Atget book for Christmas 1930. "I prepared to be deeply moved! Instead I was interested,—held to attention all through the book—but nothing profound . . . I feel no great flame . . . So often one feels he just missed the real thing." He did admit, "How much it resembles my viewpoint."[43]

In his *Fortnightly* review Ansel Adams wrote, "The charm of Atget lies . . . in his . . . revelation of the simplest aspects of his environment . . . The Atget prints are direct and emotionally clean records of a rare and subtle perception . . . The 'Pictorialist' is on the wane: the blurred indefinite 'poetic' prints are slowly but surely passing into historic oblivion." Although his work was out of style during the reign of Pictorialism, Atget had persevered. For Ansel, he was the missing link—the connection between the pre-Pictorialist world and the present, evidence that pure photography had not died during the intervening dark ages.[44]

Ansel's next column trumpeted Edward Weston's upcoming show of 150 prints at the de Young, his largest exhibition to date. Ansel urged his readers to "leave at home your 'painter's consciousness' and come to this exhibition prepared to see a profound expression in the medium of photography."[45] In the three years since meeting Edward at Albert's apartment, Ansel had come to appreciate the importance of his photography.[46]

Two weeks later his review of Edward's exhibition appeared. Ansel insisted that Edward was the opposite of the Pictorialist "who strives for the syntax of painting and etching in the language of the camera . . . The logical weakness of the Pictorialist lies in his inability to realize the austere limitations of his medium; he does not know that within these limitations exists a tremendously potent art form."[47]

Ansel placed Edward within the rarefied league of the greatest art photographers, whom he identified as Atget, Stieglitz, Strand, and Steichen.[48] Although he described Edward as "a genius in his perception of simple, essential form," he found the photographer guilty of symbolism. Edward vigorously rebutted the charge in discussions with Ansel before the review was published. Unconvinced, Ansel argued that Edward's peppers, whether by conscious intention or not, brought to mind the human form. And although Ansel wrote that "his rocks are supremely successful," he also carped, "his vegetables less so, and the cross-sections of the latter I find least interesting of all."[49]

Edward offered an adroit reply in a carefully worded letter. He explained that his pictures defined what a pepper is by visually intensifying its form and texture and thus concentrating the pepper's essence. The difference between art and non-art, he wrote, lay in the extent to which the photographer could see beyond the obvious and could achieve "seeing-plus."[50]

He pointed out how markedly different photographic vision is from what two eyes observe. Human eyes move constantly, the perceived image at times changing in a fraction of a second. The camera, in contrast, captures one moment in time for eternity. The photographer, Edward wrote, has many choices to make that affect the finished print, from which lens to use—to increase apparent distance or to telescope planes into flatness—to the contrast of the printing paper. Those decisions that Edward defended as justifiable techniques actually changed apparent reality. He cautioned that there is a fine line separating the communication of the true meaning of a thing, his ultimate goal, from the destruction of its meaning.[51] Edward's letter demonstrated his belief in Ansel as a worthy sounding board. It marked the beginning of a steadfast friendship between two men who would come to see each other as family.

Ansel must have wished he could have reviewed his own show of eighty prints at the de Young in February. Instead he was thrown to San Francisco's art wolves in critics' clothing. They applauded his photographs made directly from nature but took exception to his studio arrangements. With an intimation of Edward, one writer suggested that Ansel was "in danger of being tempted away from the thing itself, as it exists, by the idea of what it might be if it were only something else than what it is."[52]

In a short exhibition statement Ansel made it clear, as he had in his article on Edward, that he had moved through Pictorialism and emerged into the light of "pure photography." He believed that photography was the perfect art for the American West because both the medium and the West

itself were young, and thus unburdened by either the traditions of the East or older media.[53]

Ansel disparaged László Moholy-Nagy's exhibition at the de Young.[54] Moholy-Nagy, the avant-garde European artist and teacher from Germany's Bauhaus who had been central to *Film und Foto* and who called his style the New Vision, was adulated on the East Coast.[55] He took as a given that photographers should use only "purely" photographic means, independent of all other art forms, and that a photograph should communicate a subject's tonal contrasts (light to dark) and its inherent form and surface texture. But he insisted that photography's future depended on developing its own technical language through experimentation. The definition of photography would be enlarged with the exploration of unusual camera viewpoints, image distortions from a variety of lenses, shooting around the subject through an entire 360 degrees, changing camera construction, investigating X-ray photography, constructing photographic collages, making photograms (images produced without benefit of a camera), and testing the new field of color. "This century belongs to light," Moholy-Nagy proclaimed. "Photography is the first means of giving tangible shape to light."[56]

Ansel could not get past Moholy-Nagy's conspicuous lack of craftsmanship. Like Edward, Ansel made beautiful prints, and he thought those by Moholy-Nagy just plain ugly, covered with spots, and constructed in muddled tones.[57] Edward agreed, thinking the work pointless.[58] Moholy-Nagy cared about the ideas behind a picture and its impact on the viewer. Pretty prints were not part of his equation.

Providentially, the *Fortnightly* folded in May 1932, just before Ansel's opinions on Moholy-Nagy and Willard Van Dyke's de Young shows could appear. Ansel found much to like in Willard's work, but his review, in a painfully candid evaluation, described Willard's photographs as but pale reflections of those made by his mentor, Weston.[59] Had Ansel published the review, it might have destroyed all possibility of friendship with Willard and jeopardized his own relationship with Edward.

Ansel's few columns may have been a wake-up call to the more established Bay Area art critics. At the *San Francisco Examiner*, Redfern Mason wrote in August 1932, "Modern photography is a pioneer art which aims at the discovery of hitherto unrealized beauty. Of course, some people will deny that photography is an art at all. The answer to that objection is that photography is an art when the photographer is an artist. Three men in whom this condition is fulfilled are working in California today. They are Edward Weston and Johan Hagemeyer, of Carmel, and Ansell [sic] Adams of

San Francisco."[60] Articles like Mason's began to move creative photography into the mainstream of art and into the consciousness of the general public.

