



The Big Pictures:
MONUMENT VALLEY

A PORTFOLIO EDITED BY JEFF KIDA

PRECEDING PANEL: Snow from a winter storm blankets the iconic formations of Monument Valley. This view is from Hunts Mesa, an overlook on the south side of the valley. *Derek von Briesen*



ABOVE: Shadows form on Monument Valley's Camel Butte. The sandstone butte is one of several visible on Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park's scenic drive.

Tim Fitzharris

RIGHT: The fog-shrouded Three Sisters loom over snow-covered yuccas on the valley's floor. This amount of snow is uncommon in Monument Valley, which averages about 5 inches of snow per year.

Jack Dykinga





Rounded sandstone buttes punctuate a view of Monument Valley's Mittens after a rare heavy snow-storm. These rocks were made famous by a 1958 Ansel Adams photograph. *Derek von Briesen*

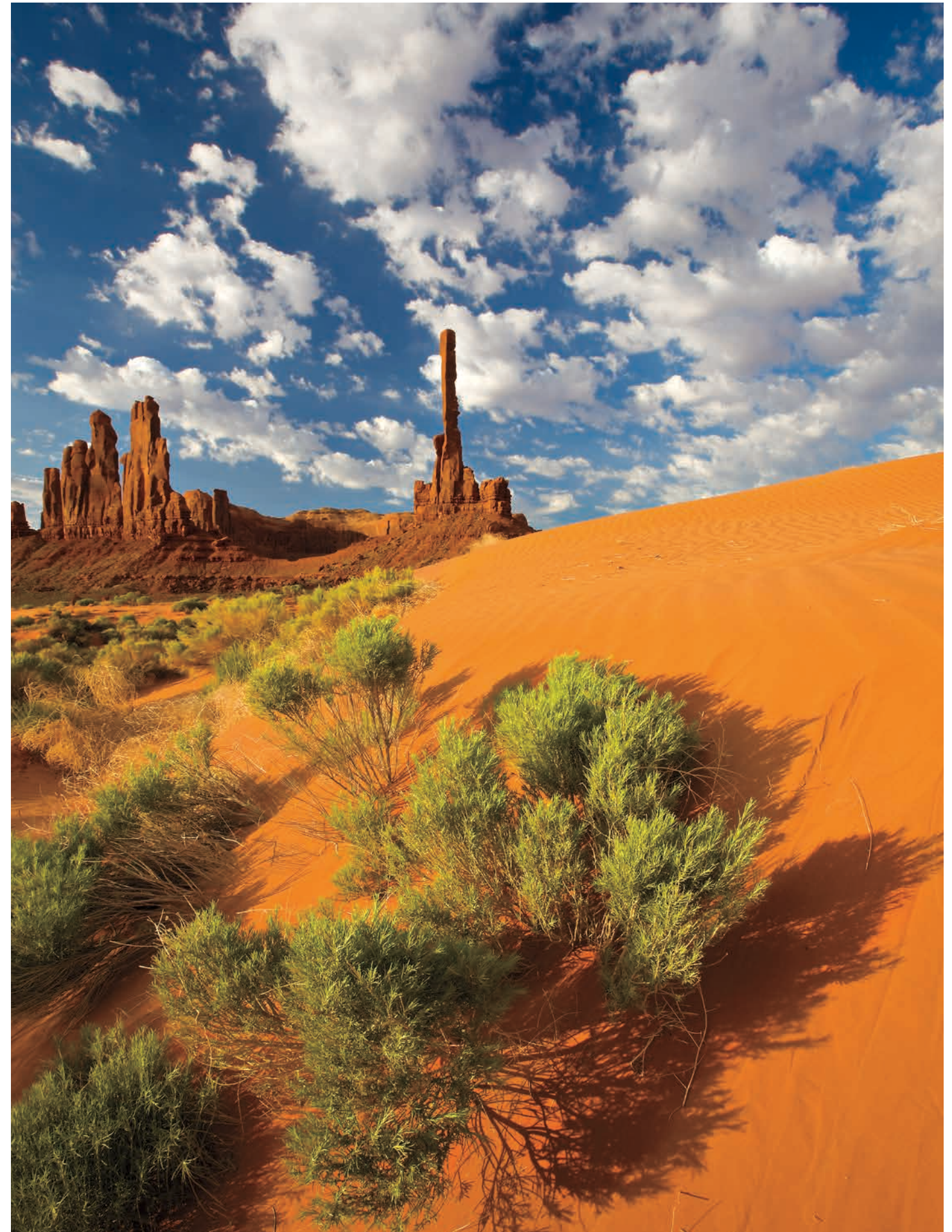
“So this is where God put the West.”

