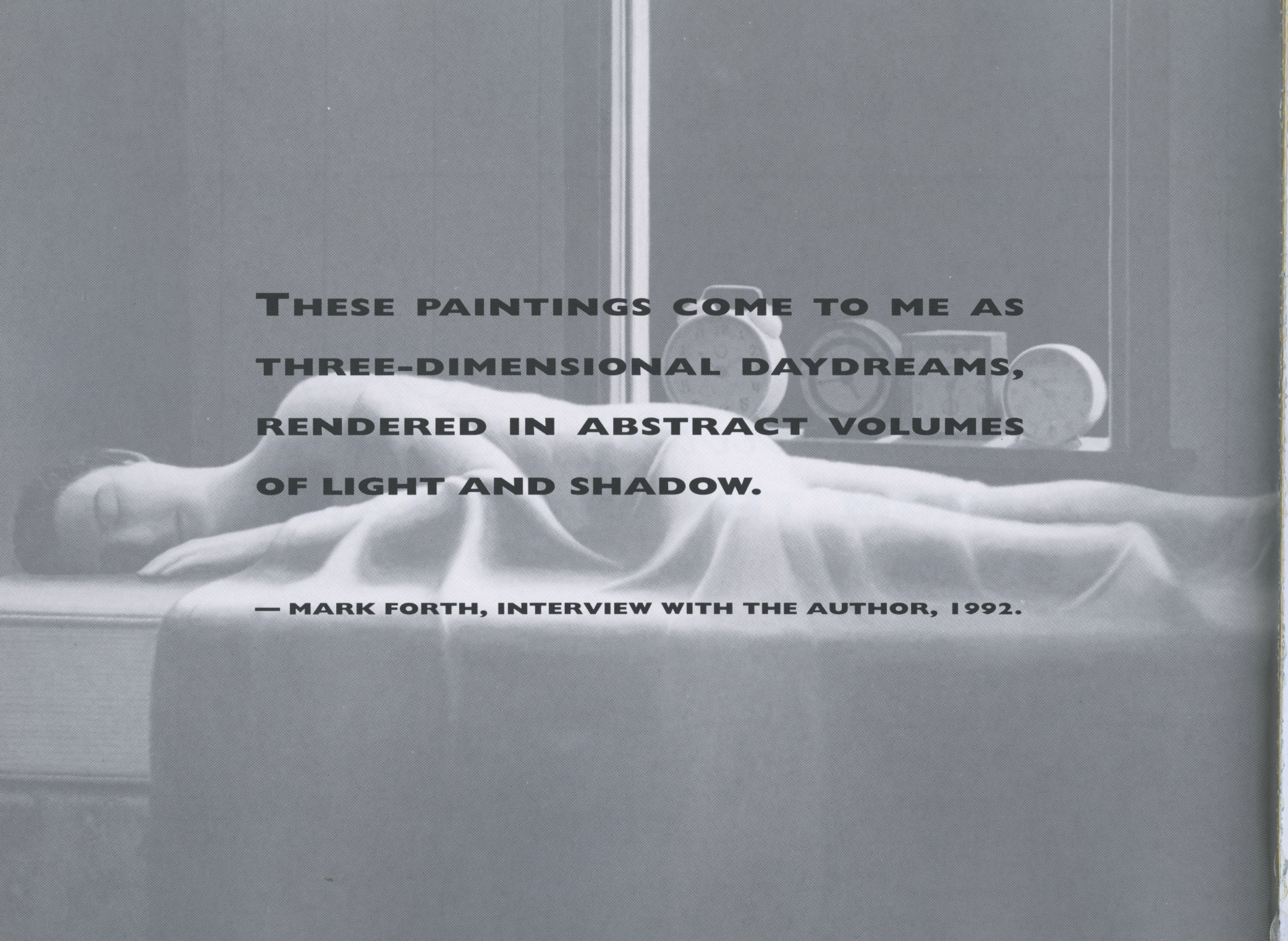


A surreal illustration of a person sleeping in a bed. The person is lying on their side, covered with a yellow blanket. The bed is positioned in a room with dark wood paneling. On the left, a red wooden nightstand holds a large, multi-colored alarm clock. On the right, another red wooden nightstand holds several smaller, various-colored alarm clocks. A window in the background shows a dark night sky with stars. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a warm, yellowish glow from the blanket and the nightstands.

