

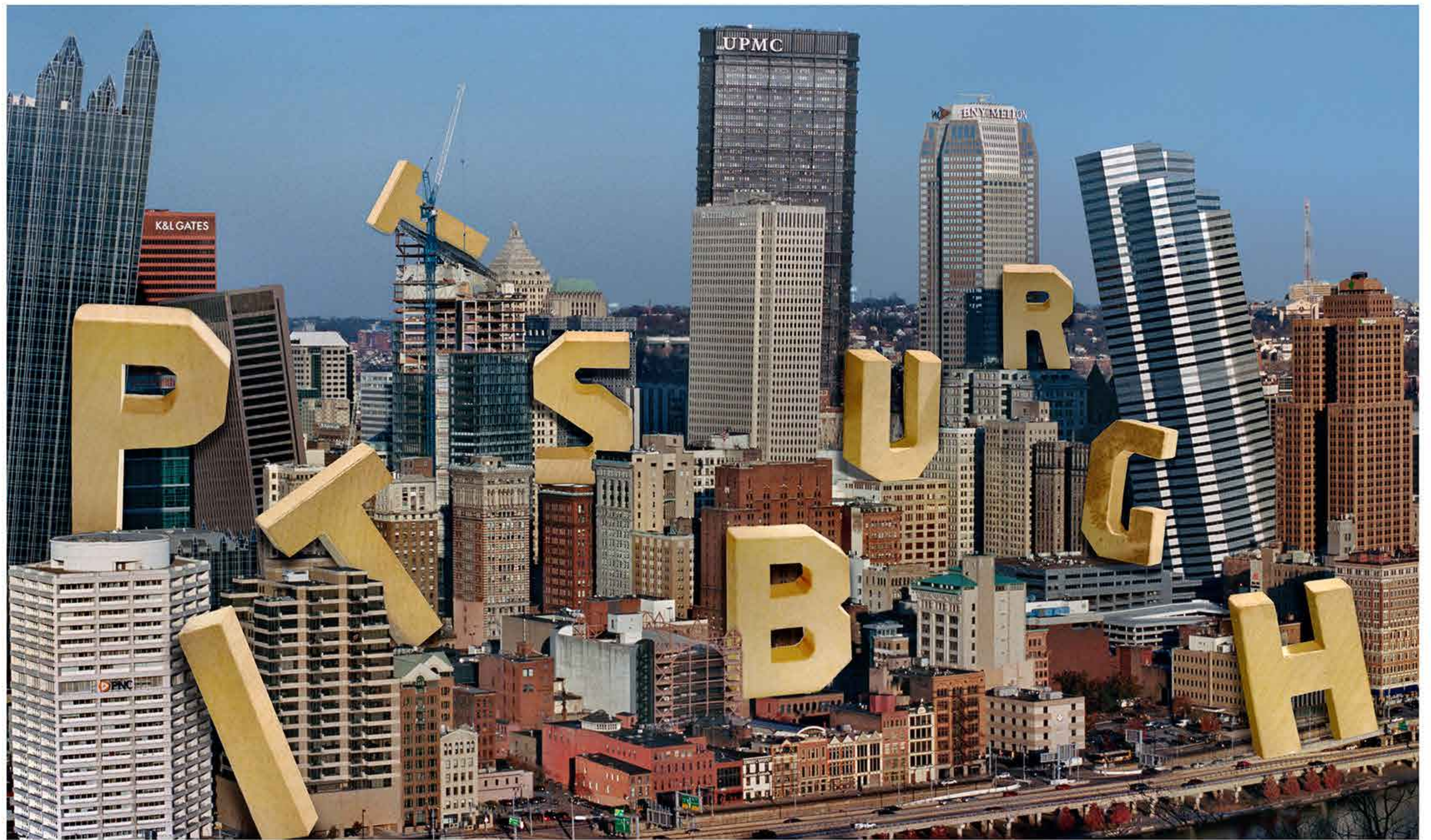
PITTSBURGH



THE  
GRAND

MYSTERY







*FIVE VIEWS OF THE CATHEDRAL OF  
LEARNING, IN THE MANNER OF HOKUSAI*

# PITTSBURGH

## *THE MYSTERYOPOLIS*

**Pittsburgh is the most poetic of all cities. There are more wizards, trolls, magicians and shamans in those hills and along its riverbanks than anywhere else. The three rivers baptize its citizens daily with flashes of moist sparkling lights. It has more knolls than Rome, more bridges than Venice, and more rivers than Paris.**