In mid-October 1932 Ansel spent most of his time in the darkroom. His income depended on the Sierra Club and on Yosemite Park and Curry Company (YPCCO), the park's chief concessionaire. Each year he produced a souvenir selection of prints and a portfolio to commemorate the High Sierra outing, targeting sales to the participants. The price of $30 for the 1932 portfolio was proving more than the Depression-afflicted audience could afford. He had only six orders.[61]

Producing the prints for six portfolios was still a lot of work, even for someone like Ansel who considered days off to be indolence. He had decided on twenty-four images to best represent the monthlong trip: twenty-four times six meant 144 separate prints, and of course he had to make more than the bare minimum in case of damage or another order or two. It would have been much more profitable if he could have made twenty or more portfolios, but he could not afford to speculate, given the price of printing paper. So much time was taken checking each negative for dust or other surface problems, placing it in the enlarger, focusing, and most important, achieving the first print. Luckily, he was a whiz in the darkroom. After he had found his way with a negative, additional fine prints took little time.

But the lack of portfolio sales was not his only worry. For the past two years, YPCCO had hired him to provide its promotional photographs, paying him $1,000 to $2,000, a significant contribution to his annual income. Recently, he had been notified that the company could not afford his services in 1933.[62]

Ansel was not sure what he would do. It now looked as if the only steady income would be from the generosity of his father-in-law, who owned a profitable artist's studio in Yosemite. At least Ansel's San Francisco house was secure. Gifts of money from his marriage to Virginia had been enough to pay for either a piece of land or construction costs. His parents had given them the land that had been his mother's dahlia garden, adjoining their house. The young couple accepted this magnanimous offer with a fair share of misgivings. Ansel's parents and his aunt Mary composed a dour household that would be physically grafted to Ansel and Virginia for the rest of their lives.

Ansel, a highly social animal who loved to party, had only recently found acceptance in the Bay Area photographic community. In the past, his extracurricular life had revolved almost exclusively around the Sierra Club, where both he and his wife were active. Virginia had just been elected to a two-year term on its board of directors.[63] Invited to the party at 683 Brockhurst by Willard and Mary Jeannette, he could count on a convivial, alcohol-fueled evening with his new social circle of photographer friends. On this mid-October day, Ansel Adams would have to quit the darkroom early to journey between San Francisco and Oakland: drive to the other side of San Francisco, half-hour-long car ferry across, and then onward to 683 Brockhurst, to be sleepily reversed on a late-night return.[64] Before evening's end, perhaps they could solve some of their common problems, from writing the fitting epitaph for Pictorialism to finding a solution for the hungry wolf at every photographer's door.

NOTES

PROLOGUE

1 Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 2, *California* (New York: Horizon Press; Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, 1966), 234–37. Both volumes of the *Daybooks* are currently out of print.
2 Ibid.
3 Wanda Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), xvii; Charles Harrison, *Modernism* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Frederick Karl, *Modern and Modernism, The Sovereignty of the Artist, 1885–1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1985).
4 Corn, *Great American Thing*, xv.
5 Richard Walker, "Great Women and Green Spaces," in *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*, ed. Rebecca Solnit (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 20–22.
6 Christian A. Peterson, *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910–1955* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 18–36.
7 In 1970, the year after our first child, Jasmine, was born, we drove from Lincoln, Nebraska, to San Francisco so that we could introduce her to Imogen.
8 Jean Tucker, ed., *Group f.64* (St. Louis: University of Missouri, 1978); Therese Heyman, ed., *Seeing Straight: The Group f.64 Revolution* (Oakland: Oakland Museum of California, 1992).

CHAPTER 1

I. Edward Weston

1 Nancy Newhall, *The Eloquent Light* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1963), 86.
2 Frontispiece, De Groote, Merle Armitage, *The Art of Edward Weston* (New York: E. Weyhe, 1932).
3 Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 2, *California* (New York: Horizon Press; Rochester: George Eastman House, 1966), 263; Edward Weston to Ansel Adams, postmarked October 19, 1932, Ansel Adams Archive, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona (henceforth CCP).
4 Edward Weston, "Prints Sold 1932," Edward Weston Archive, CCP.
5 Edward Weston to Willard Van Dyke, October 10, 1932, in Leslie Squyres Calmes, *The Letters Between Edward Weston and Willard Van Dyke* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, 1992), 7, 9.
6 Willard Van Dyke, "Foreword," in Jean Tucker, ed., *Group f.64* (St. Louis: University of Missouri, 1978); Therese Heyman, ed., *Seeing Straight: The Group f.64 Revolution* (Oakland: Oakland Museum of California, 1992).
7 Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA* (London: Penguin, 1999), 514; Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, "Federal Cultural Programs of the 1930's," in *New Deal Cultural Programs: Experiments in Cultural Democracy*, copyright 1986, 1995, http://www.wwcd.org/policy/US/newdeal.html [accessed June 16, 2012].
8 Early on, the permissive atmosphere of San Francisco welcomed rebellious writers to its safe haven. Beginning in the 1860s, Bret Harte wrote a popular column in a San Francisco journal under the byline "The Bohemian," exploring the depths and heights of the city and its people and their doings. Other young writers identified with "The Bohemian," and strove to establish the West as the new, if rowdy, frontier of American literature. They became comrades, including Mark Twain, Ina Coolbrith, and Charles Warren Stoddard, along with Harte. Ben Tarnow, *The Bohemians, Mark Twain and the San Francisco Writers who Reinvented American Literature* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014).
9 Sherri Bernstein, "Selling California, 1900–1920," in Stephanie Barron, Sheri Berstein, and Ilene Susan Fort, *Made in California, Art, Image, and Identity, 1900–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 74–77. Leaving no doubt in the buyer's mind that art had a special home in Carmel, the back cover of an early real estate brochure pictured a colorful artist's palette.
10 Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 1, *Mexico* (Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, 1961); Weston, *Daybooks: California*.
11 Beth Gates Warren, *Artful Lives: Edward Weston, Margrethe Mather and the Bohemians of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 1–5.
12 Warren, *Artful Lives*, 8–9; Willard Van Dyke, interview, in Ben Maddow, *Edward Weston: His Life* (New York: Aperture, 2000), 160; Ben Maddow, "Darling Ed," in Kathy Kelsey Foley, *Edward Weston's Gifts to His Sister* (Dayton, OH: Dayton Art Institute, 1978).
13 Warren, *Artful Lives*, 10–11.
14 Ibid. This is a vivid description written by Nancy Newhall, c. 1951; Maddow, *Weston: His Life*, 160–61.
15 Amy Conger, *Edward Weston: Photographs from the Collection of the Center for Creative Photography* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, University of New Mexico, 1992), 1–3; Weston J. Naef, "The Home Spirit and Beyond," in Susan Danly and Naef, *Edward Weston in Los Angeles* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1986), 9–15; Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 3.
16 He is said to have told Beaumont and Nancy Newhall that his priorities were his sons, his work, and, thirdly, love, although the example of his life provides a slightly different order. Maddow, *Weston: His Life*, 26.
17 The two prints Weston submitted were *Child Study in Gray* (bronze medal prize) and *Carlotta*, Margrethe Mather playing the part of the Mexican empress Carlota, a soft-focus portrait that had already won many salon awards. Warren, *Artful Lives*, 59–61, 74–76. The photography exhibition had been organized by well-known Bay Area Pictorialists Anne Brigman and Frances Bruguiere. Michael G. Wilson, "Northern California: The Heart of the Storm," in Michael G. Wilson and Dennis Reed, *Pictorialism in California: Photographs, 1900–1940* (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1994), 16–17; Frank Morton Todd, *The Story of the Exposition* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), 96.
18 Nathan Lyons, "Weston on Photography," in Beaumont Newhall and Amy Conger, eds., *Edward Weston Omnibus* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1984), 166.
19 Conger, *Weston*, 3; B. Newhall and Conger, *Weston Omnibus*, 2–3.
20 The process was the daguerreotype. In 1839 the French government acquired the rights to the process in exchange for an annuity for Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre and the son of his partner, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, who had died in 1833.

