

Jeff Colburn's Writing Credits

My writing has been used by numerous companies, publications and websites, including:

- ABCDirectory.com
- Absolute Write
- AirbrushInformation.com
- All Freelance Work
- Alphaone-Tech.com
- Art Direction and Design of Orange County Newsletter
- ArticleBunch.com
- Articles.Hotlib.com
- AZ Photography Tips
- Balloon
- BharatBhasha.com
- BitBooks.com
- BlogCatalog.com
- BrokenControler.com
- Buena Park Police Department
- Business Filings, Inc.
- BusinessContinuityInfo.com
- CameraHolidayCash.com
- Cedarfire.com
- Chiff.com
- Coordinated Resources Group
- Cutter Magazine
- DBSlink.com
- Digital Dream Photography
- DK News Clip
- DNA of Business
- DynamicVB.net
- EasyPayments.ws
- EatStayPlay.com
- eByro.com
- EyeClinic.com
- Fedex Stick Marketing
- FileGuru.com
- FindAWebsite.info
- Flagstaff Tea Party
- Forty-Niner Newspaper
- Fugitive Author
- Georgia Business Directory
- Georgia Business Review
- Graffiti - A publication of Art Direction and Design of Orange County, CA
- HappyMilad.com
- HealthQuoteFor.com

- Improving Me
- Inscriptions
- Inside Reports
- Insurance.tk
- InsuranceJIWA.com
- InsuranceMarketing.tk
- InternetMarketingMultimedia.net
- JMG-Galleries Blog
- JW Webbdesign
- Kirain.com
- Knowledge-Download.com
- Kudos
- Laguna Art Museum
- LepreCon 27
- LifeFitness Corp.
- LinkGrinder A-Z
- Long Ridge Writer's Group
- Mail-TH.com
- MaximizeROIMarketing.com
- Mme Web
- Mountain Living
- MyPublicInsuranceLiability.com
- Nanowrimo.cz.cc
- National Management Association Bulletin
- NationalRealtorsDirectory.com
- Newsbits Weekly
- Northern Arizona Computer Users Group
- OhSoSimpatico.com
- Orca Scuba Newsletter
- Paracetamol.co.nz
- Photographers World
- Photography Monthly Magazine (UK)
- Photo-Wizard.com
- PipiquCommunity.cn
- Portal Partner Press
- Predators And Editors
- Press Exposure
- Providence Speech and Hearing Center
- Reflect A Life
- Regator
- ScienceBooks.co.nz
- Sedona Writer's Group
- Sell Writing Online
- SemutKecil.com
- ShamaArtGallery.com
- Shareware123.com

- SoCal.com
- Social Media News
- Speculations
- StreetDirectory.com
- StockVault.net
- StreamingVideoHosting.com
- T & I Grafix
- Tech Valley Times
- TextLinks.mobi
- The Best Ideas In Business
- The Dev Web
- The Medina County Community Advocate
- The Writer's Room
- The Writing Life
- Themestream
- Tourist Traveler
- Travel Stock Index
- Verde Independent Newspaper
- VertexTemplates.com
- Vici Blog
- Vid4Games.com
- VirtualBookWorm.com
- VirtualPhotographyStudio.com
- Web Design Ireland
- Web Host Guide
- Web Hosting Guide
- WebsiteRedesigned.com
- Western Photographer Magazine
- WhoOwnesThis.com
- Wordmage
- WorldBookAndNews.com
- Writer2Writer.com
- Xtreme Exhibits, Inc.
- YoLike.com

My genre stories have appeared in the following publications.

- Absolute Write
- Aphelion
- Castle of the Vampyres
- Erotic Fiction by Rose
- EWG Presents
- Fiction Addiction
- Hadrosaur Tales
- Inkspot
- Inscriptions
- My Sister's Secret Place
- Planet Magazine
- Realm Of Darkness
- Realm Of The Vampire
- Twilight Times

I've written four e-books:

- How To Assemble And Show Your Portfolio
- The Writer's Answer Book
- The Writer's Resource Book Of Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror And Mythology
- The Youngest Ninja (a young adult story)

Education

Bachelor of Science, California State University Long Beach, CA
Associate of Arts, Cypress Community College, CA
Certification Program, Newport School of Photography, CA

Writing Samples

How To Photograph Lightning, And Live To Tell About It (This article appeared in ProNaturePhotographer.com)

The wind blew at over 40 MPH as lightning hit the ground about two miles away. It was getting closer than I liked.

