

Counting My Blessings



14 Days in Quarantine

#StayTheBlazesHome

Kas Stone, January 2021

Counting My Blessings

14 Days in Quarantine, January 2021

When I returned home to Nova Scotia after spending a month in Ontario for Christmas with my mother, COVID-19 public health protocols required me to quarantine for two weeks — no visitors, no outings, no exceptions. As a loner, I found the “no visitors” rule a guilty blessing. But for someone who loves to hike and photograph out in the landscape, the “stay at home” rule was a more onerous (yet absolutely necessary) constraint.

Don't feel too sorry for me though! My home is perched on two acres of remote coastal meadow overlooking the sea, with an ever-changing panorama of weather and wildlife out my front door and a wharf at the bottom of my garden.

To give some structure to my time in quarantine, I undertook to photograph the same (admittedly prosaic) view from my wharf at high tide every day and to create something with the pictures. This book is the result. It contains fourteen photographs that encompass variations and progressions in the sameness of a single location over time. Its title expresses my gratitude — for my beautiful surroundings, for my good health, for an interesting project, and for two blissful weeks of solitude in which to put it together.



The first incarnation of this project was a single panel with fourteen photographs painstakingly sized and assembled to fit.



#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



#6



#7



#8



#9



#10



#11



#12



#13



#14



The colour of freedom

#14b

Process & Technique

- ▶ **Objective:** to make a collection of 14 images that illustrated the mood of my quarantine.
- ▶ **External mood:** environmental conditions were almost uniformly cloudy, damp and windless, with only a couple of colourful sunsets.
- ▶ **Internal mood:** a curious mixture of contentment, pensiveness and restlessness. I enjoyed the solitude but not the confinement.
- ▶ **Resulting image mood:** subdued, soft and monochromatic, with hints of joy in some images and tension in others.
- ▶ **Timing:** images were made at high tide to ensure sufficient water around the dock, and near dawn or dusk to ensure low lighting, necessary for the long exposures that created a silky water effect befitting the stillness of my quarantine.
- ▶ **Gear & Settings:** slow shutter speed (2–30 seconds) which required low ISOs (64 to low-1) and narrow apertures (*f*-16 to *f*-22), a tripod and sometimes an 8-stop ND filter and/or 2-stop grad ND filter.
- ▶ **Processing:** tonal & colour adjustments to produce a muted colour palette, and reduced clarity to eliminate distracting sharp details.
- ▶ **Sequencing:** images are presented, not in chronological order, but rather in a progression of moods. Interpret these as you wish! My interpretation is likely different than yours.

Afterword

Having dutifully completed Nova Scotia's daily online health questionnaire to confirm that no COVID-19 symptoms had developed during my quarantine, I found this congratulatory email in my inbox on the final day.



Nova Scotia Safe Check-in

Kas Stone, today is the last day of your 14-day self-isolation. Starting on 31 January 2021, you can leave isolation and visit public places.

A copy of this confirmation was sent to kas@kasstone.ca. Thank you for taking care of your health and the health of other Nova Scotians while you were isolating.

I celebrated my freedom on January 31st, not with a shopping trip or a visit to friends, but with a solo day-hike across the Queensport Barrens.



But wait! There's more...

Postscript, March 2, 2021

Just a month after I made the last quarantine project photograph from my wharf, a fierce wind, combined with unusually high tides, snapped the moorings and set the seaward half of the wharf adrift. It now lies stranded 100 feet down the beach, and my view from the wharf is spoiled by the ugly concrete piling that once supported it. I suppose it could be repaired. But I am inclined just to watch as Nature gradually reclaims the beach.



Aftermath of the Storm: half a wharf, an ugly concrete piling, scattered rocks, and seaweed tossed far above the usual high tide line.



Requiem for a Wharf: one of the last pictures of my wharf before its collapse, taken during a snowstorm in mid February 2021.



All That Remains: a comparable snowy day near low tide in mid-March. So much for the “sameness of a single location” that my quarantine project was designed to illustrate! Perhaps this is food for another project?

PPS, Summer 2021

A friend who needed some lumber and fill to bolster his own eroding shoreline was happy to give the remains of my wharf a new home. He hauled the dock sections away with his fishing boat and the rocky debris with the help of another friend's backhoe and dumptruck.



The Beach Reclaimed: Little evidence of the wharf remains and my beach is once again an uninterrupted crescent of sand.

I suspect Mother Nature is now eyeing my storage shed... so the story may continue.