21 Roger Watson and Helen Rappaport, *Capturing Light: The Birth of Photography, a True Story of Genius and Rivalry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013), v.

22 Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, "Photography," *Quarterly Review* 101 (April 1857): 442–68, reprinted in Beaumont Newhall, *Photography: Essays and Images* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980), 91. Eastlake was an influential nineteenth-century British art critic, art historian, and photographer.

23 Nancy Newhall, *P. H. Emerson: The Fight for Photography as a Fine Art* (Millerton, NY: Aperture, 1975); Jean Stern, "A History of Plein Air Art: Impressionism in California," www.crystalcovebeachcottages.com/resources/AHistoryofPleinAirArt.pdf (accessed September 6, 2013). In 1872 an English translation of Eugène Chevreul's 1839 article was published. Chevreul's research on how the human eye interprets color was extremely influential with Impressionist painters. He theorized that "the apparent intensity of color does not depend as much on the inherent pigmentation . . . as it does on the hue of the neighboring color." Perhaps Emerson applied this idea to photography, where he discovered he could not control tonal densities throughout a print.

24 These techniques are based on the fact that oil and water do not mix. An oil-based light-sensitive ink mixed with a pigment is applied to printing paper. When this is exposed to light, the dark areas harden and the light, unexposed areas wash away. The pigment color provides the deep tones, while the texture and color of the printing paper determine the lighter ones. William S. Davis, *Practical Amateur Photography* (Garden City, NY: Garden City, 1937), 92–118.

25 Christian A. Peterson, *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910–1955* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 18–36.

26 "The Photographic Salon," *Camera Craft* 27 (November 1920): 370.

27 Frederick H. Evans, "Address to the Royal Photographic Society," *Photographic Journal*, no. 59 (April 30, 1900): 236–41.

28 Sadakichi Hartmann, "A Plea for Straight Photography," *American Amateur Photographer* 16 (March 1904): 101–9, reproduced in B. Newhall, *Photography: Essays and Images*, 185–88.

29 Edward Weston, "Photography as a Means of Artistic Expression," lecture for the College Women's Club, Los Angeles, October 18, 1916, reproduced in Peter C. Bunnell, ed., *Edward Weston on Photography* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1983), 19.

30 Ibid., 18; Todd, *Story of the Exposition*, 4–9; Donna Ewald and Peter Clute, *San Francisco Invites the World* (San Francisco: Chronicle, 1991), 74–75.

31 The Photo-Secessionists, a group formed by Alfred Stieglitz, boycotted the exhibition when they discovered that their work would be shown in the Palace of Liberal Arts. Wilson, "Northern California," 17.

32 Warren, *Artful Lives*, 19–27.

33 Ibid., 58–59; Beth Gates Warren, *Margrethe Mather and Edward Weston: A Passionate Collaboration* (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Museum of Art; New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 9, 11–15.

34 Paul Rosenfeld, "Alfred Stieglitz," in *Port of New York* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1924; repr., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 253.

35 Alfred Stieglitz, statement, from catalog of exhibition at the Anderson Galleries, New York, 1921, reproduced in B. Newhall, *Photography: Essays and Images*, 217.

36 Matthew S. Witkovsky, *foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918–1945* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2007), 13–14; Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982; references are to this edition unless otherwise noted), 151–56.

37 Francoise Heilbrun, "Pictorialism," in *A History of Photography* (Paris: Musée d'Orsay, 2009), 264; Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, *Alfred Stieglitz Biography* (Santa Fe, NM: Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, 2009).

38 John Francis Strauss, "Mr. Stieglitz's 'Expulsion'—A Statement," *Camera Craft* 15 (April 1908): 25, reproduced in Jonathan Green, ed., *Camera Work: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Aperture, 1973), 135–42; Richard Whelan, *Alfred Stieglitz: A Biography* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995), 231–33.

39 Stieglitz specifically defined the purpose of the Photo-Secession as to "loosely hold together those Americans devoted to Pictorial photography in their endeavor to compel its recognition, not as the handmaiden of art, but as a distinctive medium of individual expression . . . to hold from time to time, at varying places, exhibitions not necessarily limited to the productions of the Photo-Secession or to American work." Alfred Stieglitz, "The Photo-Secession," *Camera Work*, July 1903; Whelan, *Stieglitz*, 183–84; Alfred Stieglitz, "The Photo-Secession," in *The Bausch and Lomb Lens Souvenir* (Rochester, NY: Bausch and Lomb, 1903), reproduced in Newhall, *Photography: Essays and Images*, 167. Peter Henry Emerson described photography as "the hand-maiden of art and science" in his devastating pamphlet *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, printed in 1891. Wanda Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), xiv.

40 Green, *Camera Work*, 315–22.

41 Ibid, 13.

42 Whelan, *Stieglitz*, 190–91; "Camera Work," *International Center of Photography Encyclopedia* (New York: Crown, 1984), 94.

43 Marianne Moore, in *Stieglitz Memorial Portfolio*, ed. Dorothy Norman (New York: Twice a Year Press, 1947), reproduced in Rudi Blesh, *Modern Art USA: Men, Rebellion, Conquest, 1900–1956* (New York: Albert A. Knopf, 1956), 30–39.

