

a (trans/sub).continental survey
of *american developmental architecture*

phase ii of *rsa* ,
1/3 of 1/9 of
transtension

i . Providence , RI.....[27.5.25]
ii . New Haven , CT.....[28.5.25]
iii . Washington , DC.....[31.5.25]
iv . Baltimore , MD.....[1.6.25]
v . Richmond , VA.....[2.6.25]
vi . Durham , NC.....[3.6.25]
vii . Miami , FL.....[6.6.25]
viii . Charleston , SC.....[8.6.25]
ix . Atlanta , GA.....[9.6.25]
x . Huntsville , AL.....[9.6.25]
xi . Nashville , TN.....[10.6.25]
xii . St. Louis , MO.....[11.6.25]
xiii . Madison , WI.....[12.6.25]
xiv . Chicago , IL.....[12.6.25]
xv . Columbus , IN.....[13.6.25]
xvi . Louisville , KY.....[13.6.25]
xvii . Columbus , OH.....[14.6.25]
xviii . Pittsburgh , PA.....[15.6.25]
xix . Harper's Ferry , WV.....[29.8.25]
xx . Wilmington , DE.....[30.8.25]
xxi . Princeton , NJ.....[30.8.25]
xxii . NY , NY.....[30.8.25]
xxiii . Portland , ME.....[31.8.25]
xxiv . Concord , NH.....[31.8.25]
xxv . Brattleboro , VT.....[31.8.25]
xxvi . Cambridge , MA.....[26.9.25]



when i think about this survey, more than anything i think about the inevitable inadequacy of it all. i initially sought to complete an entire ‘trans.continental’ survey of ‘american developmental architecture’ and the ‘american built environment’, with the plan being to more or less circumnavigate the entire country, without necessarily passing through the middle. of course, i didn’t plan it very stringently, and i didn’t win any grants or awards to fund the trip, so it ended up being a ‘sub.continental survey’ where i only ended up completing half of my initially set task. it’s funny to me that i really don’t know if i’ll ever get over it, so much so to the point that i’ve promised myself i will do a part two of this trip hitting the other 24 of the lower 48. there’s something ungrateful in that that i don’t appreciate about myself, and yet at the same time there is a certain tenacity, intensity, and commitment that i do appreciate in that.

the fact of the matter is, i set out on this trip with a mix of intentions, both positive and negative, but the survey was surely full of negative pretenses and ambitions. i literally just wanted to prove that this country and its architecture, and really its built environment at large, has been eviscerated of all sincerity. which is to say, it all looks the same, as if whoever designed what really couldn’t care less

about what they were doing. in this way, i think it was out of fear that i started out with such negative, dare i say malicious, intensions, because i knew deep down there was a good chance that i) these people were trying there best with the conditions they were operating under and ii) i was probably destined to fall victim to the same fate in less than a year’s time when i set out into the real world to work in architecture ‘professionally’.

what follows is a series of images organized into nine categories, with the nine categories being conceived halfway through the summer, and thus the images being captured partially without pretense and partially with. the whole idea of this photo book is entirely indebted to anne spirn’s landscape photography class i took my second year at MIT, and the infra. red photography came more or less from a whim because it makes photography feel more like a game than a task.

the captions for each image are loosely related to each image/category but are all entirely free.flown thoughts, with minimal editing save for typos. loosely, each category and group of photos can be said to be accompanied by a 20 (33 for thinking) line poem of prosaic thought. i find rhyming to be fun because i enjoy contrivances and clichés and also because it comes very naturally to me to think with a certain rhythm, cadence, and schema.

images

transtension

publicSpace

category i of *survey*,
1/9 of
transtension



who perceives who , across a center in space ?
17:24 , 27.5.25 | Providence , RI



something about centers makes them hard to occupy . more often than not it's the periphery where we lie
11:39 , 9.6.25 | Atlanta , GA



oblique axes with no real points of reference
11:16 , 28.5.25 | New Haven , CT



centered on one but off on an.other
11:39 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD



but some.times center has nothing to do with geometry , only geography
08:04 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



and other.times center is simply shrouded
07:17 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



and other.times still center is so over.whelming and all.encompassing space becomes voided
11:31 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



but every once in a while center simply watches over us , simultaneously right there next to us
11:22 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



with a fine line (read : liminality) residing between a spatial void and a figural space
16:14 , 30.8.25 | Princeton , NJ



liminalities exist as those which reside in.between , offering us glimpses of that which can't be seen
16:03 , 29.8.25 | Harper's Ferry , WV



liminalities allow for passage through centers
18:04 , 12.6.25 | Chicago , IL



but they also allow for us to de.center
13:20 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD



liminalities allow for de.lineation
07:52 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



and further still for sub.limation
14:06 , 15.6.25 | Pittsburgh , PA



de.lineation can create centers
07:59 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



but it can also obscure them
19:14 , 8.6.25 | Charleston , SC



but what if there is no real center ?
14:09 , 6.6.25 | Miami , FL



only form and space and the relation between which may mend
18:05 , 12.6.25 | Chicago , IL

vacantSpace

category ii of *survey*,
1/9 of
transtension



what is it that we lack ?
10:04 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



what is it that creates this gap ?
14:04 , 15.6.25 | Pittsburgh , PA



that simultaneously compresses and contracts
12:53 , 2.6.25 | Richmond , VA



setting limits which allow us to expand as we act
17:07 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



watching over us from within us
16:56 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



as we roam around the world that is our little lot
08:10 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



which we create and destroy , over and over again
17:30 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



searching and searching for that which may rend
12:10 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



as we tend to the wounds we inflict upon ourselves
12:43 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



closing ourselves off and locking others out
12:29 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



so as to find a way in
18:07 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



hoping that one day , what is , may end
15:41 , 6.6.25 | Miami , FL



but as all who have hoped well know
12:36 , 22.9.25 | Cambridge , MA



there are no ends , just beginnings and beginning again
12:43 , 22.9.25 | Cambridge , MA



pauses , perhaps
18:52 , 31.8.25 | Brattleboro , VT



restless sleeps and tireless naps
13:20 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD



where.in , when one awakes
12:52 , 11.6.25 | St. Louis , MO



there is this aching , gnawing feeling
10:04 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



because in the end , all there is
19:20 , 8.6.25 | Charleston , SC



is that ever.persisting and omni.present lack
14:18 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD

officeSpace

category iii of *survey*,
1/9 of
transtension



why is it so , that we must do , rather than be ?
16:15 , 30.8.25 | Princeton , NJ



storing ourselves in these boxes we call bodies
14:01 , 31.8.25 | Portland , ME



base , middle , top , separated from side to side
12:05 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



rarely integrating with that which we truly need
12:08 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



rather hiding behind it so as to shield ourselves
18:13 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



or standing above it as if it weren't there
17:08 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



rarely reaching out , acting as though we (do not) care
12:41 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



focusing on the self , as if it weren't thinner than air
13:04 , 22.9.25 | Cambridge , MA



constructing these ideas
12:33 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



evaluating value
07:45 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



talking about meaning
12:03 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



all the while ignoring that which is true
14:04 , 15.6.25 | Pittsburgh , PA



throwing little stones
12:00 , 13.6.25 | Columbus , IN



from our glass houses faded blue
12:23 , 15.6.25 | Columbus , IN



hoping the wind doesn't blow
12:47 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



and expose us to something true
12:10 , 22.9.25 | Cambridge , MA



so we stand tall and on guard
17:27 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



postured straight and stoic
17:28 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



looming over ourselves as our guard develops holes
13:25 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD



lest we fall into the abyss
12:44 , 11.6.25 | St. Louis , MO

institutions

category iv of *survey*,
1/9 of
transtension



what is it that lurks in the shadows ?
12:33 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



hiding behind itself in plain sight
12:43 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



posturing itself as if above it all
19:09 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



all the while waiting to bury us deeper when we fall
12:29 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



and exceptions tend to be re.collections
11:18 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



