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The Taj Mahal shimmering in the distance might have been a workaday sight for railroad workers easing trains into Agra Fort Station. Photo by Steve McCurry, India, 1983.

A six-inch weedy sea dragon might appear formidable, at least to a tiny crustacean. But evolution has played a trick upon him: the wily female of the species has deposited her 100 to 250 eggs beneath his tail, then fled into the seaweed, leaving him to fertilize them. Photo by Paul A. Zahl, Australia, 1977.

A daily chore for a Chesapeake Bay retriever living in tiny Tylerton. Photo by Willard R. Culver, Maryland, 1937.

Life teems on a Hong Kong staircase. When seen from the harbor, the city rose so steeply to cloud-capped Victoria Peak that buildings seemed to stand atop one another. While the British colony’s main avenues ran horizontally, the numerous cross streets resembled ladders, and some were so precipitous that the sidewalks were made of wooden planks spanned (and only by foot or sedan chair). Photo by W. Robert Moore, Hong Kong, 1931.

A masked Chokwe tribesman poses before a fetish tree adorned with skulls, horns, and animal bones. Once among Angola’s most powerful tribes, the Chokwe crafted some of the finest ritual masks in Africa. Photo by Volkmar K. Wentzel, Angola, 1960.

Emerging from the darkness of the Wawona Tunnel, tourists always scramble out of their cars to take in that first stupendous view of the Yosemite Valley. El Capitan soars in granite majesty to the left, distant Half Dome peeks over the shoulder of a rounded ridge, and to the right Bridalveil Fall tumbles in spray for 620 feet beneath Cathedral Rocks. Photo by B. Anthony Stewart, California, 1965.

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