*Fractured Tales*  
**FROM THE HEARTLAND**

M A R K F O R T H



**THESE PAINTINGS COME TO ME AS  
THREE-DIMENSIONAL DAYDREAMS,  
RENDERED IN ABSTRACT VOLUMES  
OF LIGHT AND SHADOW.**

**— MARK FORTH, INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR, 1992.**

# BACK AND FORTH

Viewers of Mark Forth's paintings enter a realm of stillness and shadow, where antique furnishings, austere architecture and eerie lighting become interpreters for mute figures that stand, crouch, or recline impassively. Like somnambulists, these single or paired characters perform their quotidian rituals: boiling or pouring water, turning on lights, reading, working with tools, and especially looking. No reveries illuminate the glances of the oddly rendered people—their solitude remains inviolate. Nor is there promise of a clarifying vision in the dark landscape beyond the windows and doors of their chambers. The only possible clues as to the mysteries locked within these sparsely furnished rooms lie in meticulously articulated and curiously situated household objects: teacups lined up on a bedpost, tinted glass bottles on shelves and bureaus, a cluster of antique alarm clocks on a windowsill, a painted porcelain lamp lying on the floor.

**Beauty . . . is nothing else than an amicable enmity and a concordant discord.**

— Pico della Mirandola, *Commento II*

In *Psyche and the Comedian*, a clothed man seated at the edge of a bare mattress carves a tree branch, perhaps to make a drumstick for a drum placed on the floor nearby. A nude woman



*Night Train*  
1990



*Spring II*  
1991

*Works in the Exhibition\**

**MARK FORTH**

**Sleepless**

1988  
oil on canvas  
30 1/2 x 40 1/2 inches  
collection of Nancy Lurie, Chicago

**Psyche and the Comedian**

1989  
oil on canvas on masonite  
36 x 42 1/2 inches  
collection of Rodney Carswell, Chicago

**Saturday Morning**

1989  
oil on canvas on masonite  
18 x 13 1/2 inches  
collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

**Night Train**

1990  
oil on canvas  
38 3/4 x 46 1/2 inches  
collection of June and Francis Spiezer, Northbrook, Illinois

**Bad Girl Blues**

1990  
oil on canvas  
37 x 47 1/2 inches  
collection of Renee and Sanford Bank, Highland Park, Illinois

**Temporary Source of Two Lights**

1990  
oil on canvas  
45 x 54 1/2 inches  
courtesy of the artist, Bloomington, Illinois

**Birds**

1990  
oil on canvas on masonite  
22 3/4 x 26 1/4 inches  
courtesy of the artist, Bloomington, Illinois

**Equine I**

1990  
oil on canvas  
25 3/4 x 32 1/4 inches  
collection of Nancy Lurie, Chicago

**Swing Set**

1990  
oil on canvas  
39 x 46 inches  
collection of University Galleries, Illinois State University, Normal

**Time II**

1991  
oil on canvas  
40 1/2 x 50 inches  
collection of Ethel B. Rosenthal, Northbrook, Illinois

**Sheep**

1991  
oil on canvas  
40 1/2 x 56 inches  
collection of Nick Di Benedetto, Chicago

**Curtain**

1991  
oil on canvas  
26 x 31 1/2 inches  
collection of Darrell R. Windle, Chicago

**Swing Set II**

1991  
oil on canvas  
27 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches  
collection of Claire and Gordon Prussian, Chicago

**Spring II**

1991  
oil on canvas  
36 1/2 x 45 inches  
collection of Sophia and Marshall Marcovitz, Glencoe, Illinois

**Birthday**

1991  
oil on canvas  
27 1/2 x 34 1/2 inches  
collection of Marlene Gregor, Bloomington, Illinois

**Seeds**

1992  
oil on canvas  
36 1/2 x 50 1/4 inches  
collection of Illinois State University, Normal

**Spring VII**

1992  
oil on canvas  
48 1/2 x 41 inches  
courtesy of the artist, Bloomington, Illinois

**Spring VI**

1992  
oil on canvas on masonite  
22 1/2 x 19 1/2 inches  
courtesy of the artist, Bloomington, Illinois

**Sleep Sleep**

1992  
oil on canvas on masonite  
26 3/8 x 31 1/4 inches  
courtesy of the artist, Bloomington, Illinois