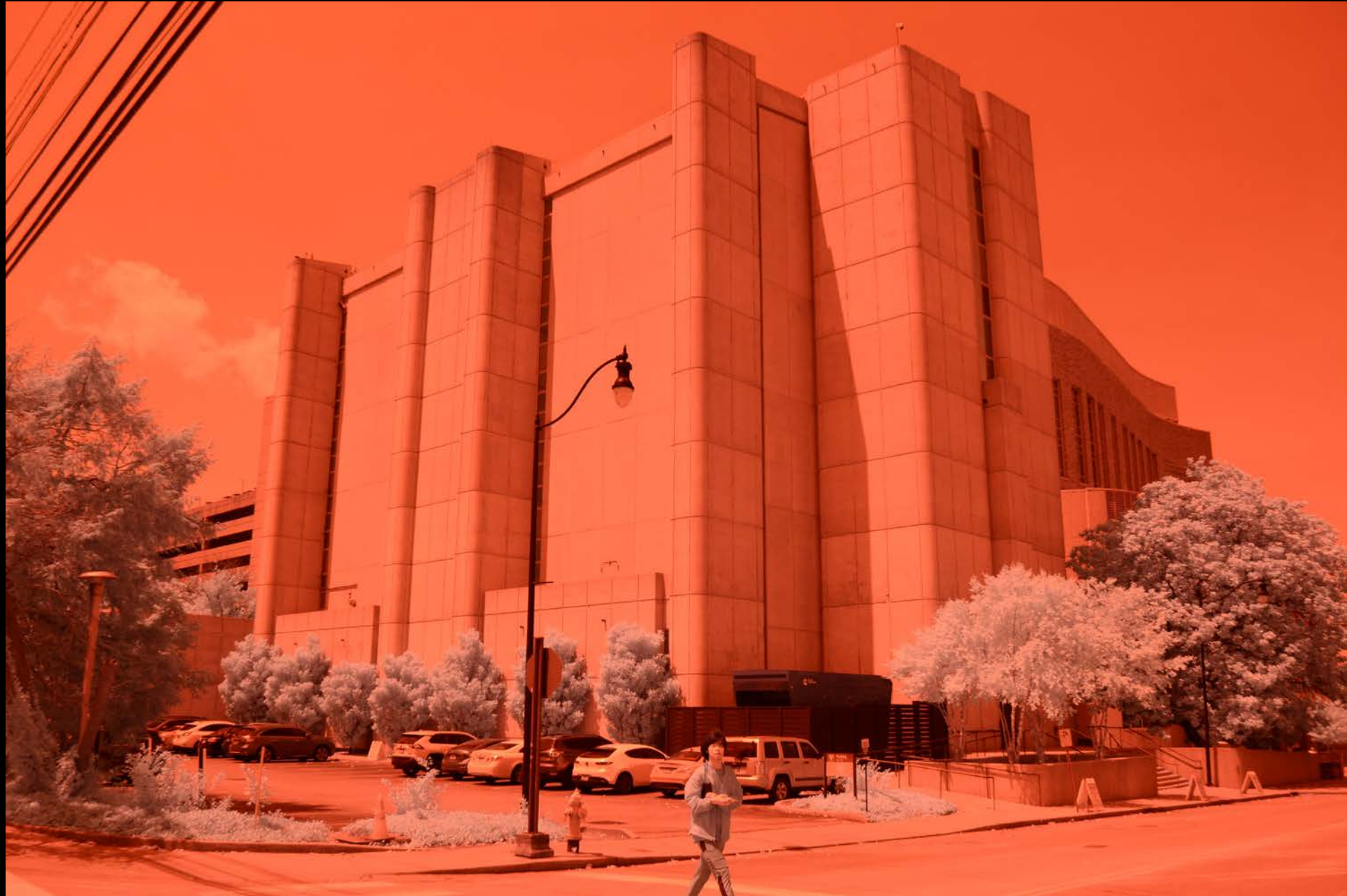
re.corded and re.presented by those that re.member them
16:58 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



bastardized and misappropriated by the powers at be
11:59 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



something about necessary evils and what is shown v. what we see
17:24 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



this is a school

this is a prison



to choose or to be
12:27 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN

stuck in this cage so we can fly free
07:38 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



cause constraints create control
17:12 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



and these worldly limits shall only be transgressed by soul
18:03 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



searching for that which may make us whole
09:41 , 28.5.25 | New Haven , CT



all the while digging our little holes
16:47 , 27.5.25 | Providence , RI



until someone lets a little light in
07:24 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



til the sky cracks open and floods us full
17:46 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



drowning in ourselves and reverting to previous states
13:13 , 2.6.25 | Richmond , VA



at a certain point you realize , there is no.where safe
12:24 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



as that place resides with.in you
12:24 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



not some.where to go , but some.place to cultivate
11:01 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH

intersections

category v of *survey*,
1/9 of
transtension



what is it that passes through ?
18:57 , 8.6.25 | Charleston , SC



us through it and it through us
11:53 , 13.6.25 | Columbus , IN



bound by time , ground and sky
12:51 , 31.5.25 | Washington , DC



watched over by those , who would rather pass us by
12:30 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



as we pass 'the other' , by and by and bye
15:57 , 30.8.25 | Princeton , NJ



willfully stuck in our own little worlds
17:48 , 12.6.25 | Chicago , IL



blissfully (un).aware
15:57 , 27.5.25 | Providence , RI



of what which we do not care
12:38 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



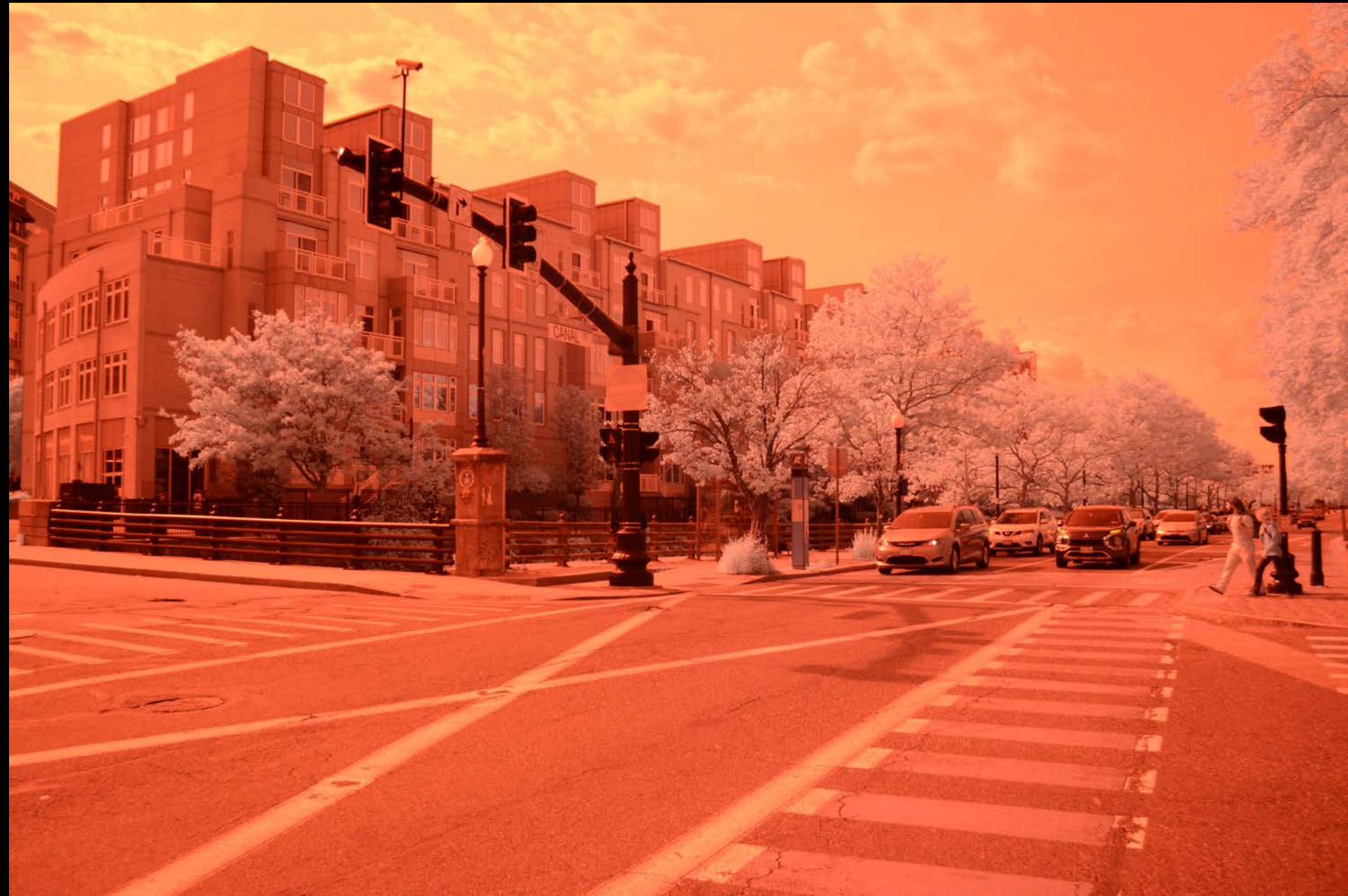
for if we were to treat others as ourselves
14:02 , 6.6.25 | Miami , FL



there would be no such thing as fair
12:49 , 22.9.25 | Cambridge , MA



simply pluralities of worlds
11:12 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



full of shame and despair
16:31 , 27.5.25 | Providence , RI



looping and cycling and circling
13:51 , 31.8.25 | Concord , NH



through memories and re.membering
12:23 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



that that which has passed
12:03 , 13.6.25 | Columbus , IN



is both more and less than just the past
13:26 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD



fading into the present
10:02 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



falling failing flailing floating through
12:45 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



cause in the end one realizes
12:48 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