**Dallas is an arriveste nouveau riche-  
bitche, LA is as fake as a Hollywood  
movie set, Boston a nerd, Beauteous  
San Francisco doomed to shake rattle  
and roll, Chicago's waist is now as  
broad as its shoulders, Philadelphia's  
Katharine Heartburn is old money,  
Phoenix fell asleep, Las Vegas  
nuns have bad habits, Miami is old  
folks home, and New York shouts  
but Pittsburgh whispers.**



**At night from the heights of the  
Cathedral of Learning you can see  
the Eiffel tower's lights. Icarus was a  
student at Carnegie Mellon when he  
flew too close to the sun from the  
peak of Richardson's courthouse.  
Frick, Carnegie's trickster fixer, used  
the Pinkerton Huns to destroy  
The Homestead Homeboys.**

**NO UNIONS FOR YOU!**

**The great Egyptian pyramids were a cheap knock off of the Gulf building. Gene Kelly originally was a ballerina. A little known fact, Fred Rogers rooted for the Dodgers not the Pirates of Penzance. It was when Gertrude Stein drank a shot of four roses straight up that she wrote a “Rose is Rose is a Rose is a Rose.”**

**Alas!**

**Houdini made the steel mills disappear.**



**Pittsburgh and Faust struck a bargain,  
full of strum and drang, yellow rivers,  
a red sky at night, rumbling flames,  
smoke and clangs!**

**That city died from bad reviews. This  
new kaleidoscopic ville has smarts,  
driverless carts, Google giggles,  
downspouts and upstarts.**

**Picasso threw a banquet for Henri  
Rousseau and John Kane at the  
Crawford Grill on the Hill Street  
blues. Max Jacob brought Iron City  
Pilsners for all.**



**When G. David Thompson peaked, he sold his grand art collection in a pique, because of the Duquesne Club grandee's slights. He cut off Pittsburgh's nose to spite his face.**

**It's slopes are cloaked red with oriental poppies, purple exotic orchids, peonies, and cherry blossoms all year round.**

**For forty-thousand quarters, you can buy a Robert Qualters painting of his Provence Pittsburgh. Escher entered a Douglas Cooper drawing at the Fort Pitt tunnel and emerged upside down on Polish Hill.**

**Andy ate a can of Heinz Baked Beans  
and invented Fart Art.**

**Listen! Pittsburgh sounds like Leoš  
Janáček's Sinfonietta.**

**I once saw the Boulevard of the Allies  
decorated in banners and waving  
buntings with swooping larks  
ascending.**

**Venus and Vulcan were both born  
twins at the Fibber McGee Hospital,  
among the squirrels of Squirrel Hill.**



**Shakespeare was June, July, and August Wilson's mentor. And Wilson was Shakespeare's tormentor. Let's see what I can be, or not can be.**

***IF IT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD IT'S HERE!***

**Salute Edgar Kufmann Jr.'s Father's grand emporium, the Place Vendôme on Smithfield Street. It was as lovely as Falling Waterfall.**

**The Leaning Tower of Learning has the best Pisas in Pittsburgh.**

**Teenie Harris photographed The  
Homestead Grays' Satchel Paige's  
black and blue bruises.**

**George Roebling heard Stephen  
Foster sing Swanee while crossing  
the Smithfield Bridge on a Baumpy  
boulevard night.**

***THIS MUST BE MAGIC!***

# REMEMBER PITTSBURGH



I returned to Pittsburgh hoping to find the truth of my memories, and that part of me that I had left in those hills. The city seemed a place that I once ~~dreamt~~ dreamt about when I was young, where everything looked familiar, yet not all the same. Pittsburgh is as hard and beautiful as I recall, like a wise and mature man, still full of his strength but a little melancholy in his wisdom.

