

A Decade on Nova Scotia's South Shore

Kas Stone

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by Kas Stone

Sample Pages

This book is dedicated to all my wonderful friends
on the South Shore who welcomed me into their
world and made my time there such a delight.
I will miss you!

www.kasstone.ca

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Looking Back

Remembrance Day 2013. A day I will never forget. After nearly two decades stranded in Toronto, here I was at last, moving home to Nova Scotia.

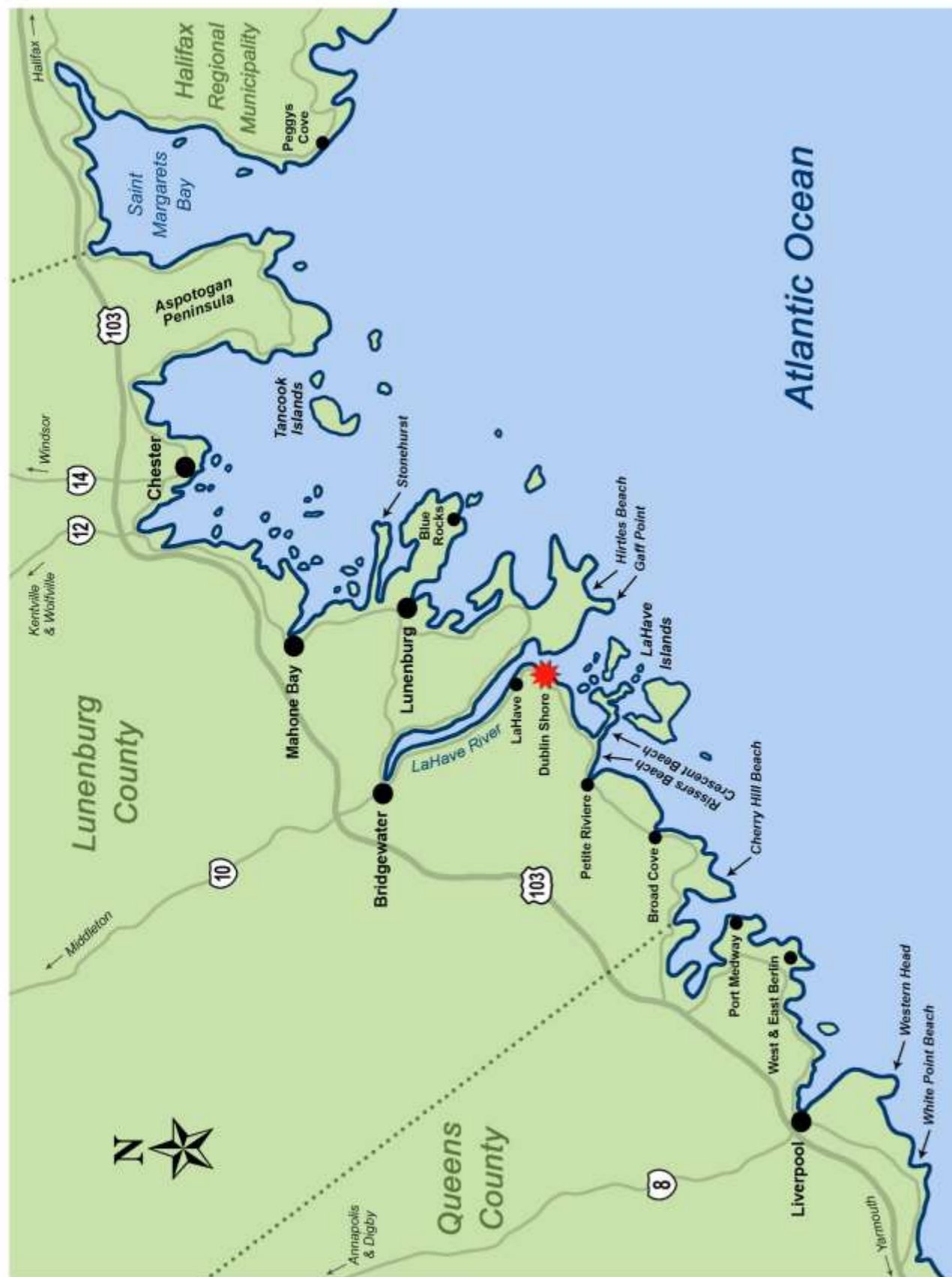
The story really began three years earlier, in 2010, when I made the decision to move. In September that year I visited Nova Scotia for a month, scouting the entire province to find a place to live. I returned every autumn afterwards, narrowing my search with each visit, opting first for the South Shore, then specifically the 85-kilometre stretch of coastal road between Bridgewater and Liverpool. Here I found the wild ocean scenery and moody weather I craved, together with wonderful places to hike and paddle, picturesque communities, and a vibrant arts and music scene, all within easy reach of urban conveniences in Halifax. I also found many kindred spirits in the area. Bridgewater even had a camera club.