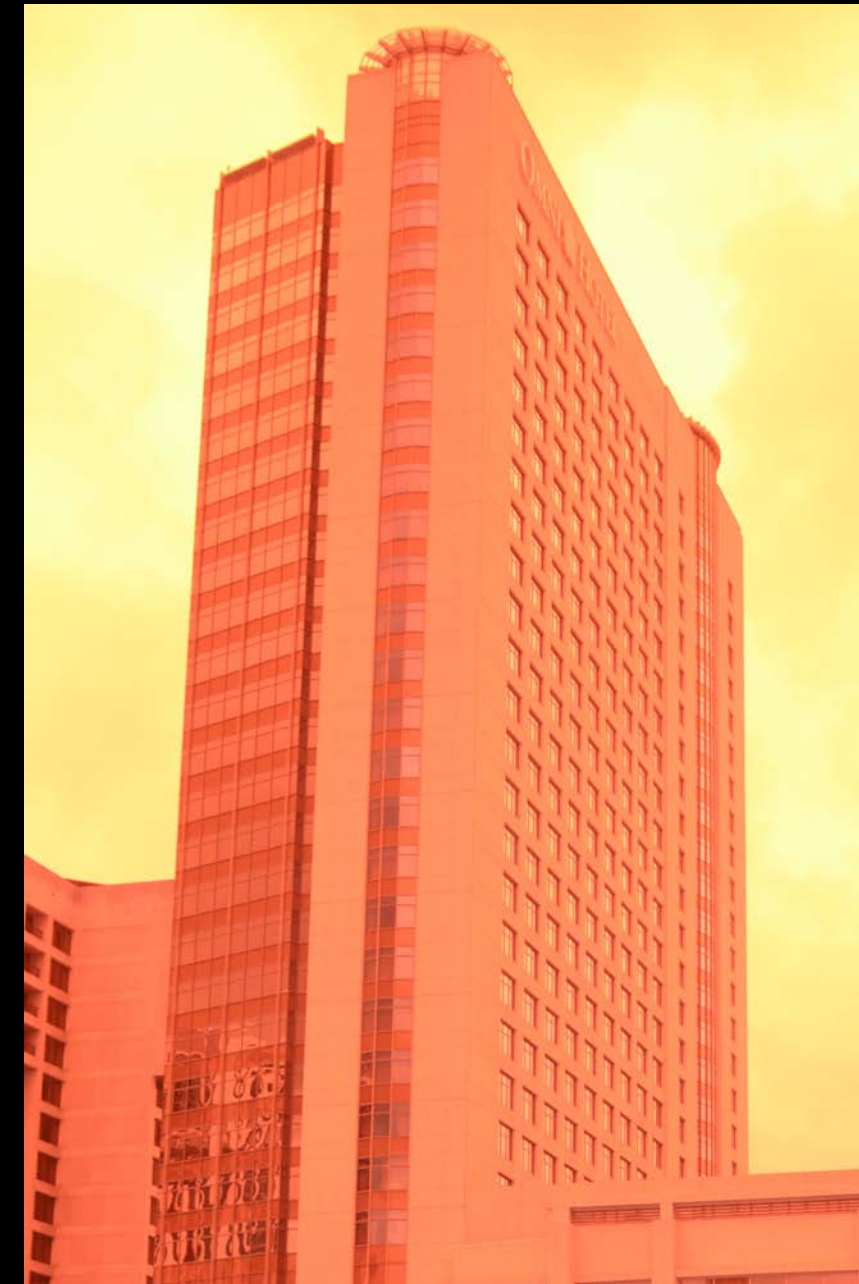
that that which they remembered , is what they already knew
12:51 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI

towers

category vi of *survey*,
1/9 of
transtension



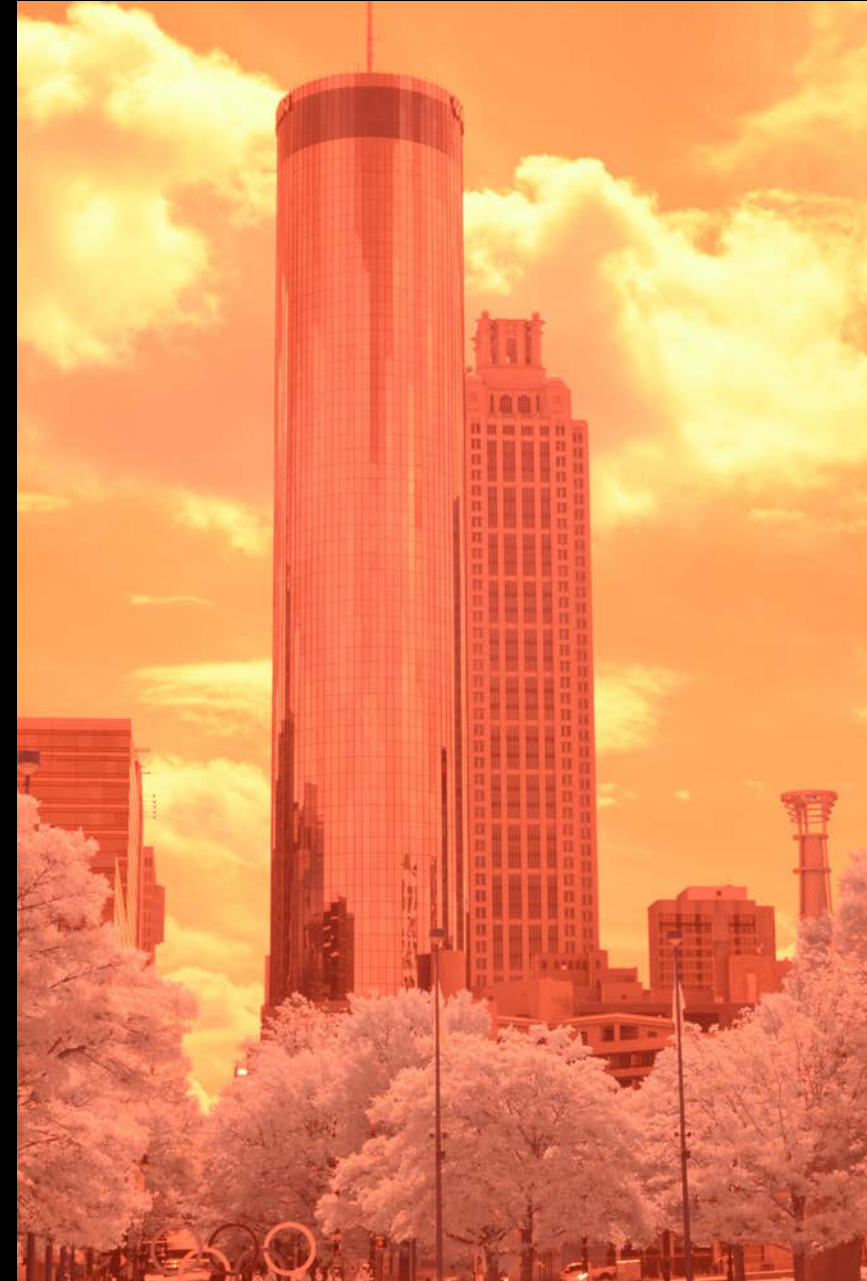
what does it mean to walk ? to keep moving on ?
16:36 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



besides to fall forward and catch your.self with every step
12:51 , 12.6.25 | Atlanta , GA



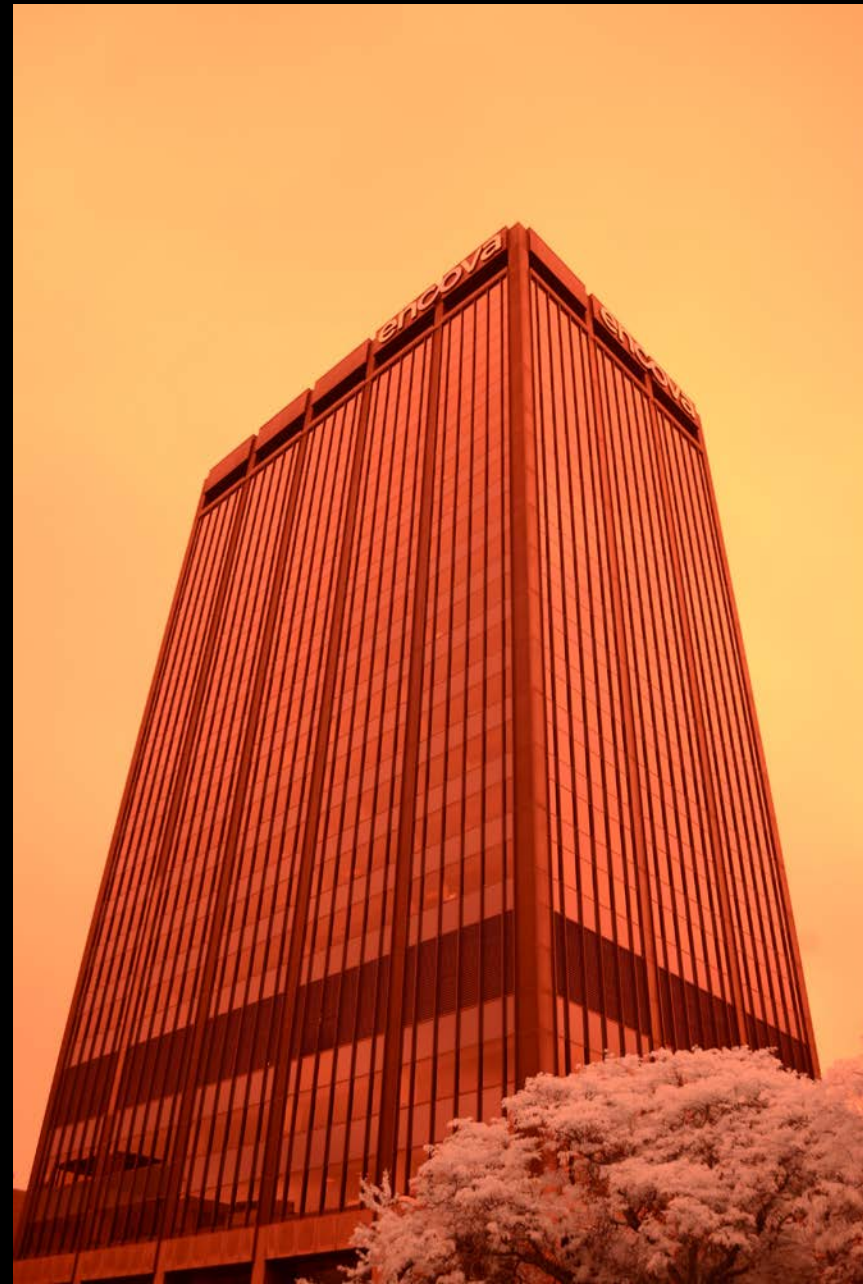
they say this life is a balancing act
17:58 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



in which one wrong stride , can leave you tumbling down the other side
10:38 , 9.6.25 | Atlanta , GA