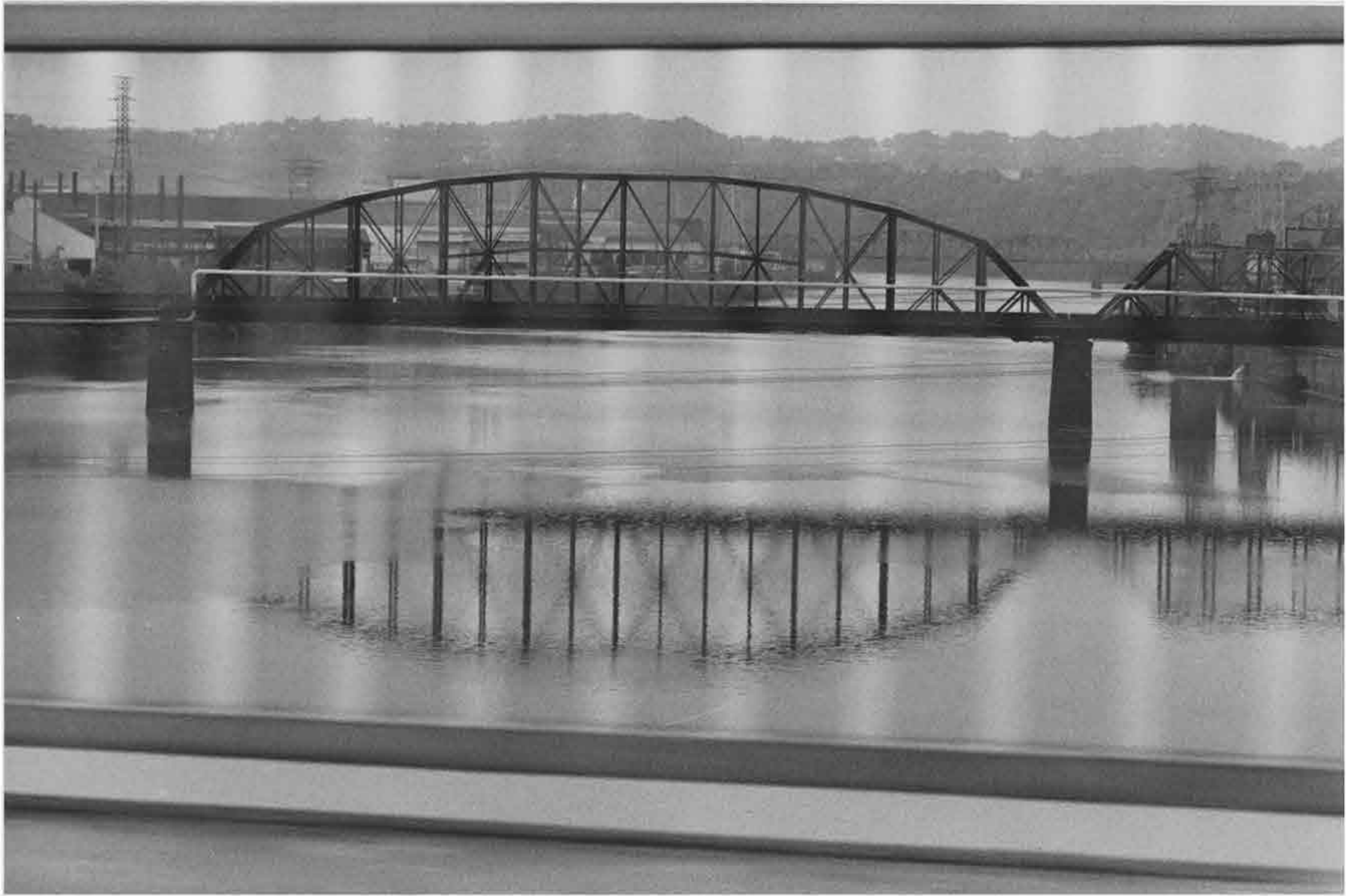
## THE HILLS OF PITTSBURGH



The hills of Pittsburgh lie along its river banks like sleeping women. This is the way they looked before we all arrived and how they will look long after we are gone.

## ORANGE

When I was a little boy, I thought all rivers were yellow and all nights were orange. It was a peculiar drama, and it all seemed very reasonable. I knew that when the night



skies were not orange, it meant my dad was not working and the mills were down. It was bad. When we went to Indiana to visit relatives, I felt sorry for those children. Their nights were only black and without magic.

## THE STREET CARS



The street cars still move along the rivers and up the hills, back and forth, back and forth. They have faithfully carried us to our destinies. Would I ~~sound~~ sound foolish that I found them comforting?

## THE CASINO

When I was seventeen, my friend Don and I told our parents that we were going to Forbes field to a Knights of Columbus rally. But instead we went to Forbes street to visit a burlesque house



called the Casino. By today's standards it was all very innocent, but for us it was exciting and amazing. We began to grow up. Today the Casino is now a parking lot.

## KAUFMANN'S

Going downtown always meant going to Kaufmann's. My mother worked there to help my brother through medical school, and I did too one summer. In February the scholastic art show exhibited in their auditorium, and I'd spend all year preparing.



But the best thing was Kaufmann's great art deco first floor. It was all black ~~with~~ marble with giant murals. Then the Kaufmann family sold the store, and the new owner removed it. Kaufmann's became ordinary.

## VALENTINE MIHAL



My grandfather was a kind and wonderful man named Valentine Mihal. He worked in a steel mill all his life as did his son. The work was hot, dirty, and long, and they were ill paid for it. My father drank. He had good reasons.