So when, during my fourth annual scouting trip, I spotted a *For Rent* sign in the window of a cute house in Dublin Shore with a view of the sea, just 20 kilometres

from Bridgewater, it seemed somehow “meant to be.” I signed the lease and moved in two months later, November 11th, 2013. Little did I imagine then the life that lay in store, nor the career and friendships that would blossom there.

In the days that followed, I took the plunge and set up my new photography business in that house. I turned its dining room into my office and the living room into a studio-gallery. I joined the camera club. I became an active member of arts, crafts and tourism associations. I ran workshops and exhibited my photographs at local galleries. I attended community breakfasts, evening concerts and weekend markets. And I flourished – personally, professionally and artistically. Until 2020, when I moved away again (another story for another book).

My time on the South Shore spanned almost exactly a decade, from my first scouting trip in September 2010 to my departure in October 2020. This book tells the story of that decade in photographs.



Out of the Fog, East Berlin, 2014



Then and Now, a tiny cove between West Dublin and Crescent Beach
Top photograph by David Stone about 1968, Bottom photograph by Kas Stone in 2011

Part 1: I grew up in Dartmouth in the 1960s, back when it was still a sleepy little town. My family was outdoorsy and my father was a dedicated amateur nature photographer, so most weekends found us somewhere on a beach or hiking trail along the coast, and our holidays were spent with our tent-trailer, exploring farther afield across Atlantic Canada.

A favourite destination was Lunenburg County. In those days, before Highway 103 punched through the South Shore bush, Lunenburg was a considerable trek from Dartmouth – a weekend excursion rather than a day-trip. The old Trunk 3 road twisted through charming towns and photogenic coastal scenery that couldn't be rushed. It was a popular drive, but not yet overrun by the tourism industry as it is today.

During one of our visits to Lunenburg County, in about 1968, Dad made a photograph of dories in a tiny, foggy cove. Fifty years later he couldn't remember precisely where, but he thought it might be near Petite Rivière. So, when I returned to the area during my 2011 scouting trip, I decided to try to find the place. I kept the picture on the passenger seat as I poked along the coastal highway. Then one afternoon I saw it, just east of Petite Rivière between Crescent Beach and West Dublin. The same rocks,

the same fog, the same tide, and similar, albeit taller, trees. But the dories were long gone, and the empty cove seemed full of ghosts.

Part 2: Valentine's Day 2014. A fierce midwinter gale was battering the Atlantic coast. I had moved into my new home in Dublin Shore just three months earlier. After twenty years living away from the ocean, I couldn't get enough of it now that I was back again. The stormier the seas, the happier I was. So, it seemed entirely appropriate that I should spend this particular Valentine's Day clambering over rocks and slithering across seaweed to capture dramatic photographs of my beloved North Atlantic.

As it turned out, 2014 brought several significant storms to the South Shore, including Hurricane Arthur in July that delayed my first landscape-seascape workshop when it knocked out the power for several days. I had a wonderful time making stormy-sea pictures that year.

I still love a good storm, but now I am more inclined to sit on a rock and admire it, rather than race around trying to photograph it. After all, how many pictures of crashing waves does a person really need in their portfolio? I think I must have thousands!



Breakers
Little Harbour, Cherry Hill
February 14, 2014

Rissers Beach



Rissers Boardwalk, summer 2014 and winter 2016



In the early days it was the home base for my exploration of Lunenburg County. Then it became my go-to place to unwind at the end of a busy day in my studio. Sometimes it was a refuge. Often it was the setting for my photographs. Always it was restorative. I walked there 4-6 times a week, and I found comfort in the annual cycle of natural and human activity in the park.

