

# ANDREW MOORE

A moment of opportunity can arise suddenly within the flow of time and just as quickly disappear. This perception of time's singular quality, which the ancient Greeks recognized as distinct from the regular passage of time (*chronos*), was embodied in their god Kairos. The youngest child of Zeus, and perhaps a favored son at that, his overall swiftness was symbolized by his winged feet; yet most emblematic of all, long locks of hair dangled in front of his face, although when seen from behind, he was actually bald. The meaning of this eccentric coiffure is clear: opportunity has to be grabbed as it approaches, and once it passes, it becomes all but impossible to reach back for.

Everyone, in both personal and professional experience, is familiar with moments of regret, of chances seen but not seized. But photographers might have this sensation more often than most, especially those pursuing rare and ephemeral alignments within reality, who are subjected to these tantalizing "misses" on a daily basis. There are do-overs, re-shoots, retakes, recreations, and a host of second chances, but the emotion of seizing upon the flow of time, the complete satisfaction of making the unrehearsed but perfect leaping catch can never be exactly replicated.

Although one of my earliest missed opportunities happened nearly thirty years ago, I can still glimpse in my mind those half a dozen workers in their brightly colored outfits, composed like musical notes on the skeleton frame of an outdoor highway sign, as I whizzed by on a highway too crowded to pull over. Or the building on fire in Brooklyn at dusk, the flames shooting high into the sky, with the Manhattan skyline in the background. Or an interior of an old woman's home in Cuba, enormous and decayed, with a child's swimming pool set in the middle of the grand salon.

Much in the same way that a love affair gone awry continues to revolve over and over in the mind, the lingering pangs of regret over these might-have-been pictures still trouble me. Perhaps there is no antidote, except to be ever prepared to grab the forelocks of swift-footed Kairos, while bearing in mind the advice of Henry James: "Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost!"