## THE NIXON THEATER

The Nixon theater was a grand legitimate theater where I saw my first Broadway play. The balcony was so steep that one would look through one's knees to watch the production.



The Alcoa company bought the old theater and demolished it to erect their office headquarters. I never understood why they ~~chose~~ chose this site when there were so many other buildings that deserved destruction. I've never forgiven the Alcoa Company.

# ***THE PITTSBURGH PINACLE***

**Paris has the Eiffel Tower.**

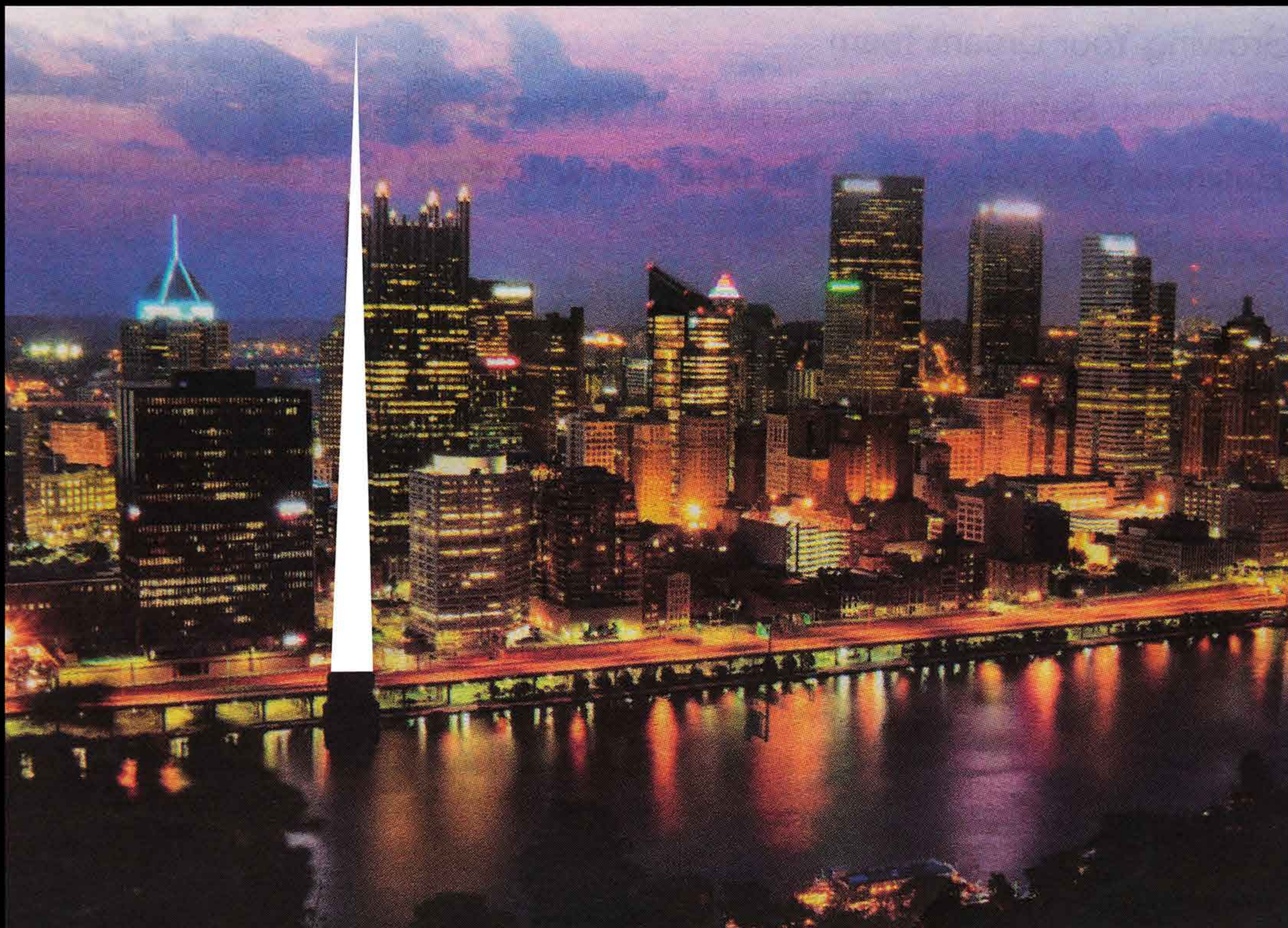
**St. Louis has The Gateway Arch.**

**New York has The Empire State Building.**

**I propose a symbol for Pittsburgh.**

**A luminous shaft of light pointing  
towards the future. Elegantly piercing  
the clouds, proud and confident.**

**Hooray for Pittsburgh!**



# PITTSBURGH PINNACLE