*\* dimensions listed include frames*

*Fractured Tales*  
**FROM THE HEARTLAND**

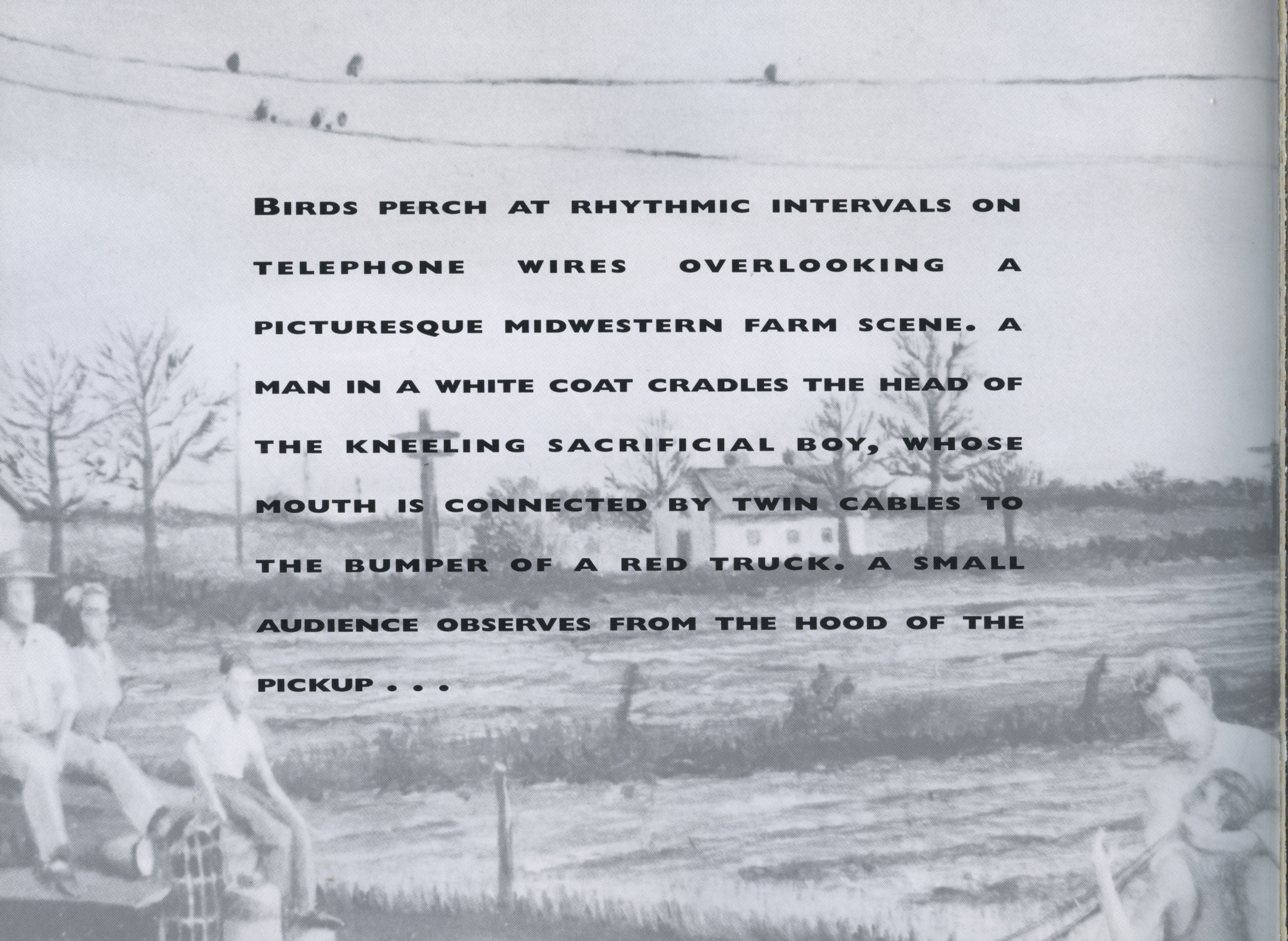


DAVID D. HODGES

D A V I D

*Fractured Tales*  
**FROM THE HEARTLAND**

H O D G E S



**BIRDS PERCH AT RHYTHMIC INTERVALS ON  
TELEPHONE WIRES OVERLOOKING A  
PICTURESQUE MIDWESTERN FARM SCENE. A  
MAN IN A WHITE COAT CRADLES THE HEAD OF  
THE KNEELING SACRIFICIAL BOY, WHOSE  
MOUTH IS CONNECTED BY TWIN CABLES TO  
THE BUMPER OF A RED TRUCK. A SMALL  
AUDIENCE OBSERVES FROM THE HOOD OF THE  
PICKUP . . .**

WITH  
THE

# greatest UNEASE

Looking at a David Hodges painting is like peering through the wrong end of a telescope at a distant place you have seen before and are not quite sure you would ever want to visit again. Yet you do, repeatedly, seeking a glimpse through tangled threads of memory at the perfect isolation one experiences during moments of existential realization. Hodges' tiny paintings invariably allude to the dreamlike links, seepages and distortions that occur when we try to recall the past in speech, in written word or in images. Within his spatially and psychologically compressed compositions we find bizarre characters involved in the most common of scenarios, relatively normal-looking folk engaged in absurd activity, or, as in the most insidious nightmare, a detached parade of somewhat believable events building gradually toward an unaccountable sense of anxiety.