44 B. Newhall, *History of Photography*, 150–71.

45 Alfred Stieglitz, "How *The Steerage* Happened," *Twice a Year* 8–9 (1942): 127–31.

46 Alfred Stieglitz, "How I Came to Photograph Clouds," *Amateur Photographer and Photography* 56 (1923): 255, reproduced in Nathan Lyons, ed., *Photographers on Photography* (Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, 1966), 110–12.

47 Douglas R. Nickel, "Picturing Modernity," in *Picturing Modernity: Highlights from the Photography Collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1998); "Fast Forward: Photography," www.albrightknox.org/news-and-features/features/article:04–21–2011 (accessed August 26, 2013). The Albright Art Gallery acquired at least five photographs at this time, including one by Stieglitz and one by Edward Steichen.

48 William Innes Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983), 144–47; Newhall, *History of Photography*, 164.

49 Edward's two portraits, *Eugene Hutchinson* and *Dextra Baldwin*, had been recently made. Warren, *Artful Lives*, 112–14; Whelan, *Stieglitz*, 390; N. Newhall, introduction to Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, xvii.

50 Paul Strand, "Photography," *Seven Arts* 2 (August 1917): 524–25. *Seven Arts* was published only from November 1916 into 1917.

51 N. Newhall, introduction to Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, xviii.

52 Warren, *Artful Lives*, 19–27; Warren, *Mather and Weston*, 9, 11–15.

53 Paul Rosenfeld, "Stieglitz," *Dial* 70 (April 1921): 397–409.
54 Edward Weston, "Random Notes on Photography," lecture delivered before the Southern California Camera Club, Los Angeles, June 1922, reproduced in Bunnell, *Weston on Photography*, 27. Collection Center for Creative Photography. © 1981 Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents.
55 Ibid., 26–32.
56 The print was *Ramiel in His Attic*. Conger, *Weston*, fig. 53/1920.
57 Weston met Sheeler as well as Paul Strand on this trip to New York. Warren, *Artful Lives*, 267–68; B. Newhall, *History of Photography*, 178–79.
58 Conger, *Weston*, fig. 85/1922.
59 Edward Weston to Johan Hagemeyer, "New York Notes," reproduced in Bunnell, *Weston on Photography*, 36–37.
60 Conger, *Weston*, fig. 85/1922.
61 Weston to Hagemeyer, "New York Notes," 35–43; Warren, *Artful Lives*, 267.
62 Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 4–7.
63 Patricia Albers, *Shadows, Fire, Snow: The Life of Tina Modotti* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 52–89.
64 Ibid., 95; Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, xviii; Rafael Vera de Cordova, "Photographs as True Art," *El Universal Ilustrado* 255 (March 23, 1922): 30–31, 55, reproduced in B. Newhall and Conger, *Weston Omnibus*, 13–16; Therese Mulligan and David Wooters, eds., *A History of Photography, from 1839 to the Present* (Cologne, Germany: Taschen, 2010), 490.
65 Albers, *Shadows, Fire, Snow*, 100–102.
66 Margaret Hooks, *Tina Modotti, Photographer and Revolutionary* (San Francisco: Pandora, 1993), 65–130.
67 B. Newhall, foreword and introduction to Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, ix–xviii.
68 Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 63; B. Newhall, "Edward Weston's Technique," in ibid., 204; Warren, *Artful Lives*, 247–48.
69 Francisco Monterde Garcia Icazbalceta, "The Edward Weston Exhibition," *Antena: Revista Mensual*, November 1925, 10–11, reproduced in B. Newhall and Conger, *Weston Omnibus*, 17.
70 Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 55. Collection Center for Creative Photography. © 1981 Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents.
71 *International Center of Photography Encyclopedia of Photography* (New York: Crown, 1984), 333; Lee D. Witkin and Barbara London, *The Photograph Collector's Guide* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1979), 194.
72 Weston to Adams, December 3, 1934, in *Ansel Adams: Letters and Images, 1916–1984*, ed. Mary Street Alinder and Andrea Gray Stillman (Boston: Little, Brown, 1988), 75–76.
73 Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 122.
74 Cole Weston, afterword to *Laughing Eyes: A Book of Letters between Edward and Cole Weston, 1923–1946*, ed. Paulette Weston (Carmel, CA: Carmel Publishing, n.d.), 154.
75 Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 117–18.
76 Barbara Head Millstein and Sarah M. Lowe, *Consuelo Kanaga: An American Photographer* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1992), 205–6.
77 Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 113.
78 Ibid., 153.
79 Ibid., 198–201.
80 Havelock Ellis, "Aesthetic Sensibility," *Impressions and Comments* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), 216. Edward Weston's personal copy, signed "Edward Weston, Mexico D.7 1925." Author's collection. Ellis was a British physician most known for his early research on sexual behavior.
81 Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 132–35.
82 Corn, *Great American Thing*, 71–79.
83 Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 132–35.
84 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 98.
85 Weston, *Daybooks, Mexico*, 194; Conger, *Weston*, 13–17; Maddow, *Weston: His Life*, 254; Charis Wilson and Wendy Madar, *Through Another Lens: My Life with Edward Weston* (New York: North Point Press, 1998), 290; Hooks, *Tina Modotti*, 115–30.
86 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 12, 25. It would seem Connie showed Stieglitz three platinum prints by Edward and a selection of prints on glossy papers. The images included one or more of Mexican pottery and most likely a solitary trunk of a palm tree, with no leaves or ground, the trunk a central broad vertical stripe with equal stripes of dark sky on either side. When Diego Rivera looked at this photograph, he thought it was a smokestack. *Palma Cuernavaca, II*, in Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, plate 23.
87 Judith Kalina, "From the Icehouse: A Visit with Consuelo Kanaga," *Camera* 35 16, no. 10 (December 1972): 52–55, 68, 70.
88 Millstein, "Consuelo Kanaga," 17–57.
89 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 12, 24.
90 Ibid., 24–25.
91 Roger Aikin, "Edward Weston and Mexico," in *Henrietta Shore: A Retrospective, 1900–1963*, ed. Jo Farb Hernandez (Monterey, CA: Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art, 1986), 24.
92 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 6.
93 Ibid., 21.
94 Ibid., 20–23.
95 Conger, *Weston*, fig. 544/1927. By the mid-1930s, Weston had sold twenty-eight prints of *Shell*, 1 S, more than any other of his photographs to that date. He made a total of four prints from this negative in 1927, for him at that time, a large number of one image.
96 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 31. A 1927 vintage print of *Shell*, 1 S, sold at auction at Sotheby's, New York, for over $1 million in 2010. He printed this, one of the first prints he made from the negative, on a matte-surfaced paper, not having yet changed to glossy paper.
97 Conger, *Weston*, fig. 544/1927.
98 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 69–101.
99 Ibid., 206. Collection Center for Creative Photography. © 1981 Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents.
100 Ibid., 155.
101 Ibid., 114, 151.
102 Ibid.,114–17.
103 Ibid., 139. Collection Center for Creative Photography. © 1981 Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents.
104 Mary Murray, "In Pursuit of Form, Sculpture and Photographs by Brett Weston," in *Brett Weston*, exhibition catalog from the Kathy and Ron Perisho Collection (Monterey, CA: Monterey Museum of Art, 2002), n.p.
105 Ibid., 158–60; Van Deren Coke, "1925–1935," in *Brett Weston, Master Photographer* (Carmel, CA: Photography West Graphics, 1989), n.p.