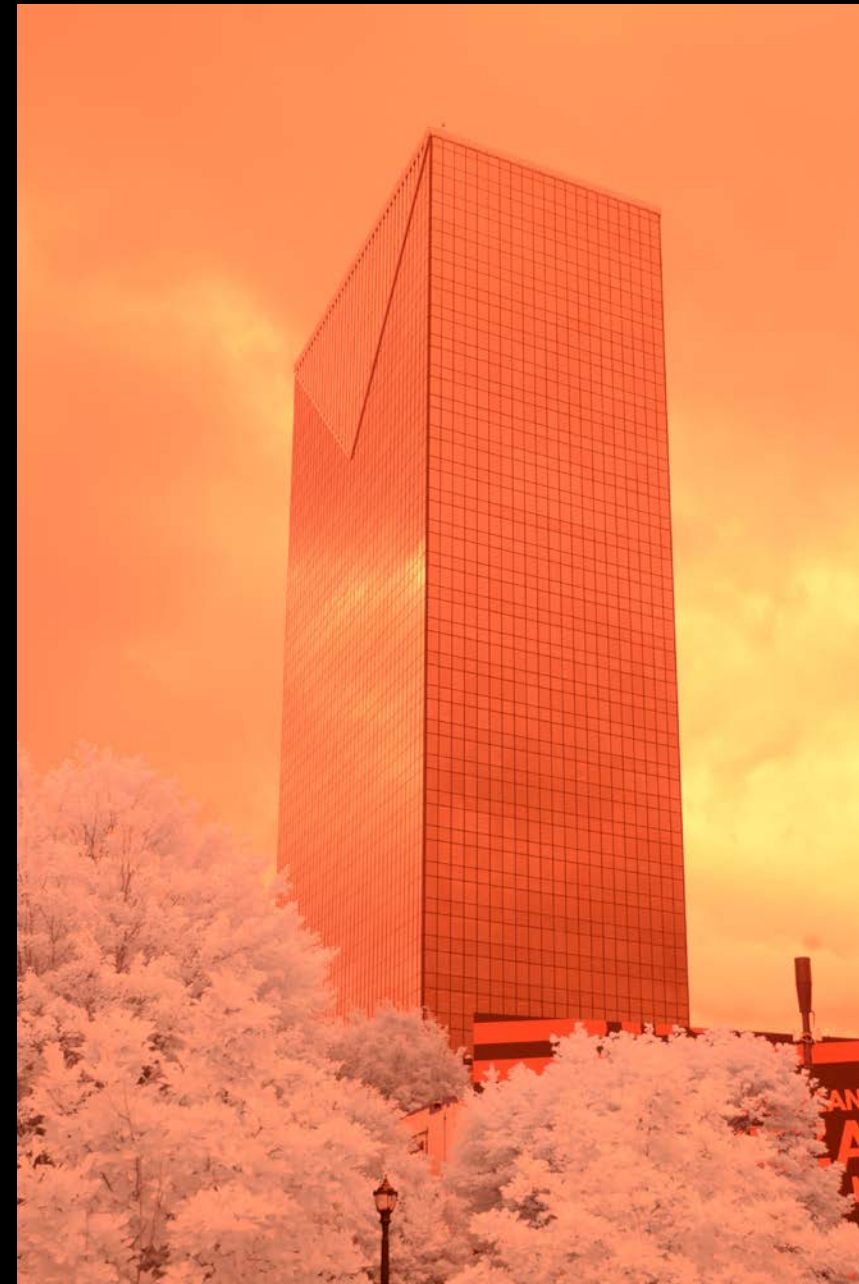
so go a.head
17:57 , 12.6.25 | Chicago , IL



but stay on your toes
12:26 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



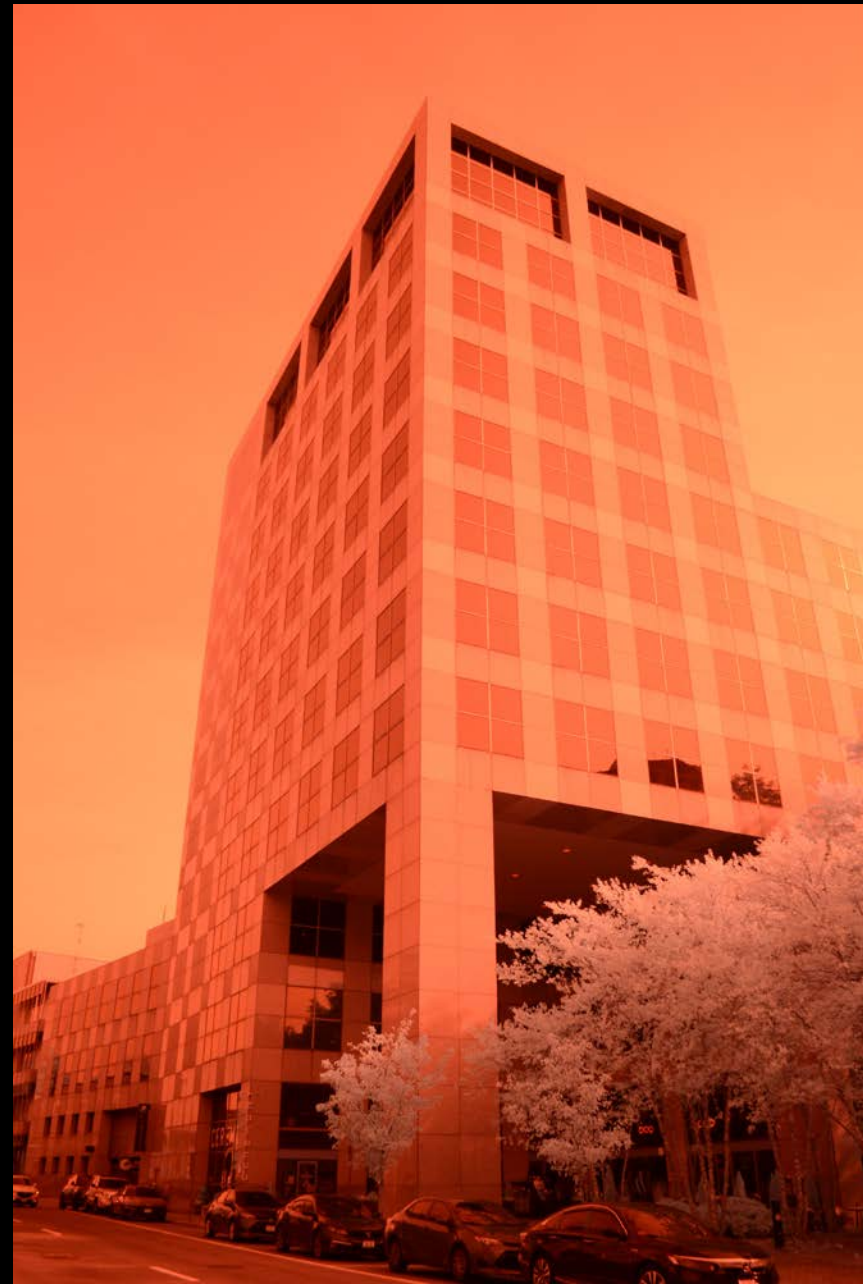
cause as i'm sure you already know
11:44 , 13.6.25 | Columbus , IN



there's no such thing as friend or foe
12:05 , 9.6.25 | Atlanta , GA



no 'right' or 'wrong'
14:27 , 15.6.25 | Pittsburgh , PA



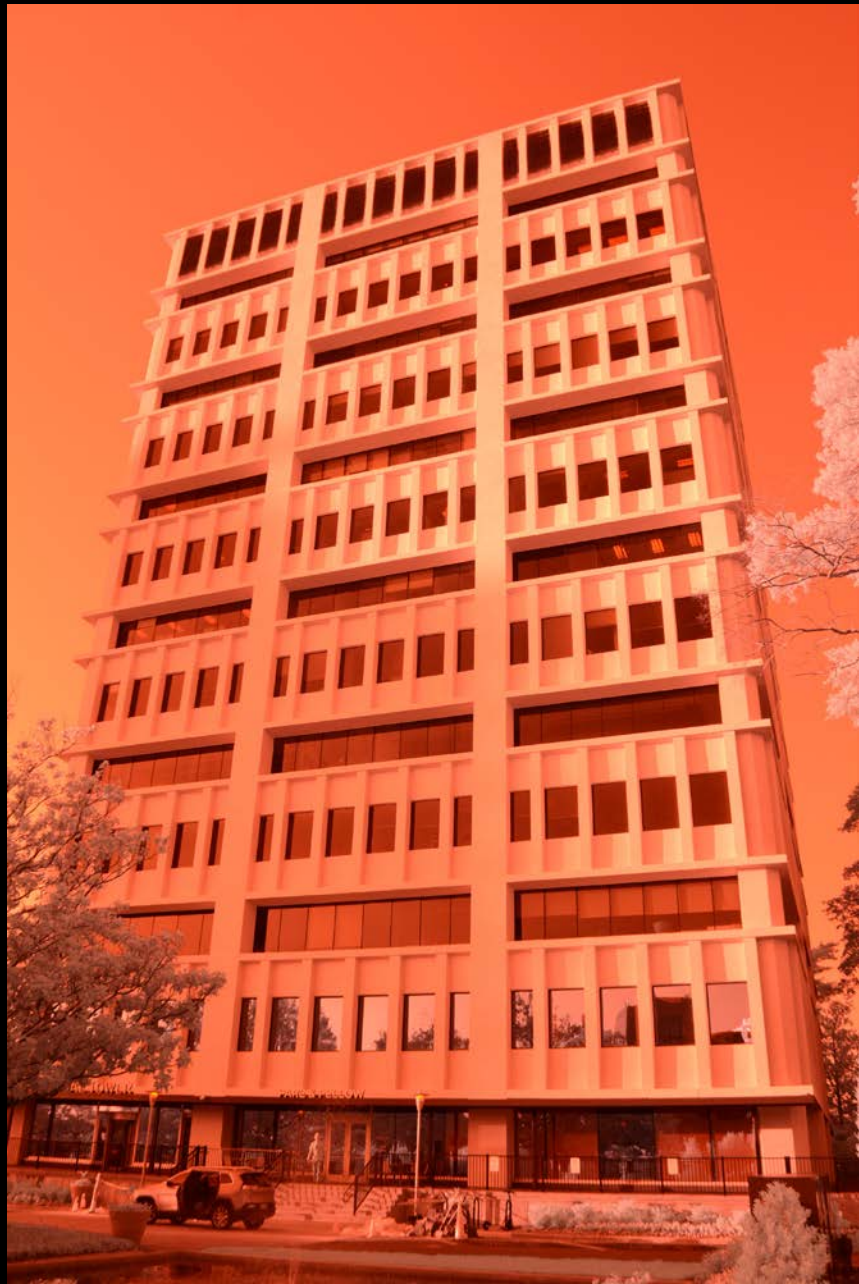
neither black nor white
17:23 , 27.5.25 | Providence , RI