My only emergency warning system, the hairs on my arms standing up, was useless in this wind. Suddenly, the wind died down to about 20 MPH, and my arm hairs were at full attention. That means that a charge rising from the ground was going through me, and attracting lightning.

I grabbed the camera and tripod and jumped into the car. Two seconds later there was a blinding flash and deafening thunder clap about 100 feet away. I had cheated Death, and my own stupidity, again.



Photographing lightning is the most amazing type of photography you will ever do. And probably the dumbest thing you can do with a camera, but I love it.

Here are some tips on lightning and safety:

- Being struck by lightning can cause many problems, including: neurological issues, memory loss, chronic pain and death. That last one's a real bummer.

- Count how many seconds between when you see lightning and hear the thunder. Thunder travels at about 1 mile per 5 seconds. So, 15 seconds means the lightning struck 3 miles away.
- As a rule, if you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning. Remember the phrase, "A bolt from the blue?" It refers to the fact that you can have a clear blue-sky overhead, and still be struck by lightning. The bolt can come from a storm that's over the horizon.
- In the United States, hundreds of people are struck by lightning every year, and about 55 of those people are killed. I have personally met three people who have been struck by lightning.
- A car can offer protection from lightning if it has a metal roof and is completely enclosed. Convertibles or open cabs offer no protection from lightning. In a storm, be sure not to touch anything inside the car that may be in contact with the outer body, such as door handles or window cranks.
- Buildings must be completely enclosed too, so no carports or covered patios.
- Want to know where the lightning is? [//cirrus.sprl.umich.edu/wxnet/radsat.html](http://cirrus.sprl.umich.edu/wxnet/radsat.html)

Now for the tofu and lentils (meat and potatoes for you carnivores) of lightning photography.

Whether you're shooting in daytime or nighttime, set your camera to Manual and do the following to ensure the sharpest images.



Turn off

- Noise reduction - It takes too long to process an image after a long exposure.

- Image stabilization - It will change the focus during exposure.
- Auto focus - It's too slow to focus on lightning. Focus on infinity.
- Remove filters - They can cause a "ghosting" effect to the lightning.

When shooting at night, set the shutter on B, and hook up a wired cable release. You can use a wireless release too, but you usually need to be in front of the camera to trigger it. And always use a tripod.

Set your ISO to between 100 and 200, and using a lens between 28mm and 135mm works best. But select a focal length based on your shooting conditions.

Set your f-stop to between f/8 and f/16. For close storms you can shoot at f/8, and use f/16 when they are farther away. You don't want to wind up with blurry lightning bolts because your depth of field is too shallow, so lean toward f/16.

If you're shooting in daylight, there are a few things you will need to do differently. Use your camera's light meter to determine exposure, but keep your f-stop the same as for night shooting. Take the longest exposure possible to increase your chance of getting lightning in the image. You can extend your exposure time by using neutral density filters, or a polarizer and you can go up to f/16 if you want.

Set your camera to shoot sequentially, and then lock the release button on your wired/wireless shutter release. The camera will take pictures until the chip is full. You will often fill your chip several times without getting a shot of lightning. If the chip is full, and there aren't any lightning shots, then format the chip and start over. If you get even one lightning shot on a full chip, change the chip. You don't want to waste time during a storm selectively deleting unwanted images.

If possible, have an interesting foreground. A tree, building or rock formation can add interest to your images, and give the lightning a sense of place.

There are a few other items you should consider buying

- A rain cover for your camera. I use the Op/Tech RainSleeve. They're made of thin plastic, cost \$6 for two and work great.
- An umbrella to keep rain off of the front of your lens.
- A headlight, the kind that attaches to your forehead with an elastic band. Mine has a white light and a red one. The red one is great for seeing what's going on without losing your night vision. The headlight is adjustable so I can point it down, which makes it easier to see if a rattlesnake, scorpion or tarantula is coming over to me with a photography question. For added comfort there's soft foam on the back of the light, where it's against my forehead. I paid about \$15 for this at a Big Box store. Be sure it uses AA or AAA batteries, and not those expensive button batteries.
- A remote trigger is nice too, and makes lightning photography safer. They're pricey, at about \$400, but as long as your camera isn't being rained on, you

can sit in the safety of your car while this device does all the work. I don't use one, yet, but you can see the Lightning Trigger at www.lightningtrigger.com

One thing I did early on was to get a map of my area and drive around looking for places to shoot. On the map I marked all the places where I could safely pull over to take photographs, and which direction I would be facing. Storms can go through an area quickly, and you don't want to waste time trying to figure out where to properly position yourself, especially at night.

