

Twilight at Maroon Bells Lake

This spot is one of the most photographed places on Earth. Years ago I ventured here in the fall when the aspens are glowing as the sun rises. Getting up early to be there and see such an instant is worth it. However, as a photographer to my surprise I had to find a place to slot in at the shoreline, as there were at least 75 people with cameras and tripods waiting for the moment.

I prefer to not be in a sea of clicking shutters and for my photographic experience to be quiet and serendipitous. This is not always that easy to come by. However, this summer we had the chance to be here and have it all to ourselves. Visions of images still come to me and before driving up to Aspen; this idea was in my mind's eye for several weeks. The final image is never exactly like the pre-visualization, as Mother Nature always makes them better than what I can dream up.

We went up to Maroon Bells Lake late on a July afternoon and took a picnic. Susan, and myself, along with our friends Paul and Peggy hunted and gathered before we set out to journey up. The picnic basket was filled with a small feast of cheese, bread, salami, and wine. We sat and looked at the landscape and its mirror image in the lake. There were a few people fishing, some hikers going by, dogs running, but to our surprise everyone just started leaving, it became quiet, and even more remarkable there were no mosquitos! Our plan was to watch the stars come out and see the moon. The night before in town, Susan and Peggy saw a large shooting star rocket by under this same moon, only one-day earlier. It left them bedazzled and mystified. No doubt this was a special moon.

I went down to the lake's edge and looked into the crystal clear water and could see day reflecting and turning into night. While at the shore two deer appeared out of the woods up near our picnic set up. It was becoming a magical moment. I secured the camera on my tripod and began experimenting with exposures of lake, mountains, and sky. The hope was to capture the picture that had been imprinted in my mind. Doubt's voice whispered, "Could it be done?" This voice is the enemy of creativity. I answer: "Who knows?" I have come to learn that the antidote to doubt and fear is intention and determination. If it doesn't work this time then try again. I am grateful to be able to work at what I love doing.

E. McD July 2018