simply reflections of our.selves
12:22 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



as situated and dis.placed in 'the other'
14:21 , 11.6.25 | St. Louis , MO



as we fade in.to the self of 'the other'
06:50 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



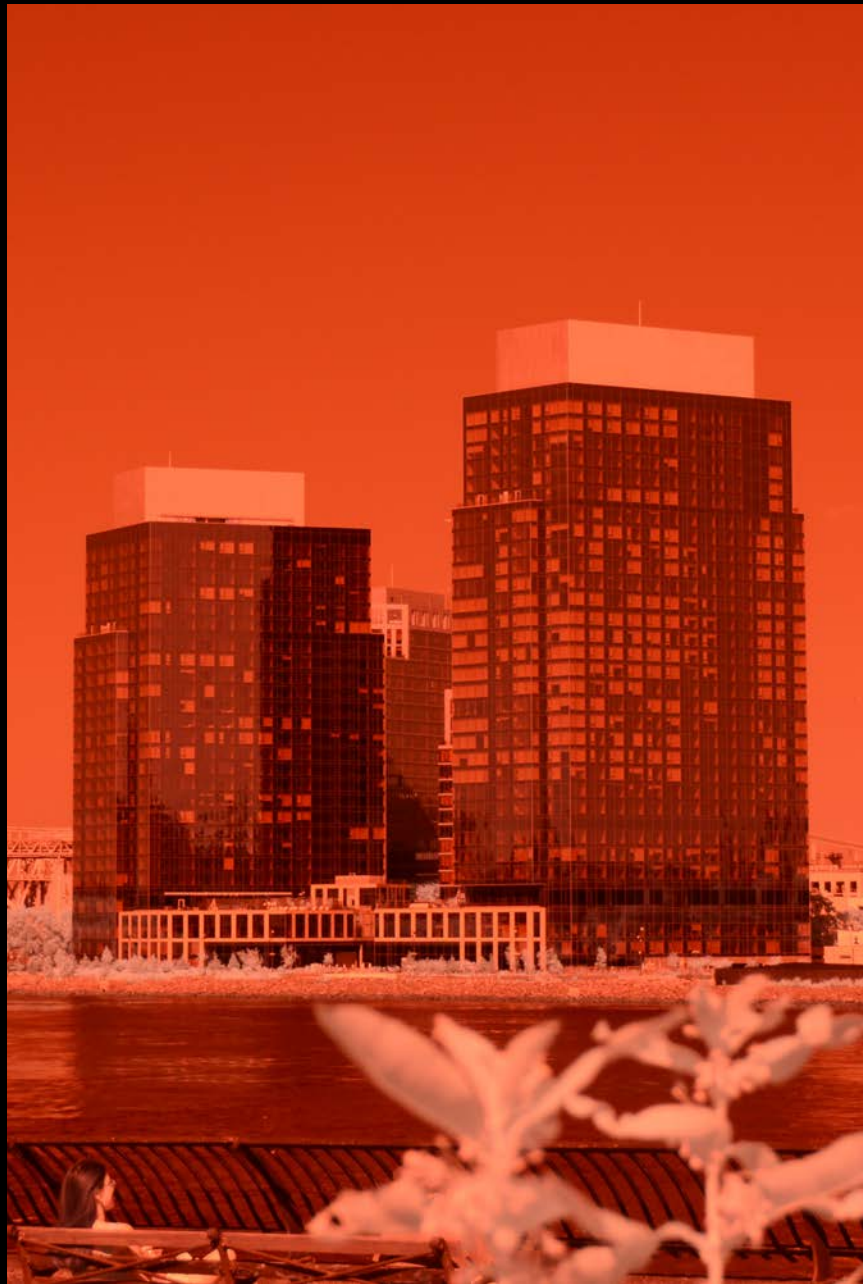
please know , there is
15:10 , 2.6.25 | Richmond , VA



no way out
15:26 , 6.6.25 | Miami , FL



no avenues or exits
12:22 , 11.6.25 | St. Louis , MO



to solitude or an escape
16:52 , 28.6.25 | New York , NY



for the only way out
12:54 , 30.8.25 | Wilmington , DE



is through
13:05 , 22.9.25 | Cambridge , MA



to a state of pure repose
18:13 , 30.8.25 | New York , NY

parking

category vii of *survey*,
1/9 of
transtension



what is it , in which it resides ?
15:37 , 6.6.25 | Miami , FL

which words stick out to you ?

is this growth or decay ?



that that thing which simultaneously lives falters and dies
12:19 , 22.9.25 | Cambridge , MA



is either sheltered or trapped
10:40 , 28.5.25 | New Haven , CT



in an infernal web with no ties
18:27 , 6.9.25 | Huntsville , AL



a.loft and a.light yet restrained none.the.less
18:31 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



bounding itself ever.more tight as it wriggles and writhes
11:43 , 28.5.25 | New Haven , CT



until eventually it lay there motionless , limp and lost
17:25 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



forgotten of its own ability it ever could fly
14:42 , 6.6.25 | Miami , FL



and then one day , as it open its eyes
16:39 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



it caught the flight of 'the other' passing by
16:41 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



‘the other’ , sensing this perception , that gaze
12:34 , 11.6.25 | St. Louis , MO



looped around and encircled it
11:14 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



lifting it up
12:23 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



up.on the strength of its own wings
11:06 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



with the force of a gale
12:31 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



til it remembered that which had remained un.seen
12:40 , 11.6.25 | St. Louis , MO



and with this new.found sight
07:35 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



it realized the web was only spun of a simple lie
17:08 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



which is only to say
12:40 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



all that is , is not simply passing you by
12:42 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI

dwelling

category viii of *survey*,
1/9 of
transtension



what is it that we're looking for , facing towards ?
13:00 , 2.6.25 | Richmond , VA



or are we only facing away from that which we'd rather not see
12:42 , 27.5.25 | Providence , RI



that thing that connects us all
13:07 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD



just as bodies in a morgue
13:15 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD



that which has eviscerated us
10:57 , 3.6.25 | between Durham and Miami



filing the undead straight in.to the horde
17:36 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



mind.lessly trudging along
06:47 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



only mind.ful of that for which we long
12:00 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



hoping 'the other's don't notice
17:55 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



that we're only play.ing along
12:00 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