However, I loved Rissers Beach best in the off-season when the campers were gone, especially on foggy or snowy days when I could walk the entire beach and trail network and not see another soul.

Part of the appeal of Rissers is the variety of its ecosystems – presumably the reason for the park's creation in the first place. An easy hour-long walk takes you through an Acadian forest, along a beach, across a sand dune, over a salt marsh (on a beautiful boardwalk), and around a shallow bay where the Petite River meets the sea, with views of rolling hills and farmland on one side and open ocean on the other.



Rissers Beach Provincial Park Campsite #31

Home base for my explorations of Lunenburg County from 2010 to 2013 (except 2012 in neighbouring site #32)

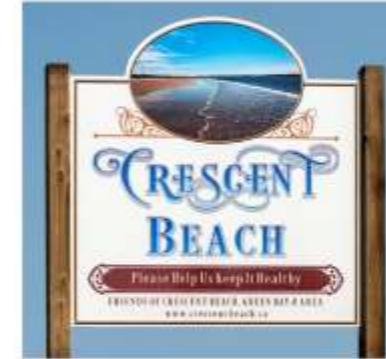
Crescent Beach



Crescent Beach Summer Traditions, 1937 postcard above (courtesy of Paul Harmon); modern reality in 2018 below.



Friends of Crescent Beach: www.crescentbeach.ca



One of Lunenburg County's most popular summertime destinations, Crescent Beach is a two-kilometre strip of fine white sand that connects several of the LaHave Islands with the mainland. Long ago the beach was used as a roadway by Island fishermen and by people collecting seaweed to insulate their houses and fertilize their gardens. These historical uses ensured ongoing access to the beach by vehicles, even after a causeway and paved road were constructed behind the dunes – a rarity in Nova Scotia where most beaches are now off limits. On sunny weekends there can be more than a hundred cars parked in the sand, and the beach is shared by families, hikers, windsurfers, dogs and brave shorebirds.

On the back side of the dunes, bordering Dublin Bay, lies an extensive saltmarsh. It teems with life at low tide as innumerable bird species peck for food in the muddy shallows. It is also frequented by people with shovels and clam buckets, likewise searching for dinner.

Like most locals, I avoided the beach on sunny summer days, but in so-called "bad" weather and in the off-season it was one of my favourite walks. I especially enjoyed the backshore, where there always seemed to be interesting natural dramas unfolding in the dunes or saltmarsh.



Alone on the Beach, August 2019



Into the Blue, July 2018



Boundless, June 2015

LaHave Islands



Bush Island Wharf, July 2018

Beyond Crescent Beach lies an archipelago of several dozen islands ranging in size from unnamed humps of bald rock to the irregularly-shaped Cape LaHave Island that measures 5 km across both north-south and east-west. Three of the islands (George, Bush and Bell) are connected via bridges to the road that runs behind Crescent Beach. The others are accessible only by boat. Once home to a busy fishery, the islands have only a scattered population of permanent residents

now, some of whom still fish. Many of the old homes have been converted into summer cottages, and a lively tourism industry brings visitors to the area each year, so the waterways can be busy with boats of all descriptions during July and August.

Since the LaHave Islands are only a few kilometres from Dublin Shore, I visited them regularly during my time on the South Shore – on foot, by bicycle, or in my canoe.



Approaching Wolfe Gut, the small channel that separates Bell Island from Wolfe Island, August 2018



The LaHave Bakery, February 2015

The bakery is a favourite gathering place for tourists in the summer and locals in the off-season. The building has something for everyone: a craft co-op and bookshop in the basement, a gallery and event space on the second floor, and a skateboard shop on the top floor. During my years in the neighbourhood I had four exhibitions in the gallery, and countless get-togethers for coffee with friends.



LaHave Bakery Interior, June 2015, with a wonderful selection of baked goods, local produce and healthy homemade meals that spared me from cooking more often than I would care to admit.





