

Rim Lighting

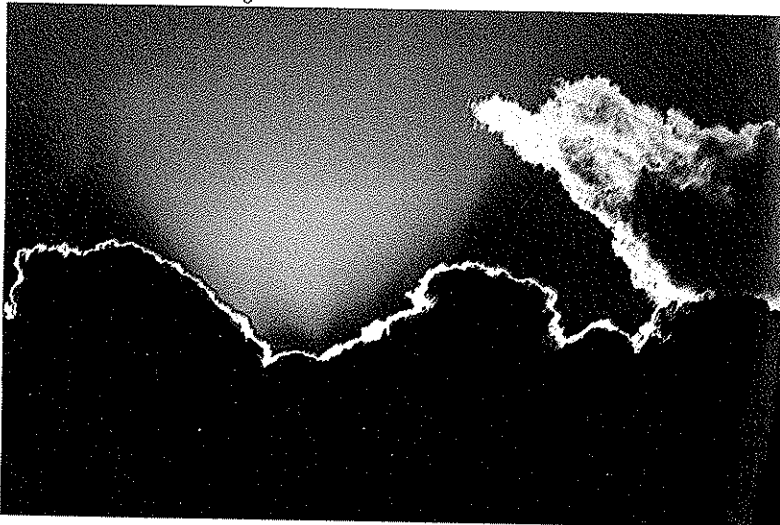
When a strong light source, such as the early morning or late afternoon sun, is directly behind a subject, it can produce a brilliant rim of light that seems to emanate from within the subject. The effect is most pronounced along edges that catch the light and diffuse it, such as hair and sheer clothing, the fine filaments and drops of liquid on a leaf, or the translucent edge of a dark cloud.

In portraits, the atmosphere of luminosity that rim lighting creates can be very flattering, particularly when the subject's hair has an interesting texture. In shooting, though, you must use extra care to prevent the subject from being turned into a dark silhouette by the strong backlighting. The front of the subject should be lighted from a soft, diffused light source, such as a reflector or a white wall. And you must expose for the relatively dim illumination on the subject.

With a camera that can be used in manual mode, take a light reading by angling the camera so that the lens receives light from only the subject. With an automatic camera that has an exposure adjustment switch, set it for one or two *f*-stops more exposure. For completely automatic cameras that have no exposure override control, reset the camera's ASA dial to half of your film's normal rating to get one stop more exposure (see page 36). The extra effort will be worth it. The bright background will become very overexposed, heightening the luminous atmosphere.

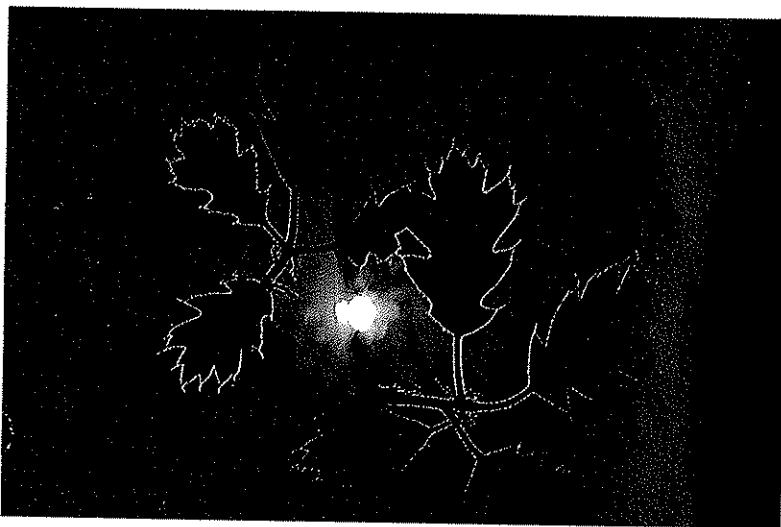
For certain subjects, such as the leaves shown here, you may want to create the effect of silhouetting to delineate the shapes dramatically. In this case, you should experiment by underexposing the subject one or two *f*-stops.

© 1981 Harald Sund/The Image Bank



As a dark thunderhead passes in front of the sun, the cloud's leading edge is dramatically outlined in white.

Michael Sutton



Backlighting that catches on filaments and dewdrops sharply defines the shapes of leaves and at the same time silhouettes them, creating a dark picture with mysterious overtones.

24

100 Special Situations

▶ *A young girl takes on an almost angelic glow as strong sunlight brilliantly halos her hair and gives a soft translucence to her gown.*

Gene Ursch