hoping searching waiting
12:23 , 15.6.25 | Columbus , OH



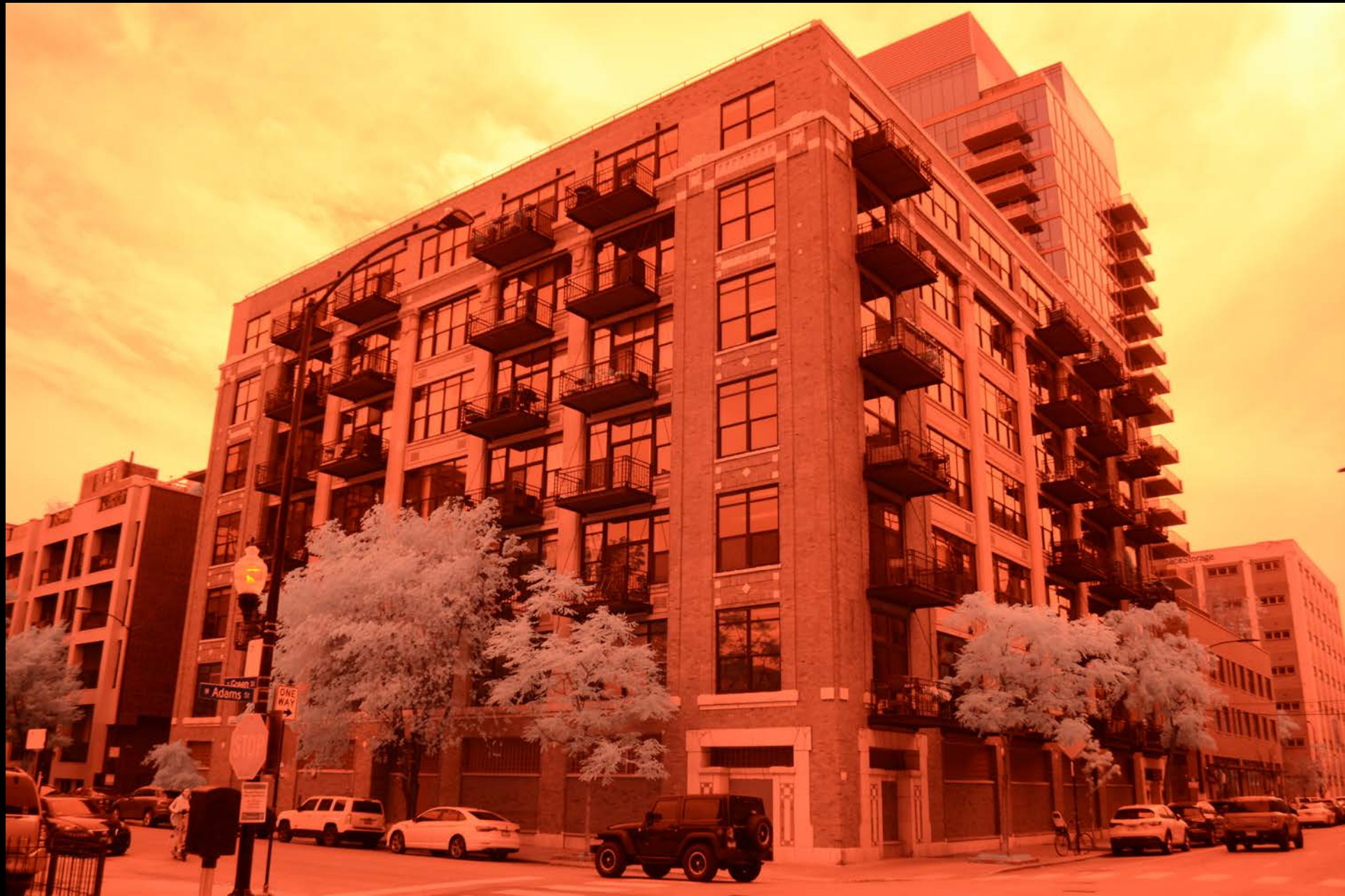
for some.thing to give or to go
12:14 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



longing for one to teach us
12:06 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



that which we already know
12:37 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



but praying just the same
17:44 , 12.6.25 | Madison , WI



that some.how some.thing has changed
14:29 , 28.6.25 | New Haven , CT



all.the.while fully aware
17:29 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



all is illusory , no.thing is new
12:34 , 31.8.25 | Portland , ME



so what,ever are we to do ?
13:48 , 6.6.25 | Miami , FL



but sink in until (we/it) slip(s) through
19:20 , 30.8.25 | New York , NY

thinking

category ix of *survey*,
1/9 of
transtension



what is it at the center of one's attention ?
11:58 , 13.6.25 | Columbus , IN



constantly shifting and churning and turning away
08:03 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



one point here , another there , another their
07:29 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



resting alone together
16:50 , 13.6.25 | Louisville , KY



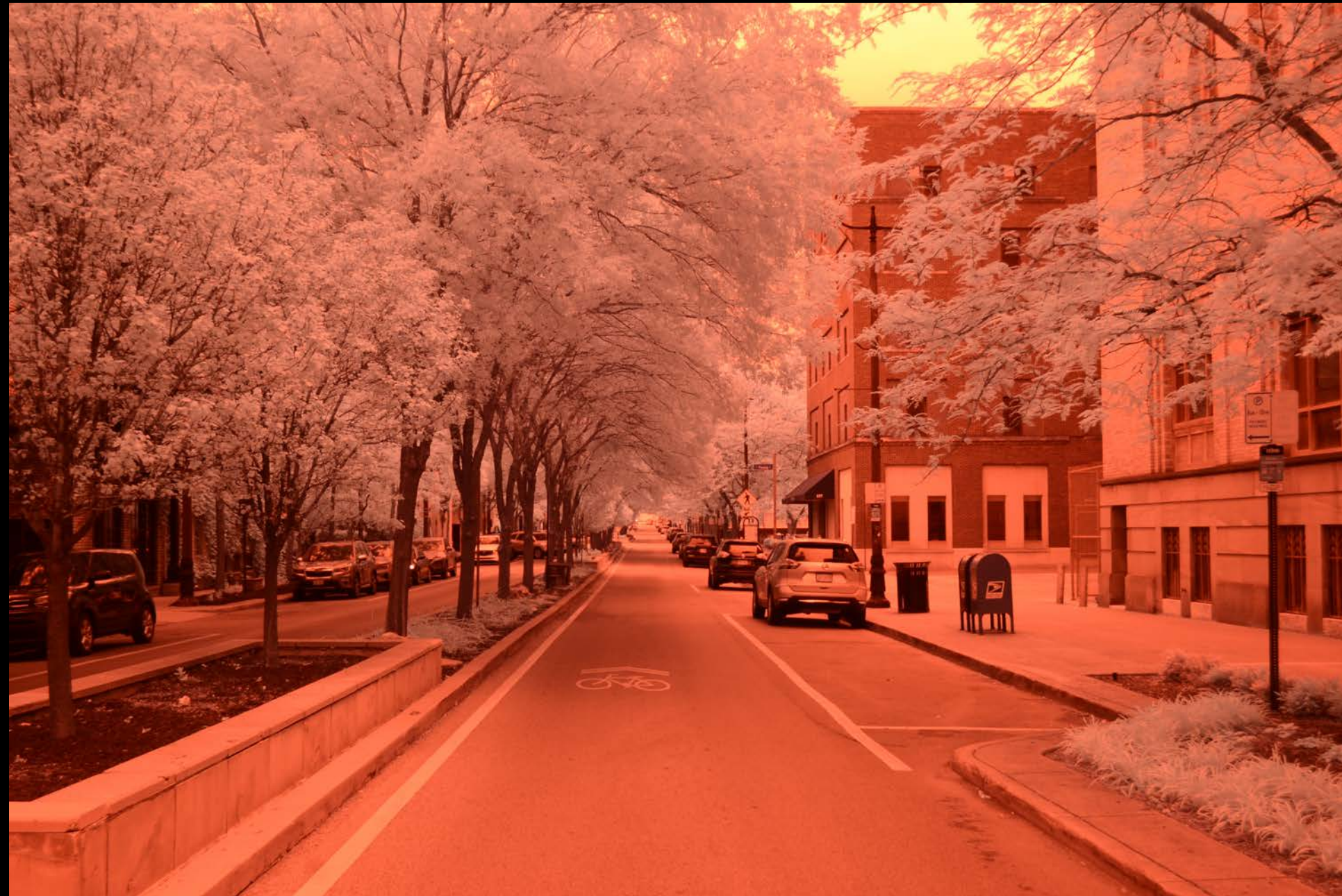
at points inter.twined
09:37 , 28.5.25 | New Haven , CT



at other.times , drawing a line
11:41 , 28.5.25 | New Haven , CT



as a line can delineate
12:38 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



and it can also connect
12:38 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



lines separate and synthesize
11:45 , 13.6.25 | Columbus , IN



simultaneously leading us across and through
18:42 , 31.8.25 | Brattleboro , VT



pointing us to
14:35 , 6.6.25 | Miami , FL



the point
11:50 , 14.6.25 | Columbus , OH



all.the.while being made up of
16:55 , 27.5.25 | Providence , RI



infinite amounts of other points
18:15 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



there are , after all , infinities of infinities
16:01 , 29.8.25 | Harper's Ferry , WV



as well as just , infinity
14:42 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD



which , with the right vantage point
07:54 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