Go on out and try your hand at lightning photography, but always keep safety first.

And if you're driving around the Sedona, Arizona area during a lightning storm, and on a high spot on the side of the road you see some crazy photographer standing a few feet away from a metal car, and a few inches away from a metal tripod, while holding an umbrella over a camera, that's me. Just wave, and enjoy being in your dry and safe car. Shaking your head in disbelief is optional.

Have Fun,
Jeff

Making A Complex Photo Mask With A Pen Tablet

(This article appeared in NatureScapes.net, Photo Zoom Magazine and Digital Ink Magazine)

I recently purchased a Wacom Bamboo pen tablet to use in retouching photographs and doing photo manipulation. The tablet would make these chores much faster and easier than using my laptop's touchpad, which is what I've used for years. I had my chance to really test my new tablet when I had to create a complex mask for a photograph I made at the Gold King Mine and Ghost Town in Jerome, Arizona.

I made various adjustments in my RAW viewer, and in Photoshop, to have the foreground look like it does below. But I wanted to darken the view out of the window so you could more easily see what's outside, while keeping the foreground properly saturated.

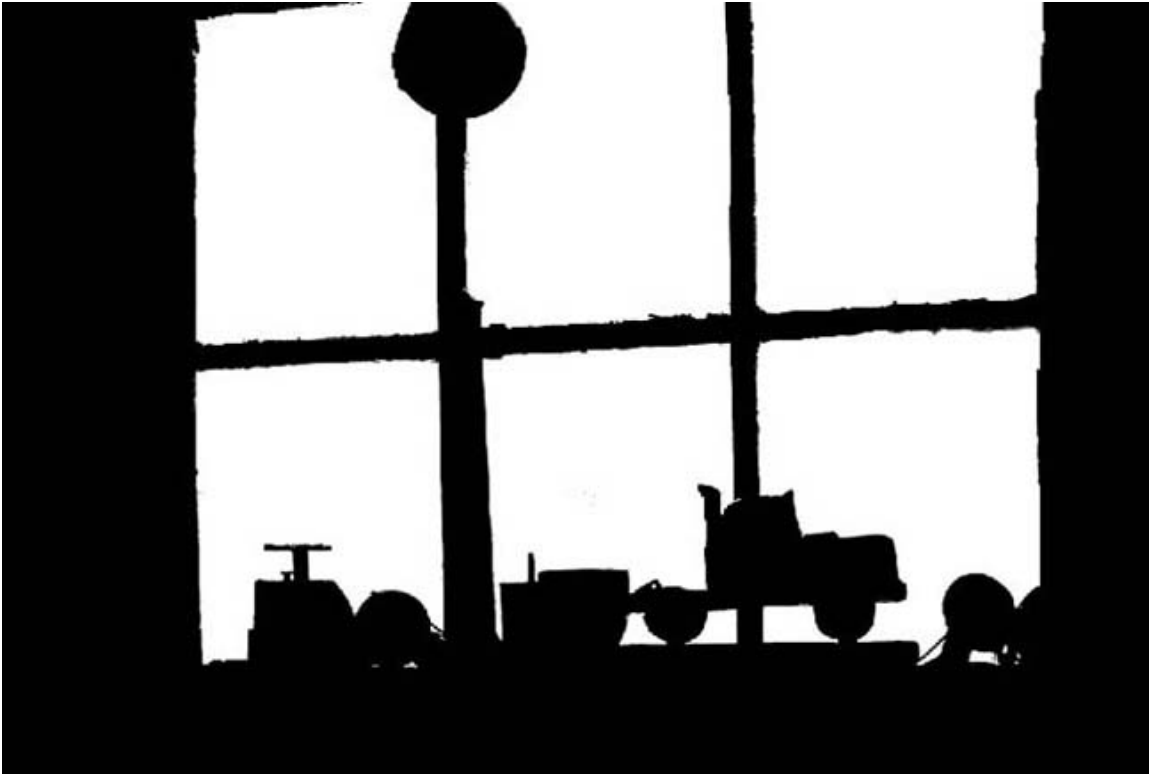


I duplicated layer 1, the background layer, to create layer 2. Then I adjusted layer 2 to give good saturation to the view outside of the window. When this was done I needed to merge these layers with a mask, so that the adjustments I'd made to layer 1 and 2 would come together to make the image I wanted.

