

# Tulsa Author Steve Gerkin Turns Photography Into Stories in Echoes of Light

*Tulsa author Steve Gerkin transforms Sam Joyner's photography into a multi-genre collection of stories, essays and poetry in Echoes of Light.*

TULSA, OK, UNITED STATES, September 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- TULSA, Okla. Author and essayist [Steve Gerkin's Echoes of Light: Images into Writing](#) grew from a friendship, a shared creative interest and a desire to preserve the work of photographer Sam Joyner.

The book brings together photography and writing across creative nonfiction, historical nonfiction, flash fiction, historical fiction and poetry. Each piece began with one of Joyner's black-and-white photographs, allowing the image to become a starting point for memory, imagination, history and story.

“

Just get behind the keyboard and let it rip. Revise later.”

*Steve Gerkin*

Gerkin, whose writing career spans more than two decades, developed the project with Joyner after the two longtime friends discussed the future of Joyner's photographic work. At the time, Joyner was living with advancing dementia and expressed concern that his photographic work might eventually disappear into what

he described as “dead folders” on a computer.

Gerkin proposed that they create a book together.

The idea quickly became a serious creative project. Gerkin selected photographs from Joyner's collection and began writing responses to the images. The resulting book was published in December 2024 through Twin Feathers Ink and later received recognition through the Oklahoma Book Awards program. According to Gerkin's website, Echoes of Light was named a 2025



Author Steve Gerkin reads from Echoes of Light: Images into Writing, the collection created in collaboration with photographer Sam Joyner.

Oklahoma Book Award winner.

At its center, *Echoes of Light* explores what can happen when photography and language meet.

### From Images to Writing

Gerkin's approach to the project was shaped by his earlier discovery of prompt-based and ekphrastic writing.

After retiring from general dentistry in 2010, Gerkin pursued creative writing and participated in writing workshops at the University of Iowa and Yale. Those experiences introduced him to exercises in which an object, photograph or other visual prompt could become the starting point for a story or poem.

Rather than feeling restricted by a prompt, Gerkin discovered that an image could open multiple creative directions. A photograph might lead to a memory, a historical idea, a fictional character or an unexpected narrative.

That approach became the foundation of *Echoes of Light*. The photographs provide the beginning of the process, but the writing is free to move beyond literal description.

Gerkin has described the experience of discovering creative writing as a major turning point in his life, saying the inspiration felt "more of a lighthouse" than a simple light bulb moment.