106 Ibid., 227, 259, 260.
107 Weston to Van Dyke, July 26, 1932, in Calmes, *Letters*, 7.
108 Edward Weston, "A Contemporary Means to Creative Expression," in Armitage, *The Art of Edward Weston*, 7–8.
109 Weston to Van Dyke, July 26, 1932, Calmes, *Letters*, 7–8.

II. Sonya Noskowiak

1 Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 2, *California* (New York: Horizon Press and Rochester: George Eastman House, 1966), 118. The historian Amy Conger writes that Sonya and Edward met through Johan Hagemeyer while she worked in one of Hagemeyer's studios. Conger, *Weston*, fig. 714/1933. Jadwiga Babcock, Sonya's sister, asserted in a 1994 interview with the scholar Darsie Alexander that Hagemeyer brought Sonya to Carmel around 1925, and that Sonya and Edward were a couple by 1927, and made a number of other statements that my research has found to be incorrect. I would like to acknowledge the insight into Sonya's personality and life provided to me by Darsie Alexander. I have never found substantiation for Sonya having worked for Hagemeyer. I have come to believe that was confusing the fact that Sonya worked in Edward's studio that he rented from Hagemeyer. In that way, it *was* Hagemeyer's studio.
2 Amy Conger, *Edward Weston: Photographs from the Collection of the Center for Creative Photography* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, 1992), fig. 550/1927.
3 "Seventh Heaven Wins Highest Praise as Season's Best Drama," *Carmel Pine Cone*, September 18, 1928, 5.
4 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 118, 281.
5 Marnie Gillett, "Sonya Noskowiak," in *Sonya Noskowiak* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, 1979), 5.
6 "People Talked About," *Carmel Pine Cone*, 1928, 9.
7 Ben Maddow, *Edward Weston: His Life* (New York: Aperture, 2000), 179.
8 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 141.
9 Ibid., 180–83.
10 Ibid., 184.
11 Cole Weston, *Laughing Eyes: A Book of Letters Between Edward and Cole Weston, 1923–1946*, ed. Paulette Weston (Carmel, CA: Carmel Publishing, n.d.), 38.
12 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 240. Collection Center for Creative Photography. © 1981 Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents. A print of *Pepper, No. 30*, sold at auction at Sotheby's New York recently for $341,000. It had been made by Edward and he signed, dated, and numbered as 25 from an edition of 50.
13 Conger, *Weston*, fig. 606/1930.
14 Afterword to C. Weston, *Laughing Eyes*, 154.
15 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 158–59.
16 C. Weston, *Laughing Eyes*, 38.
17 Sonya Noskowiak, "A Half Hour Conversation between Cole and Sonya," in ibid., 43.
18 Charis Wilson and Wendy Madar, *Through Another Lens: My Life with Edward Weston* (New York: North Point Press, 1998), 4–5.
19 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 129.
20 Ibid., 281.
21 Ibid., 227.

III. Willard Van Dyke

1 Willard Van Dyke, "683 Brockhurst," in "Autobiography," manuscript, Willard Van Dyke Archive, CCP, 12. Read with the kind permission of Barbara Van Dyke.
2 Ibid., 8.
3 Edward Weston to Ansel Adams, postmarked October 19, 1932, Ansel Adams Archive, CCP.
4 Barbara Hogenson, "The Reminiscences of Willard Van Dyke," January 18, 1980, Columbia Center for Oral History Collection, New York, pt 1, 2–10, 12–13.
5 Van Dyke, "683 Brockhurst," 3.
6 Hogenson, "Reminiscences," 12–13.
7 Anna Novakov, *John Paul Edwards: From Pictorialist to Purist*, exhibition catalog (Oakland: Oakland Museum of California, 1987), n.p.; "John Paul Edwards, Photographer," news release, 1987, John Paul Edwards file, Oakland Museum of California; Christian A. Peterson, *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910–1955* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 183.
8 Van Dyke, "683 Brockhurst," 11; Judy Dater, "Willard Van Dyke," in *Imogen Cunningham: A Portrait* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1979), 42.
9 Nancy Boas, *The Society of Six: California Colorists* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 102.
10 Dater, "Willard Van Dyke," 42.
11 Ibid.; Van Dyke, "683 Brockhurst," 11.
12 Dater, "Willard Van Dyke," 42.
13 James L. Enyeart, *Willard Van Dyke: Changing the World Through Photography and Film* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 33.
14 Michael G. Wilson, "Northern California: The Heart of the Storm," in Michael G. Wilson and Dennis Reed *Pictorialism in California* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum and Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1994), 7–19; Susan Ehrens, *A Poetic Vision: The Photographs of Anne Brigman* (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1995).
15 Van Dyke, "683 Brockhurst," 4.
16 Edward Weston, "Photography—An Eighth Art?" *Argus* (San Francisco), July–August 1928, 3, reproduced in Peter C. Bunnell, ed., *Edward Weston on Photography* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1983), 53–54.
17 Van Dyke, "683 Brockhurst," 4; Jacob Deschin, "Willard Van Dyke Reminisces about His Early Years with Edward Weston," *Popular Photography* 77 (July 1975): 16, 192, 196, 200, reproduced in Beaumont Newhall and Amy Conger, eds., *Weston Omnibus* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1984), 180–83.
18 Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 2, *California* (New York: Horizon Press, Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, 1966), 74
19 Weston was in Berkeley for the exhibition *Ten Pictorial Photographers* at the Berkeley Art Museum, October 4–31, 1929, according to Weston historian Paula Freedman.
20 Ben Maddow, *Edward Weston: His Life* (New York: Aperture, 2000), 181; Deschin, "Willard Van Dyke Reminisces."
21 Willard Van Dyke, "Foreword," Jean Tucker, *Group f.64* (St. Louis: University of Missouri, 1978), 8.
22 Deschin, "Willard Van Dyke Reminisces," 180.
23 "Willard Van Dyke, from Weston to MOMA: A Life in Photography," *Artlines* 3 (October 1982): 6.