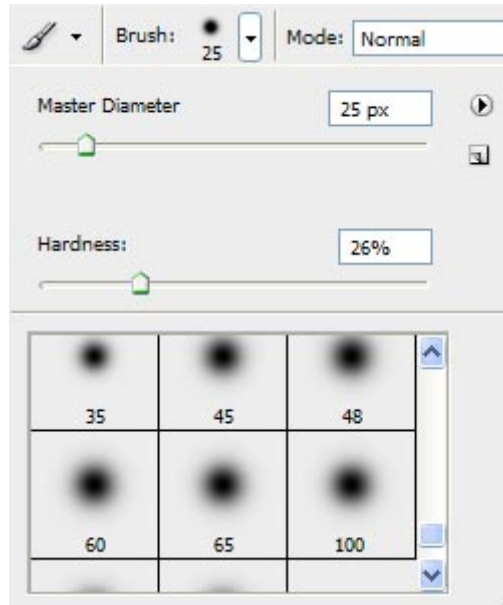
To do this, I took these steps:

1. I selected layer 2 and added a layer mask by clicking on the Add Layer Mask button at the bottom of the panels menu.

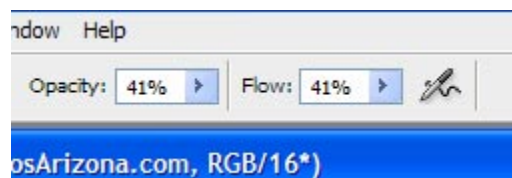
2. Remember, areas in a mask that are white allow the layer to show through, and areas that are black don't. Usually, I fill a mask with black and then use a white brush to pull out the few small areas that I want to show through. However, in this photo the windows were so large, and would be white, that I decided to fill in the layer with white instead of black, and use a black brush to show the adjustments I made to layer 1.
3. Since much of the frame had straight edges, I used a square brush to quickly paint in black on the mask to block out the window frame and cross bars, and a round brush for curved shapes. I wound up with this mask.



4. Because the edges of the window had peeling paint, and wood that had pulled away, it didn't have straight edges but edges that were bumpy and jagged. I zoomed into the image and used the square and round brush to refine the edges.
5. There were still a few edges where the white part of the mask came into the shapes that I wanted covered with black. This created thin 1-2 pixel wide dark lines on the edges of some areas. To overcome this I zoomed into these areas and refined the mask. I did this by selecting a soft brush and reducing the hardness.



And I reduced the opacity and flow of the brush to between 30% and 50%, depending on the area I was working on.



6. Now to put the magic of the tablet to work. The advantage of a tablet over a mouse is pen pressure. The Bamboo Pen tablet has 512 levels of pen pressure. Higher end models have 2048 levels of pen pressure. The harder you push on the pen, the denser the line. Adding pressure control to the hardness and opacity settings gives you an almost unlimited amount of control. To do this with a mouse would require you to create a different layer for each change in density. Or you could create the lightest line you want, then start to build up more density by going over different areas many times. That would take a lot of work and time.

With everything set, I slowly worked my way toward the edge of the mask until the black line disappeared. This resulted in a mask that had some soft areas on the edges.



These soft edges allowed the two layers to merge perfectly with no hard transitions, resulting in this image. Not only did I like seeing the view from outside the window, but I liked seeing all the crud on the glass. It adds to the feeling of age and neglect.



The pen tablet allowed me to make the detailed mask I needed with much less effort and time than would have been required with my laptop's touchpad. I was also able to make minute changes quickly and easily. This saved me a lot of time and frustration. And using the table was just a whole lot of fun.

If you want to take the next step in adjusting your photographs, I suggest you get a pen tablet. Mine was inexpensive, and as far as I'm concerned, it's already paid for itself.

Have Fun,
Jeff