one can catch a glimpse and see
07:28 , 3.6.25 | Durham , NC



that (mending/bridging) the gap
12:26 , 15.6.25 | Pittsburgh , PA



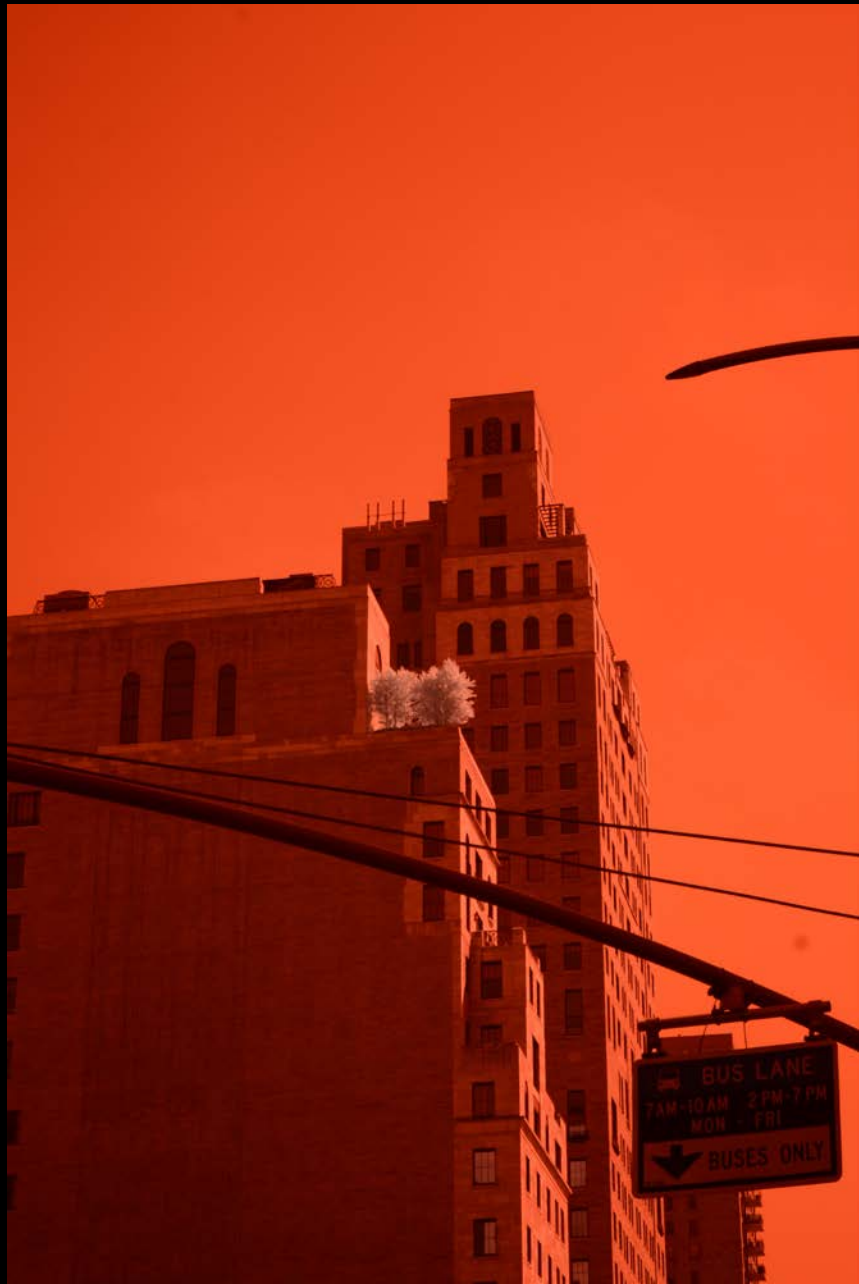
isn't all that it's said to be
19:01 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



the gap is this ephemeral thing
10:42 , 28.5.25 | New Haven , CT



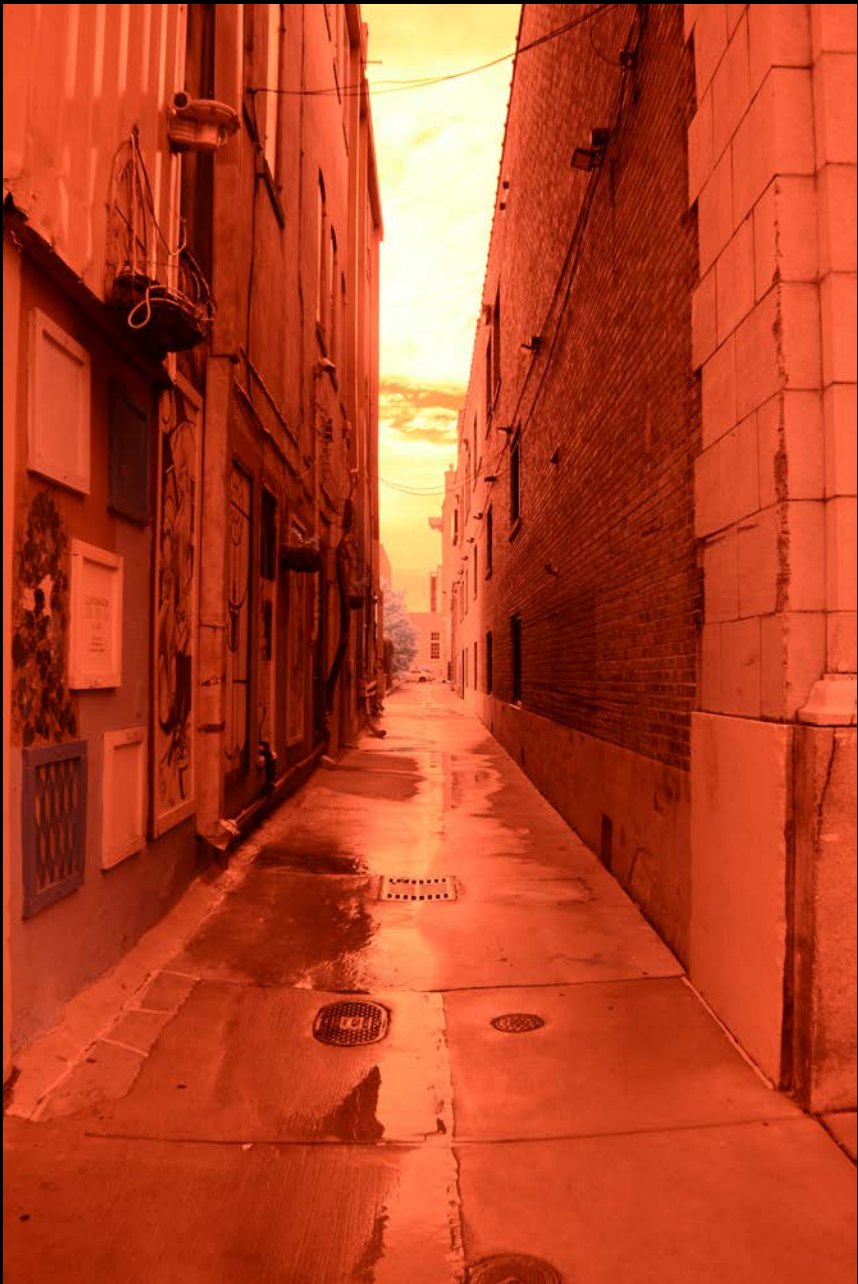
that allows us to see thru
19:01 , 31.8.25 | Brattleboro , VT



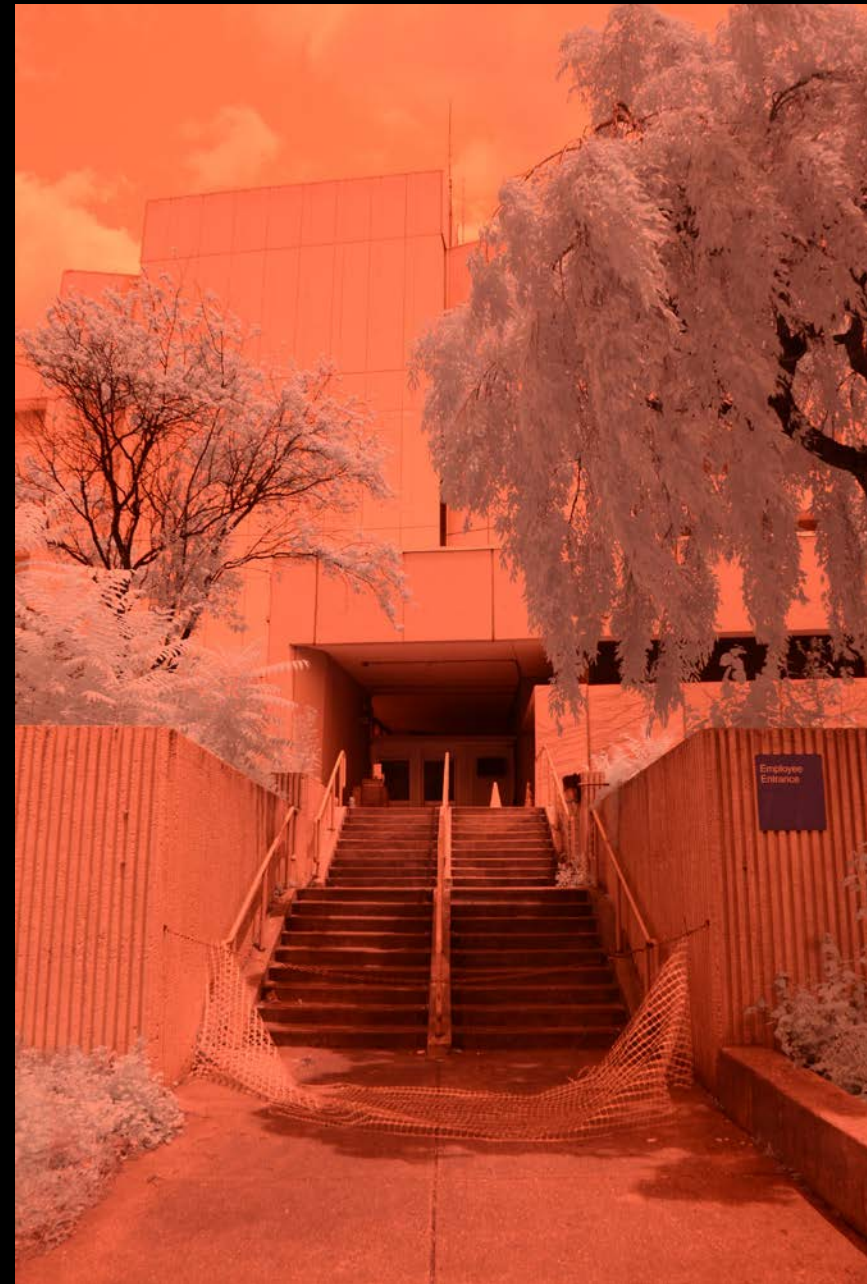
shifting our attention
15:52 , 28.6.25 | New York , NY