— JOHN WAYNE



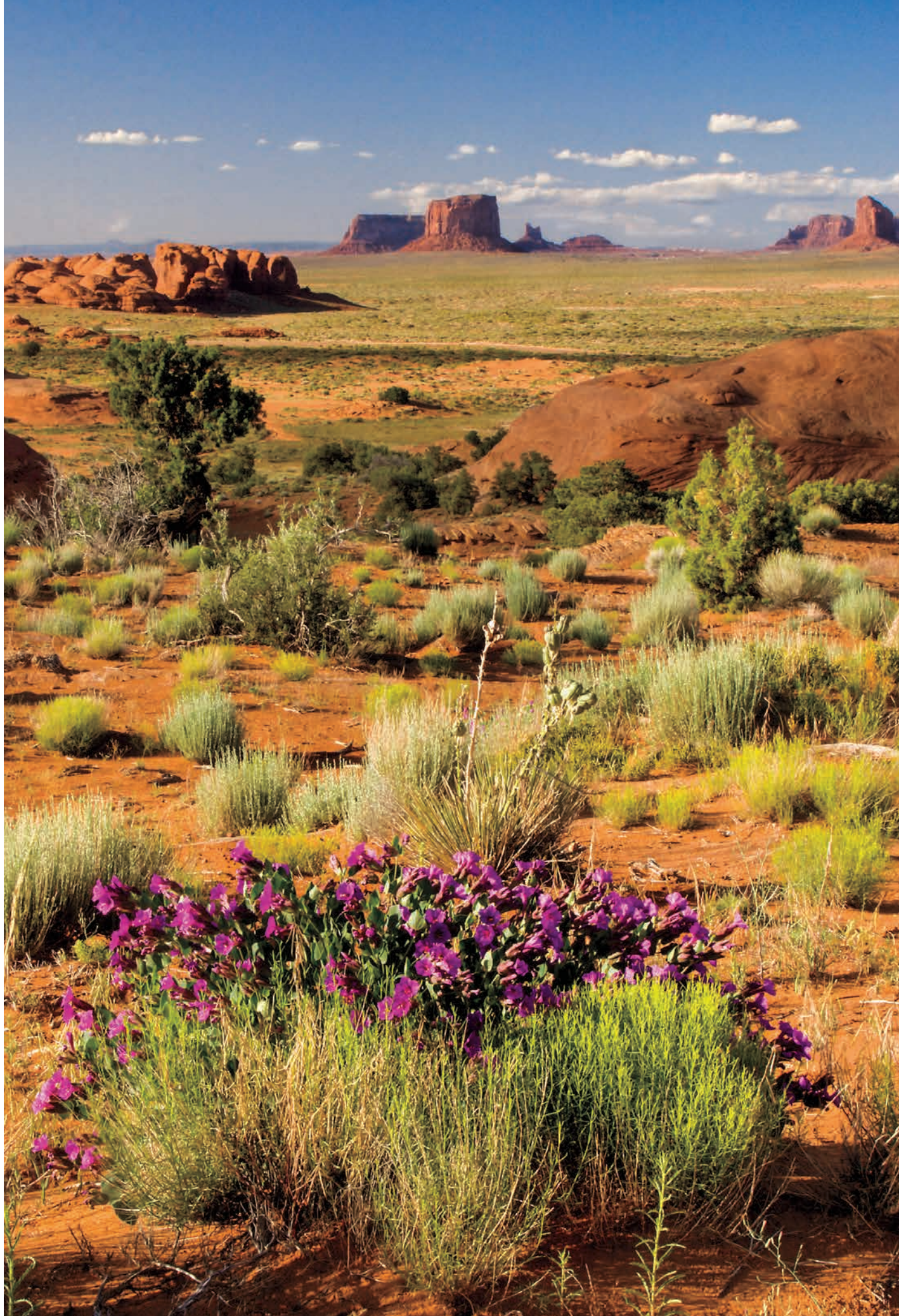
ABOVE: Utah junipers are encased in frost on the floor of Monument Valley. Average high temperatures here range from the low 40s in December and January to the low 90s in July.
Jack Dykinga

