

Letting the light in: As James Thurber says “Light can illuminate or obscure.”

I prefer to decide for myself what I want to illuminate and what I want to obscure in my photos and this involves selecting the appropriate aperture/ f stop³ on my camera to either allow more or less light to reach the sensor. My camera’s largest opening is f 2.8 and the smallest is f 32. The smaller openings (higher number) only allow a pinprick of light to reach the sensor. With these smaller openings, my image will have all the details throughout the image crisply in focus.

With the larger openings (smaller number), only part of the image will be crisply focused and the distant details will disappear into soft forms.

Here we have a landscape that is clear from front to back. It has an f stop which is a high number/small opening.



The tiger photo has a low f stop number/large opening and the background is no longer in focus.

Getting it right can be frustrating!

Sometimes even when I have my camera set to the correct exposure, parts of the image are still either too light or too dark for my taste so I must make adjustments using post-processing software, such as Lightroom or Photoshop, or one of the apps on my phone such as Snapseed.

Often I use the tools on both my phone and my laptop to fix my mistakes.

³ Here is a good video on fstop and aperture <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmn3K-06YTg>

Here is a plant⁴ I saw while in Barbados last February. I loved the patterns of the veins and the



contrasting colors - the soft white gray of the newer leaves against the greens, and the subtle shadows glancing over them.

However, in my picture, my eye keeps going to those white spots in the dark background at the top left. Furthermore, the pink flower buds are lost in the composition.



My choices were : erase those spots; darken the edges of the picture; crop out the extraneous background; or some combination these options. In version 2 although the crop eliminated the original problem it created a new one.

in Version 2, I'm seeing a "blowout" Where the flower stem crosses the gray/white leaf. There is almost no detail in that white area and this white patch now has become **the main focal point** instead of the flower buds or those delicious chartreuse leaf veins.

So I tried again, sending my image to my phone via airdrop⁵ and, using Snapseed I changed the exposure etc.. making sure there is some detail in that white area. Although the results pleased me, (Version 3), I decided to convert the image to black & white and this black and white version,(Version 4) is quite fun, it is rather blah, lacking the intensity of the color versions. I tried again. This time I combined the black and white version with color version 3, using another smart phone app called ColorSplash. (Version 5). Which version do you prefer ?



⁴ This plant, *Calotropis procera* – Lavender Cotton - attracts butterflies especially the Monarch and although poisonous, is used in traditional medicine

⁵ [Airdrop](#)