

New Perspectives: Elda Castle Ruin
Rob Dublin

Elda Castle



Three years ago a photographer friend introduced me to the ruin of Elda Castle, which sits in the middle of a small park barely five miles from my house in Croton. Since then I have been back many times and recently, I have taken to composing very wide angle, close-up panoramas that unravel the various rooms and spaces in ways that challenge the viewer to look at them in a new way.



Elda was built in New Castle in 1927 by David Thomas Abercrombie to pursue an active outdoor life. It sits on a rocky promontory in the middle of a 22-acre property. It is a massive, multi-level, castle-like edifice comprised of four sections, including a tower, and 25 rooms.



After Mr. Abercrombie died in 1937 were a series of owners who were unsuccessful in their attempts to rehabilitate the property. Racked by time and vandals, the property is now an empty ruin in the middle of the woods.



The most striking room is the formal living or "great room." This large space, with exposed wood beams, hanging tapestries, green tile floor and big fireplace, hearkens back to the romanticized ideal of the great halls in medieval castles.



Panorama of the "great room." The graffiti changes over time.



Space leading into the great room.



Room with two couches and hallway leading further into the interior.



Downstairs room with staircase to second floor. Staircase is on wall not shown.



Staircase to the second floor.



One of the downstairs bedrooms.



This currently existing open space looks like it once had a roof and was the wing where the family lived.

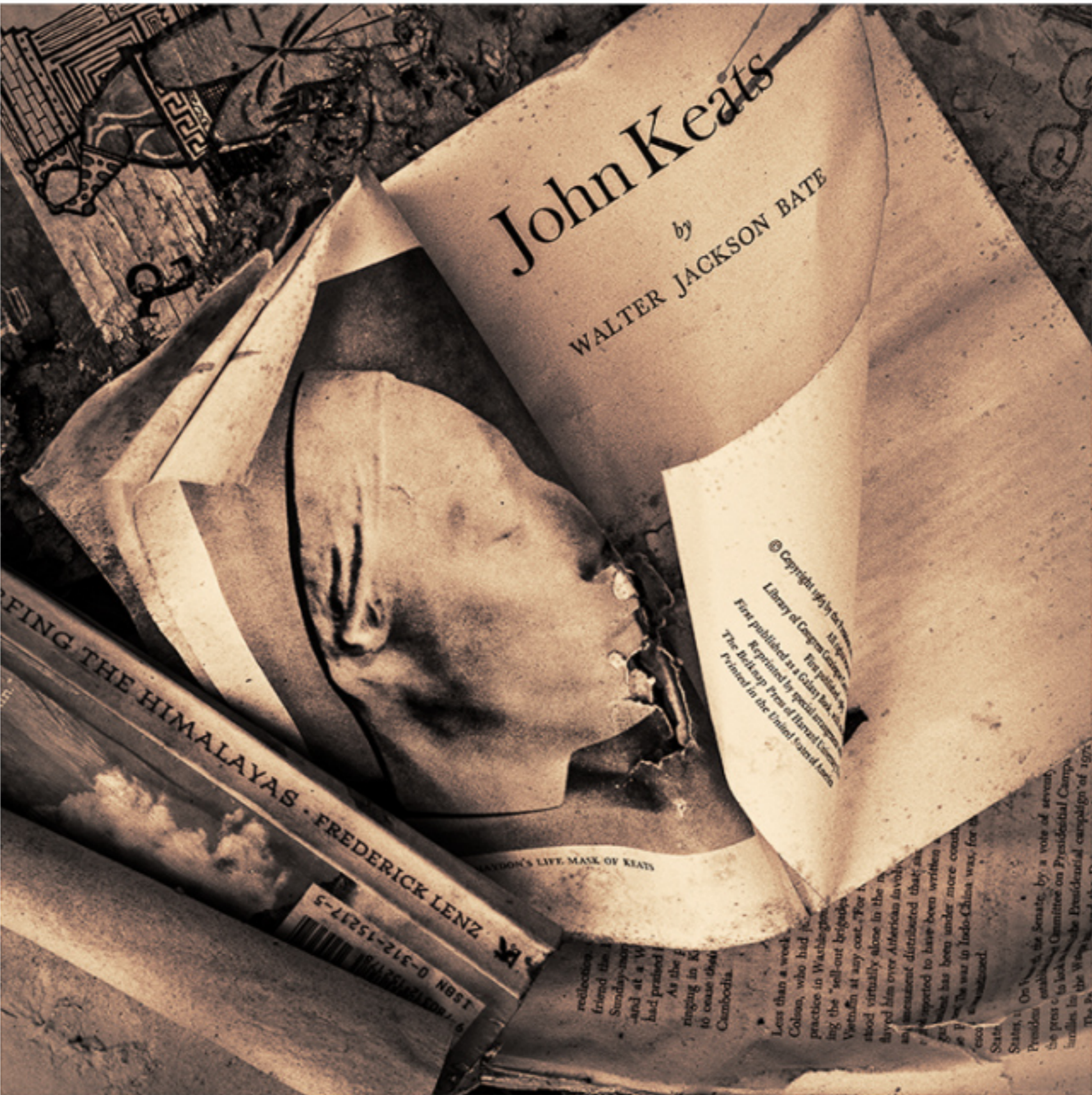


This room was inexplicably filled with books, now exposed to the elements.



...three years
Botticelli
the image
as emblem-
denied the
of the subject
a relief now lost,
to that in Vienna
other case, he has pene-
extraordinary affinity with
possibly have seen. He has recog-
of a frieze of dancers, and has
ment, animated by the rhythm of
to the impulse from which
drapery. So naked beauty reappears in the Renaissance as
first emerged in Greece, protected and enhanced by *drapery*
moillé. In the management of flowing lines he was
influenced by the figures of maenads, which were such a
motive in Hellenistic decoration. In a later chapter, we
discuss the maenads as embodiments of ecstatic energy, I suggest
that they may have been first invented by a painter; and it is
remarkable that the works of art that most closely resemble
Botticelli's *Graces* are the antique paintings of the *Seasons* from
Herculaneum. Obviously his figures are more slender and fragile
than the ample nudes of antiquity, though not more so than
those in the stucco reliefs from *Prima Porta* or *Hadrian's Villa*,
some of which he may have known. The real difference lies in
the more nervous articulation of each form and the more intri-





John Keats

by
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As the castle decays, the grafitti evolves.



I would like to thank local historian Miguel Hernandez, whose short history, "An Ossining Castle: David Abercrombie's 'Elda,'" provided background material for this work

Selfie of the artist in a broken bathroom mirror.