24 Beaumont Newhall, *Focus: Memoirs of a Life in Photography* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993), 62.
25 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 136.
26 Amy Conger, *Edward Weston: Photographs from the Collection of the Center for Creative Photography* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 1992), fig. 572/1929.
27 Ibid., 137.
28 Deschin, "Willard Van Dyke Reminisces."
29 Enyeart, *Willard Van Dyke*, 63–64; Maddow, *Weston: His Life*, 181.
30 Willard Van Dyke, "Autobiography," unpublished manuscript, 1, Van Dyke Archive.
31 Van Dyke, "Autobiography," 52; James Alinder, "The Preston Holder Story," *Exposure* 13, no. 1 (1975): 2.
32 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 208. Collection Center for Creative Photography. © 1981 Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents.
33 Van Dyke, "683 Brockhurst," 12; Hogenson, "Reminiscences," pt. 2, 51–53.
34 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 70–71.
35 J. Alinder, "Preston Holder Story," 5.
36 Willard Van Dyke, "Group f.64," *Scribner's*, March 1938, 55.

IV. Imogen Cunningham

1 Ansel Adams, "Photography," *Fortnightly*, February 12, 1932, 26.
2 Ibid.
3 Richard Lorenz, *Imogen Cunningham: Ideas Without End* (San Francisco: Chronicle, 1993), 64n43.
4 To stop further development of a negative or print, it is placed in a "stop bath," commonly a solution of acetic acid and water.
5 Mary Street Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), xii.
6 Grace Hubbard, "Art," *Wasp-Newsletter*, January 9, 1932.
7 Lorenz, *Ideas Without End*, 11. Imogen was the eldest of six children from Isaac Burns Cunningham's second, and last, marriage, to Susan Elizabeth Johnson.
8 "Kodak," in *The Focal Encyclopedia of Photography*, ed. Leslie Stroebel and Richard Zakia (Boston: Focal Press, 1993), 410.
9 Christian A. Peterson, *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910–1955* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 180.
10 Richard Lorenz, "Imogen Cunningham," in *Imogen Cunningham, 1883–1976*, ed. Manfred Heiting (Cologne: Taschen, 2001), 15–16, 243.
11 Richard Lorenz, *Imogen Cunningham: Flora* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1996), 8–9.
12 Margery Mann, *Imogen! Imogen Cunningham, Photographs, 1910–1973* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 11.
13 Lorenz, *Ideas Without End*, 17.
14 Imogen Cunningham, "Photography as a Profession for Women," *Arrow of Pi Beta Phi* 29 (January 1913): 203–9, reproduced in *Imogen Cunningham: Selected Texts and Bibliography*, ed. Amy Rule (Oxford, England: Clio Press, 1992), 47–52.
15 Flora Huntley Maschmedt, "Imogen Cunningham—An Appreciation," *Wilson's Photographic Magazine* 51 (March 1914): 97–98 in ibid., 97–100.
16 Frank Norton Todd, *The Story of the Exposition* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), 96.
17 Judy Dater, "Brett Weston," in *Imogen Cunningham: A Portrait* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1979), 41.

18 Lorenz, *Ideas Without End*, 19.
19 Judy Dater, "Roi Partridge," in *Imogen Cunningham*, 25–29.
20 Judy Dater, "Padraic and Marjorie Partridge," in *Imogen Cunningham*, 21–25.
21 Linda Gordon, *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 10–20, 41–42; Jan Goggans, *California on the Breadlines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 58–59.
22 Richard Street, *Everyone Had Cameras: Photography and Farmworkers in California, 1850–2000* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 166–67.
23 Gordon, *Dorothea Lange*, 49–50; Goggans, *California on the Breadlines*, 58–59.
24 Beth Gates Warren, *Artful Lives: Edward Weston, Margrethe Mather and the Bohemians of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 27; Dater, "Roger Sturtevant," in *Imogen Cunningham*, 29–31.
25 Cunningham to Weston, July 27, 1920, Weston Archive. Collection Center for Creative Photography. © 1981 Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents. Edwards's prints included *Prologue to a Sad Spring*, *Epilogue*, and *Ramiel in His Attic*. Warren, *Artful Lives*, 191.
26 Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 2, *California* (New York: Horizon Press, Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, 1966), 76.
27 Margery Mann, preface to *Imogen Cunningham, Photographs* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), n.p.
28 Heiting, *Imogen Cunningham*, 4, 114–15.
29 Aaron Scharf, *Creative Photography* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1965).
30 *Magnolia Blossom* became one of Cunningham's most famous photographs. It resided on an exhibition wall at New York's Museum of Modern Art for so many years as the sole representation of her work that Imogen came to resent it.
31 Lorenz, *Ideas without End*, 26–27.
32 Heiting, *Imogen Cunningham*, 108–9.
33 Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 1, *Mexico* (Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, 1961), 80.
34 John Humphrey, "The Henry Swift Collection of the San Francisco Museum of Art," *Camera* (Switzerland) 52 (February 1973): 4, 13.
35 Weston, *Daybooks: Mexico*, 146.
36 Edward Weston, "Imogen Cunningham, Photographer," *Carmelite*, April 17, 1930, 7. In his review of Imogen's solo show at the Denny-Watrous Gallery in 1930, Edward wrote that he had been deeply impressed with her *Glacial Lily* at an exhibition of Pictorial photography in 1926. His description of the reaction of himself and Brett to this exhibition may have been a result of his memory conflating two shows into one, experiences in 1926 and 1928. In January 1928, he wrote a letter to her immediately after attending a Pictorial exhibition, about the impact of her *Glacial Lily* upon him, the only fine piece among much "rubbish." Weston to Cunningham, January 12, 1928, Imogen Cunningham Archives; Lorenz, *Ideas Without End*, 31.
37 Ibid.
38 Paul Hill and Thomas Cooper, *Dialogue with Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979), 234–35.
39 Matthew S. Witkovsky, *foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918–1945* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2007), 58–59; Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 60, 62, 102–3.
40 Richard Lorenz, *Imogen Cunningham: Frontiers; Photographs, 1906–1976* (Berkeley: Imogen Cunningham Trust, 1978), n.p.

