



SHINING SEA. MCCLURES BEACH. FEBRUARY 1994



SHOREBIRDS. McCLURES BEACH, FEBRUARY 1994



AFTER THE STORM. FEBRUARY 1994

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A winter day at McClures—Jean and I were there on a day of dazzling afternoon light. The sea was a blinding platinum white. The swollen surf etched fleeting patterns in the sand. When one wave spilled past the rocky point, leaving a bright circle of foam at our feet, I made the first of three images—“Shining Sea.”



DETAIL - SHINING SEA, McCLURES BEACH

SHOREBIRDS, McCLURES BEACH
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Several feet south of the rocky point at McClures Beach, a feeding frenzy was in progress. Sanderlings skittered, in rhythm to the waves, up and down the steep slope. I was captivated by the light's reflection on the sea and the dance of the birds. I set up my camera and make quick studies—such incredible light! During a moment of tidal stasis, I make the photograph, "Shorebirds, McClures Beach."



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There's something about getting my feet wet and making a fine photograph that seem to go together. They're so linked, that now when I come home from a particularly productive photo shoot, and tell Jean, "I got my feet wet." She knows that something pretty good has happened. She'll reply, "Oh . . . I can't wait to see the proofs!"

This wet-feet thing started on a brilliant winter's afternoon in 1994, when Jean came with me as I explored McClures Beach. I usually go on these forays alone, but on this particularly lovely afternoon it was easy to persuade Jean to go for a walk. Soon we were headed down the steep creekside trail on our way to my favorite Point Reyes shoreline. We slithered through the fissure in the rocky point and arrived at the spectacularly lit "hidden beach." A departing storm had scrubbed the air crystal clear. The sun blazed under a thin layer of cirrus clouds, turning the water's surface silvery white. The rugged sea-stacks were etched against the horizon by the low angle of the setting winter sun.

Jean watched safely from the rocks above the edge of the surging sea. Like the shorebirds, I ran back and forth. I considered my composition and tried to keep my feet clear of the water. There was little dry beach where I could place my tripod, and that only briefly. "I'll watch for the waves, while you set up," Jean called to me.

"Okay, let me know when I have to run for it!" I shouted back as I set the tripod on a dry uphill patch of beach. I knew my exposure, and the camera was focused. I had only seconds between waves.

Jean shouted, "Here comes a wave!" The camera was level and my corners were right. I pulled the cable release, the shutter clicked, and in a second I was standing in water above my knees. As the sand slipped out from beneath my feet, I held the tripod and camera high, and mucked my way out of the sea. My feet were wet, but I got the photograph.