RIGHT: The Yei Bichei (left) and Totem Pole formations rise over one of the valley's sand dunes.
Derek von Briesen





A snowy landscape surrounds Monument Valley's best-known formations, the Mittens (left) and Merrick Butte. This vantage point is near the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park visitors center.
Paul Gill



LEFT: With Monument Valley's buttes in the distance, wildflowers and desert shrubs grow in Mystery Valley to the south.
Suzanne Mathia

ABOVE: Spiderweb Arch casts shadows on the sandstone landscape below. Like most of Monument Valley, the arch is off-limits to non-Navajos unless they hire an authorized Navajo guide.
Larry Lindahl



LEFT: A diagonal sandstone formation frames a wintry view of the Three Sisters.

David Muench

ABOVE: A determined wildflower grows through dried mud at Hunts Mesa. Because Monument Valley receives little annual precipitation, only hardy desert plants thrive there.

Suzanne Mathia



Predawn fog shrouds the Mittens — officially known as West Mitten Butte and East Mitten Butte. The summits of both are about 6,000 feet above sea level.
Kerrick James

“There were no lies here. All fancies fled away. That’s what happened in all deserts. It was just you, and what you believed.”

– TERRY PRATCHETT

Monument Valley is a jumble of striking rock formations. The geologic layers that form the valley’s buttes include Organ Rock shale, de Chelly sandstone and Moenkopi formation.
David Muench





Lightning from a monsoon storm looms behind Monument Valley's buttes. The dirt road visible here is Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park's scenic loop. *Suzanne Mathia*

Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park

Created by the Navajo Nation in 1958, Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park includes many of the valley's world-famous formations, including the Mittens, the Totem Pole and Yei Bichei. The park's entrance road is along U.S. Route 163 near the Arizona-Utah state line, and the

entrance fee is \$20 per vehicle, which covers up to four people. Once inside the park, you can explore Monument Valley's formations via an unpaved, 11.6-mile loop drive that features several scenic overlooks, such as John Ford Point and North Window. In good weather, the drive is suitable for passenger cars, but a high-clearance vehicle is recommended. You also can hike the Wildcat Trail, a moderate 3.2-mile loop that circles West Mitten Butte and offers stunning views of

both Mittens and Merrick Butte. That hike begins near the park's visitors center. In the same area, you'll find the View Hotel, which has hotel rooms, cabins, a campground and a restaurant. Other hikes and drives in Monument Valley, such as to Hunts Mesa, require a Navajo guide, which you can hire at the visitors center.

For more information, visit the Navajo Parks and Recreation website, www.navajonationparks.org.



“Sometimes I hear the still voices of the desert; they seem to be calling me through the echoes of the past.”

– MARTHA SUMMERHAYES



LEFT: Beneath the Three Sisters, melting snow creates a small waterfall along the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park scenic loop.