to and fro , what we thought we knew
19:16 , 8.6.25 | Charleston , SC



at times placing blinders
18:29 , 9.6.25 | Huntsville , AL



so as to re.focus our view
13:22 , 1.6.25 | Baltimore , MD



at times dis.appearing
19:12 , 31.8.25 | Brattleboro , VT



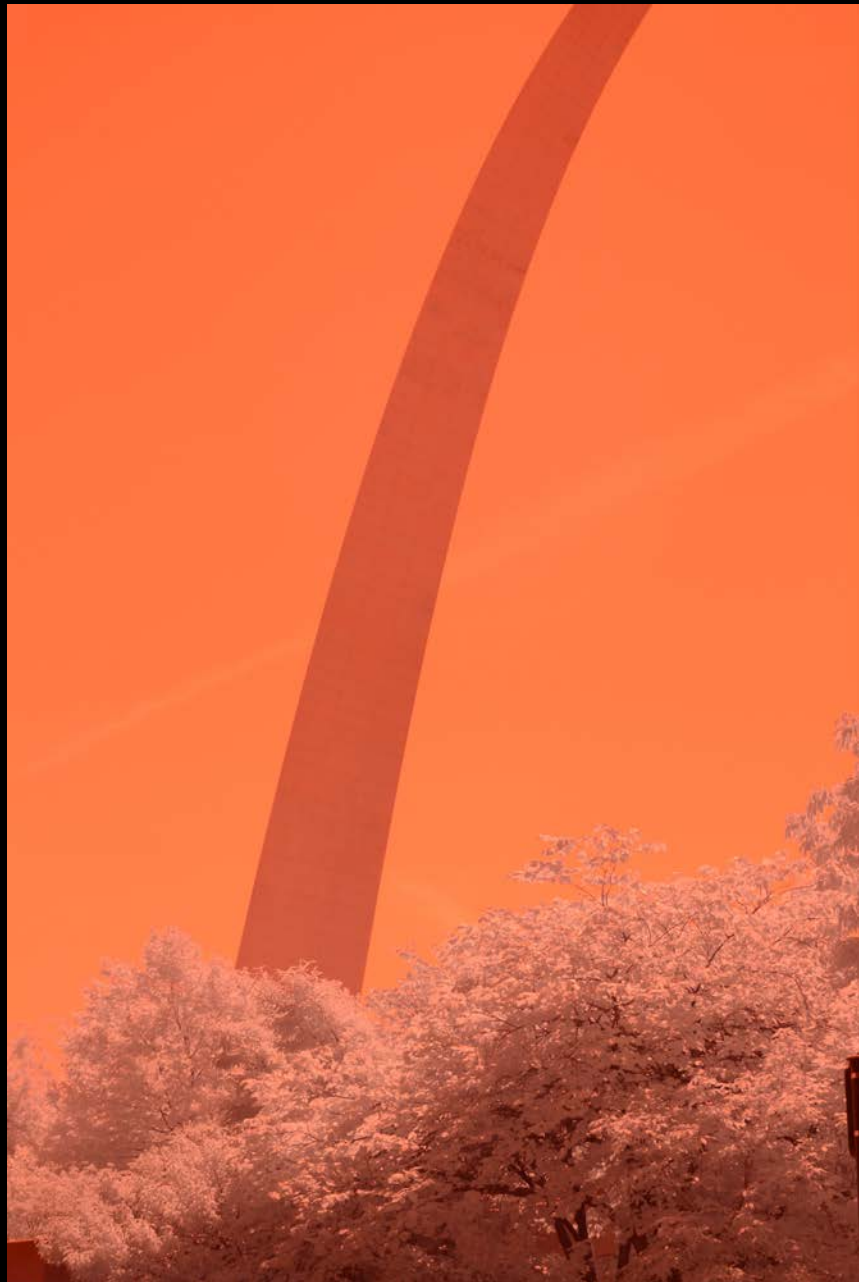
so as to allow us to be , instead of do
17:56 , 28.6.25 | New York , NY



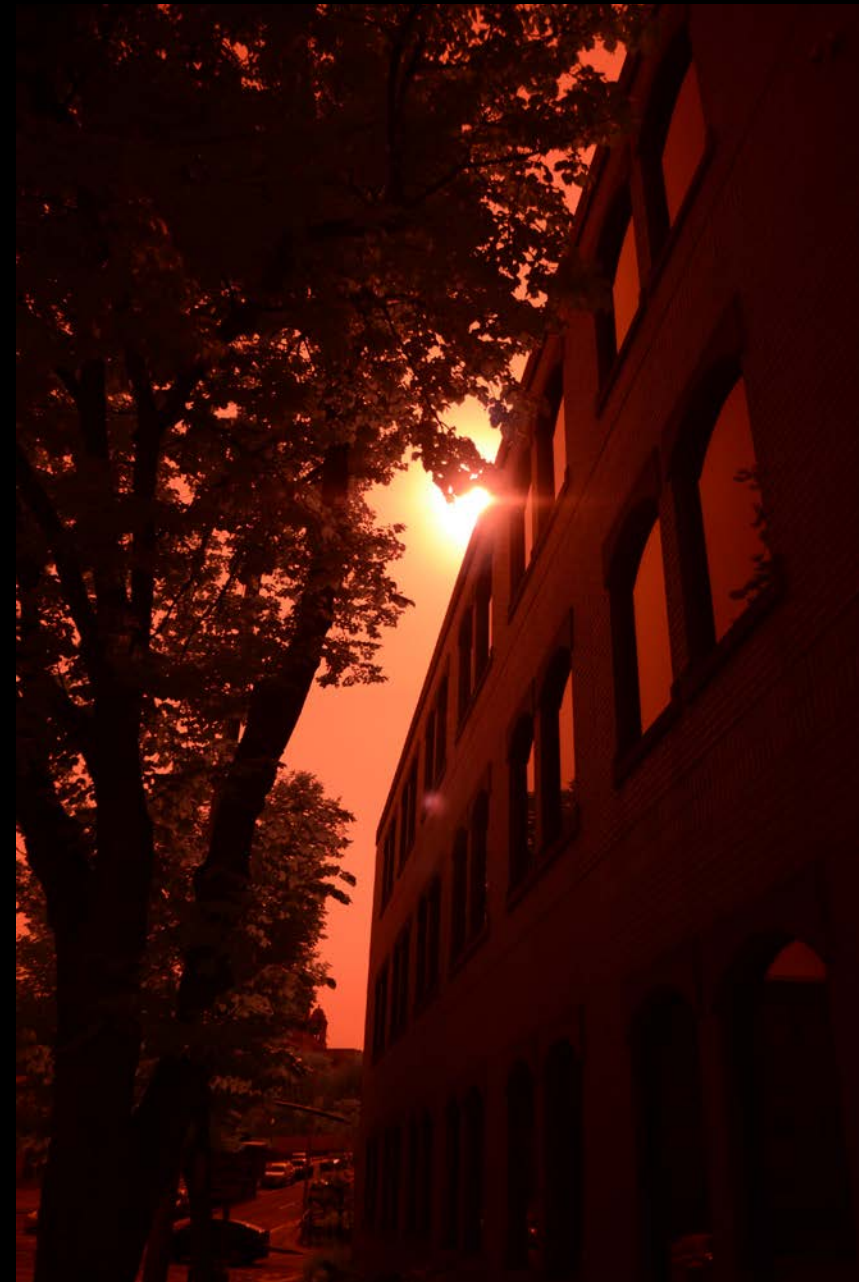
to be , as peaceful as the trees
11:19 , 10.6.25 | Nashville , TN



as content , to simply breathe the breeze
14:09 , 28.5.25 | New Haven , CT



fore , as you may remember
12:21 , 11.6.25 | St. Louis , MO



there are no endings
16:48 , 27.5.25 | Providence , RI



simply infinities
12:44 , 31.8.25 | Portland , ME

and beginnings and beginning again
00:00 , 00.00.00 | void

after.word

when i think back to this survey, so many memories come to mind wherein i can place myself exactly back at that point in time. in that way, it's incredibly surreal. the entire trip was more or less carried out in a state of flow [save for when i lost my wallet], such that i was so deeply embedded and enmeshed in the experience that i wasn't really thinking that much about what i was doing. in that sense i can honestly say i was fully 'being' rather than 'doing'.

looking back at these photos, and then reflecting on the 'post.rationalized' captions, i find there to be a certain equanimity about the whole thing, a sort of solace and acceptance being conveyed with regard to the nature of it all. i certainly don't feel the same malice now that i did when i set out on the trip. rather, there is simply peace. i do feel as though i see things more clearly now, and i've reached a certain state of repose.

with that being said, i am nervous about how this repose translates to professional practice, and i do have a nagging feeling it could be the top of a slippery slope which could lead to a level of complacency which i find unacceptable (at least at present).

overall, i am once again re.affirmed in my belief that whatever needs to happen will happen, that there are no co.idences, and that this is a chaotically deterministic universe not necessarily predicated on but rather interspersed with moments and bouts of synchronicity which, if one pays attention, well, actually, if one just is, full stop, then one becomes viscerally aware of the inherent unity in all things.

with that being said, categorization and codification are useful, but as tools rather than masters. there is actually a lack of hierarchy, a total harmony, which should never be forgotten when codifying and rationalizing thought and experience.

i would also like to add that, i do still believe architecture, the american built environment, and really contemporary western society at large has been eviscerated by 'the bottom line', but this trip has re.assured me that love can always be found, even in the most mundane and minutiae of things, and as such will always prevail, even in the darkest of times.

acknowledgements

transtension

acknowledgements

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