



Before the Mountain

Patagonian windscares

John C. Alfano

for Barb and Giancarlo

These images tell a story about mountains, clouds, and wind...about how a *relentless* wind transforms the mountain landscape. This wind comes undeterred from across the Pacific, greets Patagonia with its full fury, and *defines* the place. And though autumn can provide a few weeks of respite, not this year. This year, it blew. It generated white caps on the lakes, day and night. It hurled water and dust horizontally across vast stretches of lakes and foothills. It parted the fur of foxes and guanacos, and caused humans to *lean*. It swept plumes of snow high off the ridges and crowned peaks magnificent in their own right. At night it created dreams of silence; in the day, it created a long reverie of roiling clouds and ever-changing patterns of shadow and light across the massif.

The transformation goes beyond the physical. This is the kind of wind that eventually permeates your entire being, altering how you think and how you act. The kind of wind that, when it stops, creates moments of disbelief that give way to a psychological and emotional liberation that can, well, make you *giddy*. It made me a humbled witness before the mountain.

All images were captured in April, 2008, in and around Torres del Paine National Park, Chile, over the course of five perfect days, and in some cases, a few minutes...

John Alfano
Los Altos, California

A simple vacant mind
has no place to go.
Resting on the peak,
I watch the clouds return.

Han Shan

Humble before the Mountain...



light and shadow



wind on the peaks



Glacier Grey



late afternoon



lone condor



iceflow



clouds over cuernos



cuernos upclose



morning light, cuernos



sentinels

Bone-chilling snow on a thousand peaks,
wild raging wind from ten thousand hollows.
When I first awake deep beneath my blanket,
I forget my body is in a silent void.

Han Shan

Edge of the Wind...



showtime



harbinger



Lago Grey, ice



just the tip





Patagonian brushstrokes



telltale



beneath the mountain



warm in the sun

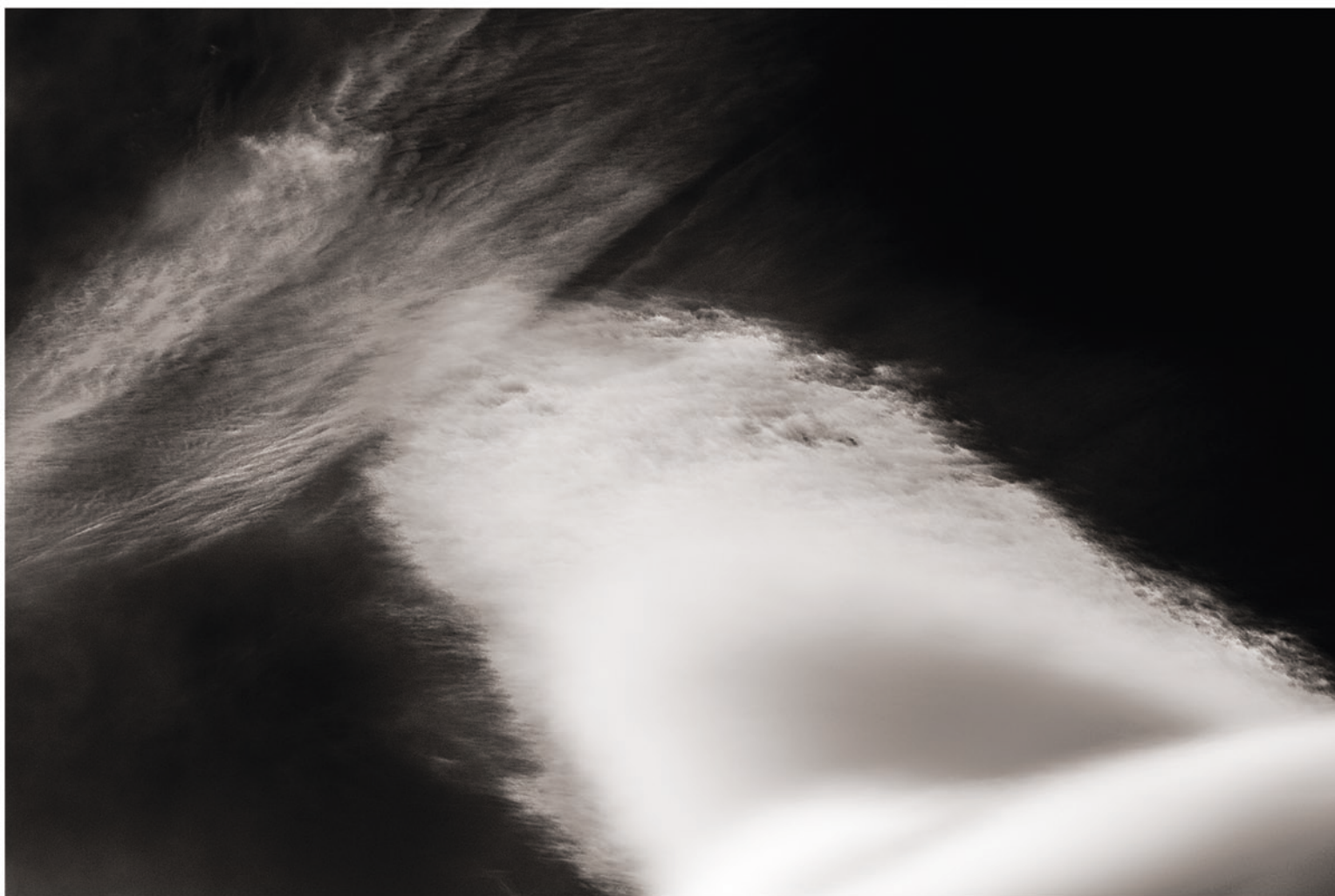


hanging glacier

“When heaven and earth are
interwoven, you are free to ride
the clouds and follow the wind.”

mountain and rivers sutra

Dreams of Silence...



high drama one



high drama two



high drama three



high drama four



high drama diptych



sunrise cloudscape



maelstrom



silent sunrise one



silent sunrise two



silent dream

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Prints of the images in this book are available at:

**www.johnalfano.com or
email: prints@johnalfano.com**

A video presentation of these images can be found at:

thecolorofwind.blogspot.com/

I would like to express my gratitude to Bill,
Linde, Lito, and Ruth for helping to make
my Patagonian dream into a reality.