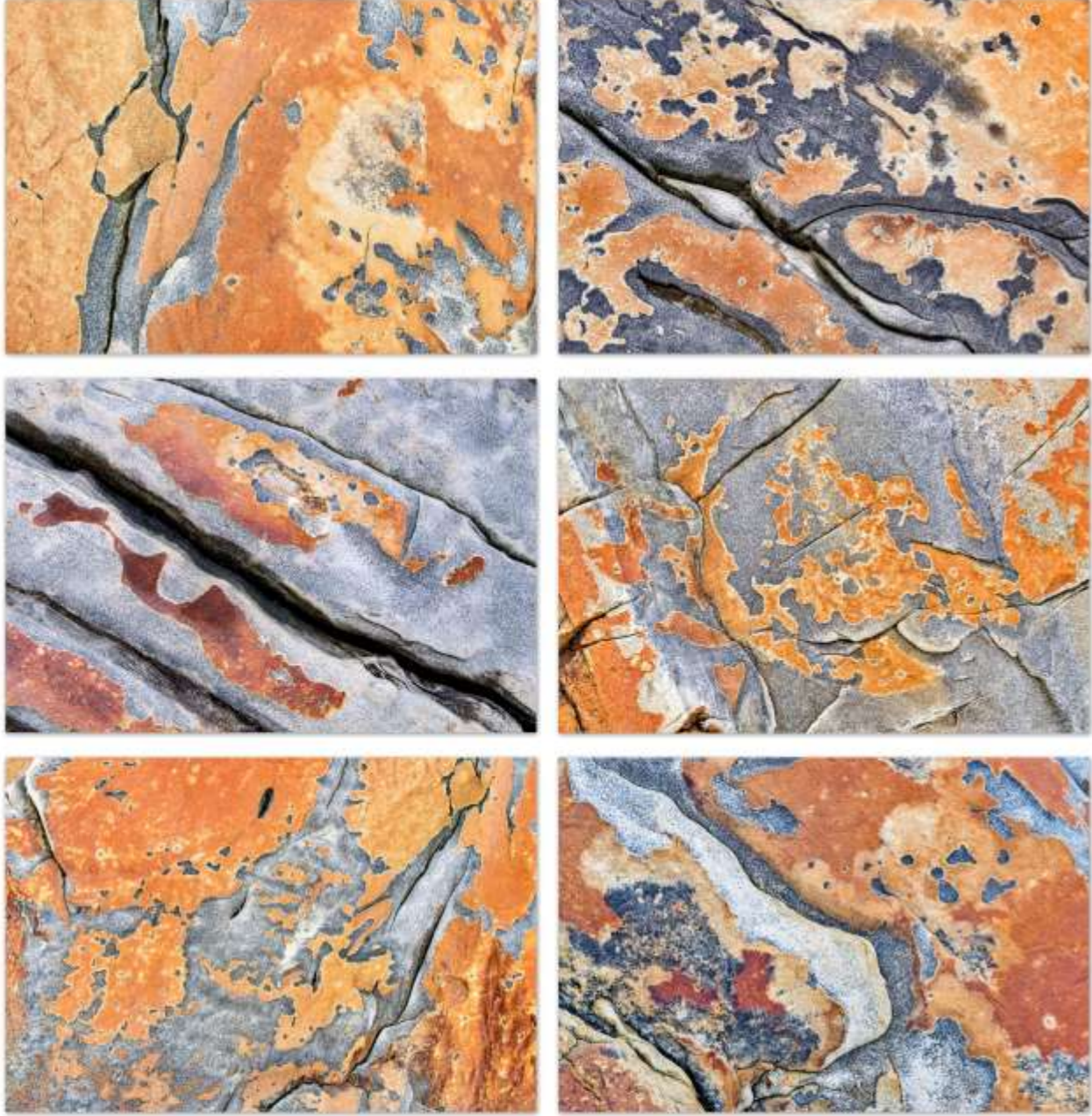
Safe Harbour, Voglers Cove, September 2013