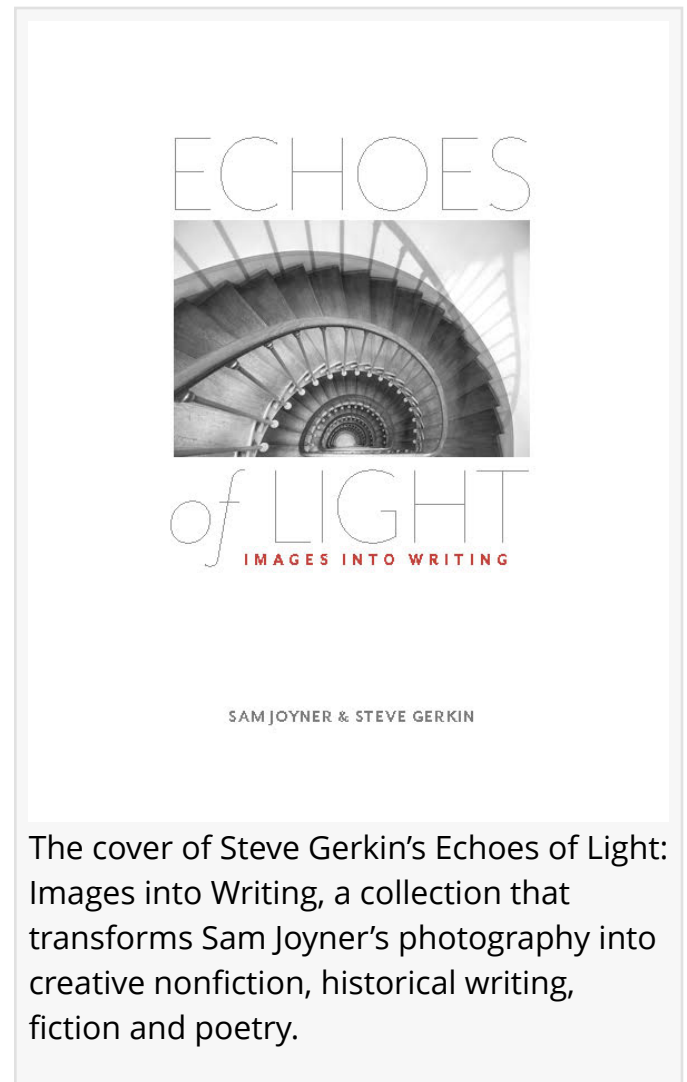
### A Collection Built on Variety

One of the defining characteristics of *Echoes of Light* is its movement between genres.

Gerkin intentionally blends creative nonfiction, historical nonfiction, flash fiction, historical fiction and poetry rather than placing each form into separate sections. The genres are woven throughout the collection so readers encounter different styles as they move through the book.

Each piece is identified by its genre, allowing readers to see how the same photographic prompt can produce very different forms of storytelling.

The photographs span a range of subjects and places, creating opportunities for Gerkin to move



The cover of Steve Gerkin's *Echoes of Light: Images into Writing*, a collection that transforms Sam Joyner's photography into creative nonfiction, historical writing, fiction and poetry.

from observation into imagination and from contemporary scenes into historical or fictional possibilities.

### A Writing Career That Began Later in Life

Gerkin's career as a published writer developed after his retirement from dentistry.

A chance conversation introduced him to This Land Press, a literary publication in Tulsa. Gerkin later connected with publisher and editor Michael Mason, and his first story for the publication became "Grapes of Wrath Revisited."

That experience helped open the door to a writing career centered in part on Tulsa, history and place. His books include *Hidden History of Tulsa*, *Someone Left the Gate Open* and *4th & Boston: Heart of the Magic Empire*. His stories have also appeared in *A Voice Was Sounding*.

Gerkin also returned to formal education later in life, earning an MFA in Creative Writing from Lesley University after beginning the program at age 72. His work has continued to include books, essays, screenwriting and creative nonfiction.

### Continuing to Write and Learn

Gerkin's interest in writing extends beyond producing his own books.

His work includes projects that examine literary craft and the techniques writers use to build effective stories. He has also remained involved in the Tulsa literary community and continues to encourage writers to develop their own voices.

His advice to emerging writers is direct: "Just get behind the keyboard and let it rip. Revise later."

That philosophy also captures the spirit of *Echoes of Light*. The photographs do not dictate the finished story. They create an opening, and Gerkin follows the possibilities.

### Looking Ahead

Gerkin continues to write and develop new projects. His upcoming work includes *Tomorrow Starts Today & Other Stories*, a collection of previously unpublished writing, and *What Makes Them Tick: Historic Writers Exposed*, a project focused on literary techniques used by established writers.

The broader direction of his career remains consistent: write, study, experiment and continue learning.

For Steve Gerkin, the process remains open-ended. A photograph can become a story. A memory can become an essay. A writing exercise can become a book.

And a creative idea that begins with two friends in conversation can become a lasting collaboration between image and language.

For more information about Steve Gerkin and *Echoes of Light: Images into Writing*, visit [stevegerkin.com](http://stevegerkin.com).

#### About Steve Gerkin

Steve Gerkin is an author and essayist whose writing career spans more than two decades. His work includes historical nonfiction, creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry and screenwriting, with a particular interest in history, place and the human experience. His books include *Hidden History of Tulsa*, *Someone Left the Gate Open*, *4th & Boston: Heart of the Magic Empire* and *Echoes of Light: Images into Writing*.

Steve

Gerkin

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