41 Wanda Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 15–23; Theodore E. Stebbins Jr., "Sheeler and Photography," in *The Photography of Charles Sheeler*, ed. Theodore E. Stebbins Jr., Gilles Mora, and Karen E. Haas (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 2002), 9–25.
42 Amy Conger, *Edward Weston: Photographs from the Collection of the Center for Creative Photography* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 1992), 23.
43 "America and Photography," in *Film und Foto: Internationale Ausstellung des Deutschen Werkbunds*, ed. Gustaf Stotz (Stuttgart: Deutschen Werkbunds, 1929), 13–14, reproduced in Peter C. Bunnell, ed., *Edward Weston on Photography* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1983), 55–56.
44 Witkovsky, *foto*, 58–59.
45 Heiting, *Imogen Cunningham*, 22–23.
46 Adams, "Photography," *Fortnightly*, February 12, 1932, 26.
47 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 64.
48 Weston, "Imogen Cunningham, Photographer," 7.

V. Ansel Adams

1 "Robert Green Ingersoll," *Bulletin* (San Francisco), April 20, 1896; Susan Jacoby, *The Great Agnostic: Robert Ingersoll and American Freethought* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).
2 Mary Street Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 8–10; Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Civilization," *The Conduct of Life*, 1860; Robert Waldo Emerson, *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: Modern Library, 1968).
3 Ben Macomber, *The Jewel City* (San Francisco: John H. Williams, 1915), 107.
4 Ken Johnson, "Reliving the Show That 'Dropped like a Bomb,' " *New York Times*, October 11, 1913. The quote is from Oscar Bluemner, an American painter.
5 M. Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography*, 6–8.
6 Records of Adams's music students, Ansel Adams Archive, CCP.
7 M. Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography*, 48; Dorothy Minty interview by Nancy Newhall, June 23, 1947, CCP.
8 Zoe A. Battu, "Albert M. Bender—Art Patron," *California Arts and Architecture*, April 1930, 40–43, 74, 78.
9 Oscar Lewis, *A Day with AMB* (San Francisco: privately published, 1932), n.p., in the collection of Stanford University; Ansel Adams with Mary Street Alinder, *Ansel Adams: An Autobiography* (Little, Brown: Boston, 1985), 81–90.
10 The bromoil process, popular with Pictorialists in the early twentieth century, used ink to render painterly, expressive prints in unnuanced tonalities of black and white at the price of photographic sharpness, detail, and full range of tonal scale.
11 Adams with M. Alinder, *Ansel Adams: An Autobiography*, 73.
12 Bender later gave this print to Alma Lavenson and decades later it came to this author's collection via auction. Reproduced in M. Alinder, *Ansel Adams, A Biography*, rev. ed. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014). I thank Dr. Don Olson for his conclusion that this earlier study of Half Dome must have been made from Glacier Point.
13 M. Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography*.
14 In Spanish, *sierra* is a plural form meaning one mountain range; the added *s* denotes several ranges and as used here is incorrect. Ansel was embarrassed by this mistake and also by his titling the portfolio with the made-up name *Parmelian* rather than *Photographs*.
15 M. Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography*, 57. This ad is reproduced in the biography

16 Ruth Teiser and Catherine Harroun, "Conversations with Ansel Adams," an oral history conducted 1972, 1974, 1975, Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1978, 585.
17 "July Contributors in Brief," *Overland Monthly* 85, no. 7 (July 1927).
18 Judy Dater, "Ansel Adams," in *Imogen Cunningham: A Portrait* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1979), 45.
19 Adams with M. Alinder, *Ansel Adams: An Autobiography*, 275.
20 Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston* ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 2, *California* (New York: Horizon Press, 1966), 116; Although Albert Bender had been her first patron, Dorothea Lange came to see him in an uncharitable light; as she said in an interview, "His art patronage was a kind of a joke . . . He harmed a few people in this respect. He inoculated Ansel with the idea that an artist had to develop his patrons, and Ansel became a 'little brother of the rich,' under Albert's guidance. Ansel became somewhat their entertainer and it wasn't good for him." Suzanne B. Riess, "Dorothea Lange: The Making of a Documentary Photographer," oral history interview conducted 1960–66, Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1968, 113, 115.
21 Patricia Fuller, *Alma Lavenson* (Riverside: California Museum of Photography, 1979), 5.
22 Alma Lavenson, "The Light Beyond" (Zion Canyon), *Photo-Era*, December, 1927, cover, 12.
23 *Camera Craft* 38 (September 1931): title page.
24 Fuller, *Alma Lavenson*, 6.
25 Ibid., 5; Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 265; Susan Ehrens, *Alma Lavenson, Photographs* (Berkeley: Wildwood Arts, 1990), 14–15; Karen Tsujimoto, *Images of America: Precisionist Painting and Modern Photography* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 104.
26 Teiser and Harroun, "Conversations with Ansel Adams," 72–23.
27 M. Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography*, 60–64.
28 "Pictorial Photographer Show," *Washington Post*, January 11, 1931.
29 Teiser and Harroun, "Conversations with Ansel Adams," 303.
30 US Census 1900, 1910, and 1920.
31 "Rollins Elected Director," *Harvard Crimson*, www.thecrimson.com [accessed July 26, 2013]; *Oakland Tribune*, May 12, 1930, and May 18, 1930; "New Legion of Honor Director Due in S.F.," *Oakland Tribune*, September 16, 1930; "A History of the Museums," in *Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco* (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco), 16.
32 "Strangled," unsigned editorial, *Art Digest*, May 1, 1933.
33 Leslie Squyres Calmes, *The Letters Between Edward Weston and Willard Van Dyke* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, 1992), 55n24.
34 "Art Calendar," *Argonaut*, April 14, 1933, 10.
35 See appendix 1 for a full listing of photography exhibitions at the de Young during and following Lloyd Rollins's tenure.
36 Junius Cravens, "The Art World," *Argonaut*, February 5, 1932, 10.
37 Leslie Squyres Calmes, archivist at the Center for Creative Photography, has determined that the *Fortnightly* first appeared on September 11, 1931, and ceased publication on May 6, 1932.
38 Adams, "Photography," *Fortnightly*, December 18, 1931, 21–22.
39 Ibid.
40 Beaumont Newhall, *History of Photography*, 195.

