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My first photographs were of tiny birds perched on the branches of newly budded trees in Colorado’s Rocky Mountains. On a vacation with my family, I was seven or eight years old when I took these pictures.

The camera was a 35mm Instamatic, loaded with grainy black and white Kodak film. Back in Kansas City, my father had the film processed for me. Each time I looked at those glossy 3x5 prints (which was often), I felt joy and wonder. The birds — and the instrument that allowed me to make these pictures — inspired my mind and imagination.

Throughout my teenage years, I explored many career possibilities from science to the arts. Then, in college, a special gift became a compass that guided me back to photography.

For my 20th birthday, my father visited me at school and bought me a beautiful Canon SLR 35mm camera. As he had when I was a child, my father shined a light on my truth.

Within a few years, I was a photographer. My work has included commercial and editorial projects, individual assignments and fine art. Across the years, one theme has endured — my passion for earth’s botanical life.

Much of this can be attributed to the fact that I was born into botany.

I come from generations who have dedicated their lives to nurturing nature. Throughout my life I’ve been surrounded by trees, plants and flowers. From my extended family of florists, landscapers and growers, I inherited an appreciation and gratitude for the immeasurable value of nature.

Each time I hold my camera, I see more of nature’s infinite beauty and fierce resilience —and discoveries happen with every opportunity to take pictures.