



# Travel:

INQUIRIES INTO THE NECESSITY OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY TIMOTHY CAHILL





*Where I seek myself I cannot find myself: I discover myself more by accident than by inquiring into my judgment.*

—Montaigne

*Reality denotes reality,  
and that's a greater puzzle.*

—Wisława Szymborska

These photographs were made in the spring of 2000, during a period when I was taking the train two, three, sometimes four times a week the 150 miles up and down the Hudson between my home in upstate New York and an apartment at Columbia University. Eventually I reached a stage where each terminus seemed provisional, and the only fixed point was my movement between them. This sense of perpetual travel between two destinations, belonging simultaneously to both and neither, produced in me a kind of protracted reverie, a detached subjectivity where insight and spectacle merged. A place, as Octavio Paz has written, where “sense begins and ends in the image.”

After years of shooting for publication and exhibition, I gave up photography a decade ago, I thought for good. But last year's transitions and influences brought me back to it. The limitations that had led me away from photography—its inextricable tie to reality, and its uncloseable distance from it—now seemed its principal virtues. The camera is an instrument of touch as well as sight; it searches the surface of reality like a blind man's fingers, seeing by way of feeling. Like those sightless philosophers trying to describe an elephant, the trick is to not stay fixed on any one part of the beast. Each full stop of the shutter is met by the question mark of the film advance. The only necessity is to keep looking.

These pictures are inquiries into that necessity. There are no conclusions here, no terminal stations or end of the line. There is travel.

*Timothy Cahill  
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1. *New Soul in Paradise* (for Archie Rand), Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York
2. *The Heart Has Its Reasons*, Amtrak No. 256, Albany to New York
3. *After L.'s Party*, Christopher Street, New York
4. *Michael on 9th Avenue*, Hell's Kitchen, New York
5. *Walking with Sara*, Riverside Park, New York
6. *Muses, Not Yet in Focus* (for Kennedy Fraser), Iglesia de San Francisco de Asis, Havana, Cuba
7. *Harlem Out My Window*, Morningside Park, New York
8. *Either Or*, Washington Heights, New York
9. *Jus' Grew, Still at Large* (for Tony Green), IRT local #9 (uptown), New York