41 Katherine Ware, "Between Dadaism and MoMA-ism," Katherine Ware and Peter Barberie, *Dreaming in Black and White: Photography at the Julien Levy Gallery* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006), 19–24; Eugène Atget, with a preface by Pierre Mac Orland, *Atget, photographe de Paris* (New York: E. Weyhe, 1930).
42 Katherine Ware and Peter Barberie, *Dreaming in Black and White: Photography at the Julien Levy Gallery* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006), n293.
43 Weston, *Daybooks: California*, 201–2.
44 Ansel Adams, "Photography," *Fortnightly*, November 6, 1931, 25.
45 Adams, "Photography," *Fortnightly*, December 4, 1931, 25.
46 Adams with M. Alinder, *Ansel Adams: An Autobiography*, 238.
47 Adams, *Fortnightly*, December 18, 1931.
48 In an earlier draft of this article, Adams selected Weston to join the pantheon of Stieglitz, Strand, Steichen, and Sheeler. By the time of publication, Adams had changed his mind; Atget had ascended, booting Charles Sheeler from the lofty group. Ansel Adams, untitled, undated typewritten article, Adams Archive CCP.
49 Adams, *Fortnightly*, December 18, 1931.
50 Weston to Adams, January 28, 1932, in Mary Street Alinder and Andrea Gray Stillman, eds., *Ansel Adams: Letters and Images, 1916–1984* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1988), 48–50.
51 Ibid., 49.
52 Junius Cravens, "The Art World," *Argonaut*, February 12, 1932, 14.
53 Ansel Adams, statement, likely written for his February 1932 solo exhibition at the de Young, Adams Archive, CCP.
54 Ansel E. Adams, "Photography," May 17, 1932, written for the *Fortnightly* but unpublished, Adams Archive, CCP.
55 Maria Morris Hambourg, "Portrait of the Artist," Maria Morris Hambourg, Jeff L. Rosenheim, Douglas Eklund, Mia Fineman, *Walker Evans* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), 15; Christopher Phillips, "Resurrecting Vision: European Photography Between the World Wars," in *The New Vision: Photography Between the World Wars*, ed. Maria Morris Hambourg and Christopher Phillips (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989).
56 László Moholy-Nagy, "Unprecedented Photography," in *Das Deutsche Lichtbild* (Berlin: Schulz, 1927), x–xi; also published in i10 (Amsterdam) 1, no. 1 (1927): 114–17, reproduced in Christopher Phillips, ed., *Photography in the Modern Era* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989), 83–85.
57 Teiser and Harroun, "Conversations with Ansel Adams," 113.
58 Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 1, *Mexico* (Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, 1961), 190.
59 Adams, "Photography," May 17, 1932, unpublished. Ansel's four published reviews in the *Fortnightly* were Atget, November 6, 1931; preview notice of upcoming Edward Weston exhibit, December 4, 1931; Edward Weston, December 18, 1931; and Imogen Cunningham plus condemnation of the San Diego International Salon, "hardly worthy of notice," February 12, 1932. Remaining unpublished were his critiques intended for the May 17 issue, all damning, of Willard Van Dyke, Moholy-Nagy, European commercial photographs, and a de Young architectural photography show. Adams Archive, CCP.
60 Redfern Mason, "Photographers Are Bent on Revealing Beauty Usually Unnoticed," *San Francisco Examiner*, August 7, 1932.
61 Ansel and Virginia Adams, Eastman Studio Cash Book (July 30, 1931–January 6, 1936), CCP.

62 Ibid., 130.
63 "Organization of the Sierra Club," *Sierra Club Bulletin* 18, no. 1 (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1933): 100.
64 Timetable, Southern Pacific Golden Gate Ferries Ltd., San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

CHAPTER 2. THE PARTY

1 Willard Van Dyke, "Autobiography," unpublished manuscript, 49, 50. Van Dyke Archive, Center for Creative Photography, WVDA, CCP.
2 James L. Enyeart, *Willard Van Dyke* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 27.
3 Martin W. Sandler, *Against the Odds, Women Pioneers in the First Hundred Years of Photography* (New York: Rizzoli, 2002), 51–53.
4 Van Dyke, "683 Brockhurst," in "Autobiography" manuscript, 1–2; Michael G. Wilson, "Northern California: The Heart of the Storm," Michael G. Wilson and Dennis Reed, *Pictorialism in California, Photographs 1900–1940* (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum and San Marino: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1994), 15–19.
5 Van Dyke, "683 Brockhurst"; Imogen Cunningham, interview by Louise Katzman, June 9, 1975, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 5. Today 683 Brockhurst in Oakland is the address of a small, simple, stucco house surrounded by apartments.
6 Charles Wollenberg, "Berkeley: A City in History," Berkeley Public Library, www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org (accessed September 9, 2013); "City of Oakland History," www.oaklandwiki.org/City_of_Oakland_History (accessed September 9, 2013).
7 "Sun, Moon and Tide," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 15, 1932. It was one day past the full moon.
8 Ansel Adams, Willard Van Dyke, and Beaumont Newhall, interview by the author on "Group *f*.64," Adams' home, Carmel Highlands, June 21, 1983; Edward Weston, *Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall, vol. 2, *California* (New York: Horizon Press, Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, 1966), *California*, 264; Weston to Van Dyke, October 10, 1932, in *The Letters Between Edward Weston and Willard Van Dyke*, ed. Leslie Squyres Calmes (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 1992), 7–8; Weston to Adams, postmarked October 19, 1932.
9 Weston to Van Dyke, October 10, 1932, in Calmes, *Letters*, 7–8.
10 There were few books about creative photography or monographs in 1932. Three important monographs published shortly before Weston's were: Albert Renger-Patzsch, *Die Welt ist schön: Einhundert photographischen Aufnahmen* (The World Is Beautiful; Munich: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1928); Eugène Atget, *Eugène Atget: Photographe de Paris* (New York: E. Weyhe, 1930); and Heinrich Schwarz, *David Octavius Hill: Der Meister der Photographie*, in English as *David Octavius Hill: Master of Photography*, trans. Helen E. Fraenkel (New York: Viking Press, 1931). Ansel Adams's *Taos Pueblo*, published in 1930, qualifies as a monograph, but the images were purpose-made for the book to describe one subject, not an overview of his photographs. It also was an individual work of art in its own right. With only 108 total copies, costing $75 each, it was expensive and rare from the start.
11 *California Trees* had a full-month run, September 21–October 21, 1932.
12 "Photographic Competition of California Trees," California Trees file, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum Archives. The California Conservation Committee of the Garden Club of America and the Save-the-Redwoods League sponsored the *California Trees* contest. Edward's winning print was *Joshua Tree—Mojave Desert*. Amy