On most Fridays in 1938, Jeannette Klute (1918–2009) visited the personnel office of Eastman Kodak Company in search of employment. Yet, each time, she was turned away. Klute was twenty years old and had spent the year enrolled in the Mechanics’ Institute, then located in downtown Rochester, NY. When she enrolled in the Mechanics’ Institute, it was during the closing years of the Great Depression (fig. 1). Jobs were still scarce — even in a company town such as Rochester — and technical or trade programs pointed a new path to skilled jobs and, hopefully, financial security. For Klute, as for other Rochester residents, Kodak represented a singular hometown company for possible employment: “The word was that Kodak was the place to work, so I thought…why don’t I take photography and get a job at Kodak. Nothing to it.”1 But securing a position at Kodak, especially if one was a woman, was anything but easy. That was until October of 1938 when a personnel director, worn down by Klute’s persistence, finally gave her a position as a photography technician developing exposed film. For the next forty-three years, she worked at Kodak, enlarging her role far beyond that of a lab technician. Klute’s career would intersect with the company’s authoritative status in the popular development of modern color photography in the 1940s and 1950s and then later, in the 1970s, the re-discovery of pioneering women photographers by feminist counterparts involved in the women’s movement.

The Mechanics’ Institute’s mission fulfilled the instructional purpose of similar education centers situated around the world: providing access to

1. Jeannette Klute’s yearbook picture from Mechanics’ Institute, 1939.
In development and refinement, Klute played a key role in Dye Transfer printing technology in particular, and color photography, such as Kodachrome, in general. Her central position as a research photographer of color processes and materials can be attributed not only to her own ambitions as a photographer, but to her working relationship with Kodak scientist, Ralph M. Evans, a world authority in the disciplines of color and vision. Within two years of arriving at Kodak, Klute was invited by Evans, then head of color development and quality control in Kodak laboratories, to provide illustrations for his slide lectures, articles, and books. She would work closely with Evans until his retirement in 1971.

A 1929 graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Evans trained in physics, maintaining a strong interest in color science and photography. At Kodak (1928, 1935–1971), in addition to supervising the development of color processes, he took up the study of the phenomena of color and vision. Evans’ first book, *An Introduction to Color*, published in 1948, is regarded today as a classic text on modern color science, attentive to the physiological and psychological implications of color in photography. Herbert Kalmus, acclaimed color scientist and president of the Technicolor Motion Picture Corporation, wrote in a 1949 review that the book was a “must for the artist, technician, and scientist in color and related arts.”

Evans described complex technical or theoretical concepts with the persuasive use of accessible, well-composed illustrations in his books. In *An Introduction to Color*, Klute’s black and white and color photographs, reproduced from original Dye Transfer images produced in Evans’ lab, share pages with detailed graphic presentations of scientific representations. Whether photographic or diagrammatic, illustrations served as a further example or elucidation to deepen the weight of Evans’ written perspective. An instance of this is Plate V in *An Introduction to Color Photography* (fig. 3), where Klute illustrates how, as the accompanying caption describes, the “perception of depth is affected by the lighting contrast of a scene.”

3. Plate V from *An Introduction to Color* by Ralph M. Evans, 1948. This plate describes how “perception of depth is affected by the lighting contrast of a scene.” Illustration by Jeannette Klute.
In the book, *Eye, Film, and Camera in Color Photography*, published in 1959, Evans made his technical ideas about color photography more accessible to the reader. Importantly, he wrote with the photographer’s point of view or intention specifically in mind:

What an observer sees when he looks at a scene, can be and usually is very different from what he sees when he is looking at an ‘accurate’ color photograph of that scene. The contents of this book are the result of twenty years of continuing investigation into this difference in its various aspects. This has been done both to learn what the differences are and to find out how the photographer may either offset them or make use of them for his particular purposes.⁴
Blue Eyed Grass
Blue Green