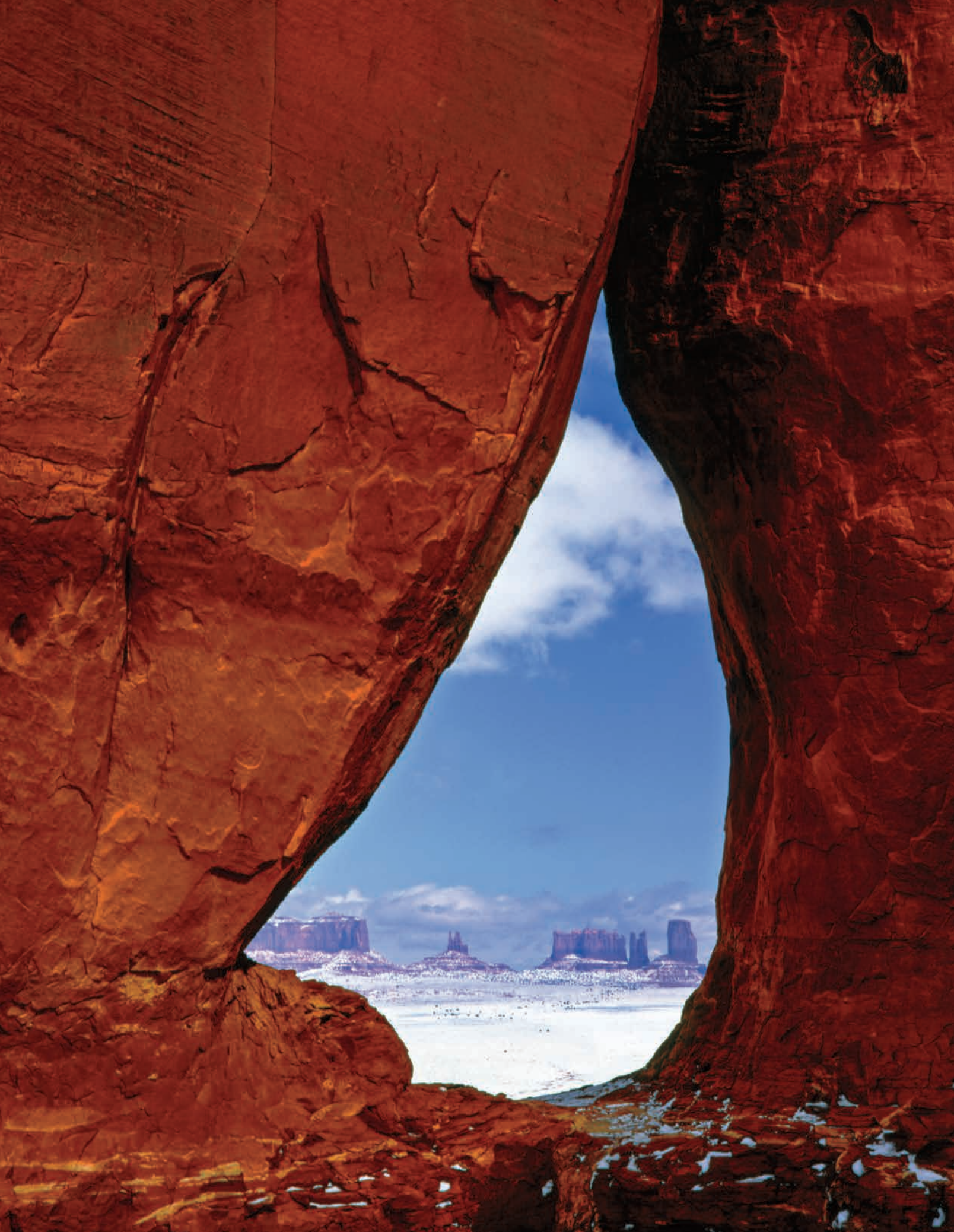
Derek von Briesen

ABOVE: Wind-sculpted ripples add texture to one of the valley's sand dunes.

Dean Hueber



A viewpoint known as the North Window frames several of the valley's buttes. This vantage point, one of several stops along the scenic drive in Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, is popular with photographers.
Bruce D. Taubert



“Night comes to the desert all at once,
as if someone turned off the light.”

– JOYCE CAROL OATES



LEFT: The formation commonly known as Tear Drop Arch, located near the Arizona-Utah state line, frames a view of a wintry Monument Valley to the southeast.

Kerrick James

ABOVE: Beneath a crescent moon, sunset silhouettes the Three Sisters.

Guy Schmickle



Yei Bichei and the Totem Pole reach skyward from Monument Valley's snowy landscape at sunrise.
Derek von Briesen



Partly obscured by clouds, Brigham's Tomb is flanked by the Big Indian (left) and the King-on-His-Throne. All three formations are southeast of U.S. Route 163 in the Utah portion of Monument Valley.
David Muench



Yei Bichei and the Totem Pole reach toward a starry night sky. There are no large cities near Monument Valley, making it an ideal stargazing location.

Shane McDermott

