



## Visions of Light: Inspirational Poetry. Stunning Photography.

**Raymond J. Klein**

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*Visions of Light is a brilliant book in several senses of the word—a unique collection of innovative, luminous images along with poetry from a variety of voices and fascinating technical insights on the photographic process.*

Raymond J. Klein spent over forty years as a working photographer, always seeking new techniques to yield attention-getting images. *Visions of Light* gathers many of those experiments, which mostly involve the use of multiple exposures and different aperture shapes, with some after-image editing using Adobe Photoshop.

Klein's long career gives him a wide range of knowledge, and he seems equally as comfortable discussing experiments with film—Polaroid, Ektachrome, and otherwise—as he is with describing his use of multilayer images and Photoshop filters. Perhaps most stunning of Klein's photos are those where he combines traditional photography with digital art, expertly joining different photographs together, all but undetectably if not for his own explanations.

Klein also includes some more typical but nonetheless outstanding “untouched photographs” that don't rely on unusual experimentation or digital alterations. Seeing that Klein can do “regular” photography well might help photography purists to appreciate the effort, skill, and most importantly the results of his digital manipulations. It might be “cheating” to some, but it's hard to argue with Klein's often glorious results.

Despite the impressive visuals, *Visions of Light* is not just a photography book; Klein matches these images with poems by a handful of contributors. There are poems inspired by photos as well as photos inspired by poems, and either way, the combinations can achieve a soaring synergy. For example, a geometrical, golden-yellow layered image called “Radiance” is matched with the poem “Honeycomb Prophecies” by Toni Partington, which begins:

*in the panorama of  
your heart  
I wish to be a cubicle  
made of beeswax  
translucent, thick butterscotch  
unfiltered balm  
bright with buzz*

Such collaborations seem the product of a single mind but result from the experience of two individuals who are very good at what they do. Not every poem succeeds completely, and not every image is as striking as the standouts, but the ratio of successes to those that fall a bit flat is a good one.

Part 2 of the book, titled “Experiments Explained,” offers detailed accounts of how Klein’s images came to be. Amateur and professional photographers alike will be interested to know the step-by-step processes of Klein’s efforts, and even those who are sometimes lost by the occasional technical jargon can enjoy Klein’s stories of inspiration sought and found or his quests for perfect natural lighting in outdoor settings.

Klein describes his goal in publishing *Visions of Light* as providing inspiration—to photographers, writers, and anyone else receptive to his message of “Challenge yourself!” As inspiration, curiosity, or technical guide, *Visions of Light* has much to offer.

PETER DABBENE (June 14, 2018)

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