Hunts Point, April 2016



Maritime Hospitality, West Berlin, October 2010



Rock Details, Western Head, April 2019



Western Head Lighthouse, April 2019



Upon Reflection, Dublin Shore, August 2016

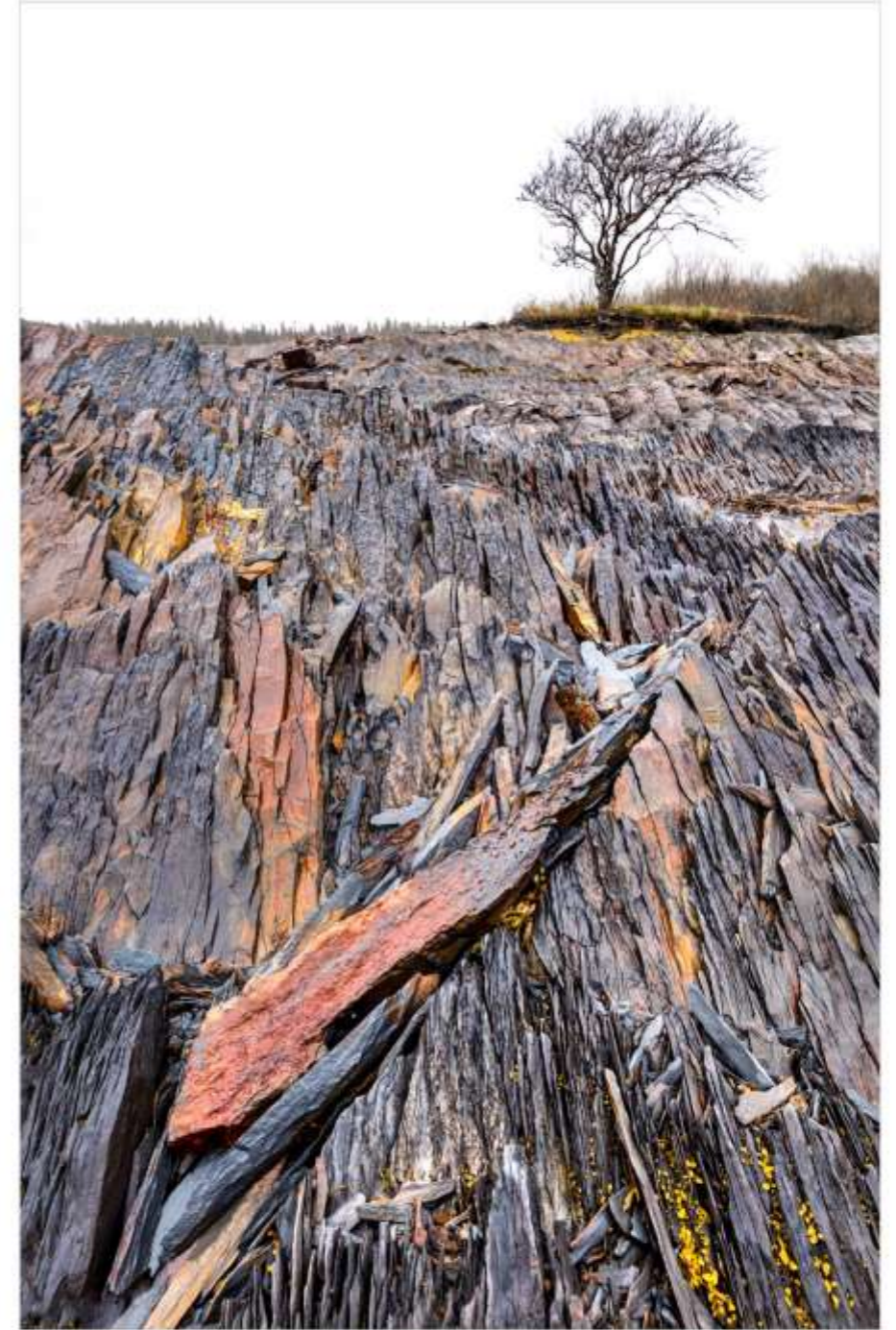


A Maritime Evening, Bells Cove, September 2015

My daily routine included a walk from my house down the road to Bells Cove and back via the community mailbox. Whenever the light and weather looked promising, I took my camera. One day I came home with this picture – a classic Maritime scene that became one of my best-sellers at craft shows.



Summer Wildflowers
Dublin Shore, July 2017



In Memoriam, Dublin Shore, May 2019

This old apple tree was a favourite photographic subject for six of my seven years in Dubin Shore. I passed it almost every day on my morning walk to the mailbox. Hurricane Dorian blew it over in September 2019.