Hodges is a self-taught painter with a degree in philosophy who grew up in a household deeply immersed in the Pentecostal faith. Referring to the practice of talking in tongues, a memorable part of his boyhood church experience, the artist relates: "It's about accepting the normalcy of nonsensical language. You believe that the person may not understand what he or she is saying, but has the faith to know it means *something*." Indeed, finding meaning where it is not readily apparent is a transformative aspect of both art and religion that Hodges twists, bends,



THE LAST SURVIVING PORTRAIT  
OF A DOUBLE MINDED MAN

1992



NO BOYS: THIS CAME OFF A COW  
1990

*Works in the Exhibition\**

**DAVID HODGES**

**I ASKED HIM TO TRAVEL WITH ME**

1987  
oil on panel, wood frame, engraved plaque  
1 1/2 x 2 1/4, 10 3/4 x 13 3/4  
collection of First National Bank of Chicago

**WOULD I RATHER BE HEALED OR HAVE MY SINS ALL FORGIVEN**

1987  
oil on panel, wood frame, engraved plaque  
2 x 2 1/2, 12 3/4 x 15 3/4  
collection of First National Bank of Chicago

**YOU MAY BE FORCED TO PICK COTTON**

1988  
oil on panel, wood frame, engraved plaque  
1 1/2 x 8 3/4, 16 x 30  
collection of S. Ronald Stone and Dart Gallery, Chicago

**YOU CAN EAT MORE THAN I CAN BEAR**

1989  
oil on panel, wood frame, engraved plaque  
1 3/4 x 2 3/4, 13 x 19  
collection of Karen and Daniel Lee, Chicago

**DADDY ALWAYS ASKED US WHAT WE WOULD DO IF JESUS CAME BACK LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT**

1989  
oil on panel, wood frame, engraved plaque  
3 1/4 x 1 3/4, 20 x 13  
collection of Judith B. Williams, Chicago

**HE HAD TO KNOW IF ANYTHING HAD EVER BEEN BROKEN**

1989  
oil on panel, wood frame, engraved plaque  
1 1/4 x 1 3/4, 13 x 16  
collection of Jeffrey Mercer and Linda Glass, Chicago

**WHAT A BEAUTIFUL THOUGHT I AM THINKING CONCERNING A GREAT SPECKLED BIRD**

1989  
oil on panel, wood frame, engraved plaque  
1 1/2 x 3 1/2, 13 x 19  
collection of Alan Cravitz, Chicago

**HE ALWAYS TOLE ME THAT IT WOULD SOUND LIKE A TRAIN AT FIRST**

1989  
oil on three panels, wood frames, engraved plaques  
1 1/2 x 2 7/8, 13 1/4 x 19 1/8  
Private Collection, Princeton, New Jersey

**HE HAD TO TEACH ME HOW TO SOUND LIKE A TRAIN**

1989  
oil on panel, wood frame, engraved plaque  
1 3/4 x 1 1/2, 16 x 13  
collection of Rena and Daniel Sternberg, Glencoe, Illinois

**YOU LOST YOUR LAST RIDE**

1990  
oil on plastiform with antique oval frame and engraved plaque  
2 x 1 1/4, 22 3/4 x 16 1/2  
collection of Roy and Ann Boyd, Chicago

**NO BOYS: THIS CAME OFF A COW**

1990  
oil on plastiform with antique oval frame and engraved plaque  
1 7/8 x 2 5/8, 22 3/4 x 16 3/4  
courtesy of Galerie Albrecht, Munich

**DON'T EXPECT TO CATCH ANYTHING TONIGHT**

1990  
oil on plastiform with antique oval frame and engraved plaque  
2 3/4 x 1 7/8, 22 1/2 x 16 1/2  
courtesy of Galerie Albrecht, Munich

**OH FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES**

1991  
oil on plastiform with antique oval frame and engraved plaque  
1 3/8 x 2 3/8, 19 x 25  
collection of Roy and Ann Boyd, Chicago

**IF I CAN OVERCOME LAZINESS THERE WILL BE RESTLESSNESS IN MY FEET**

1991  
oil on plastiform with antique oval frame and engraved plaque  
1 1/8 x 2, 22 3/4 x 16 1/2  
courtesy of the artist, Chicago

**I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN A TALL THIN BLACK MAN**

1992  
oil on masonite with antique oval frame  
2 3/4 x 1 5/8, 25 x 19 1/2  
courtesy of Dart Gallery and the artist, Chicago

**BLIND HARMONY**

1992  
oil on masonite with antique oval frame, embroidered towel, hymnal and table  
3 1/2 x 21/2, 64 x 23 x 18 overall dimensions  
courtesy of Dart Gallery and the artist, Chicago

**I SAW YOU AT THE SAWMILL**

1992  
oil on masonite with antique oval frame  
2 x 1 3/8 inches, image size  
14 1/4 x 11 1/4 inches, framed  
courtesy of Dart Gallery and the artist, Chicago

**THE LAST SURVIVING PORTRAIT OF A DOUBLE MINDED MAN**

1992  
oil on panel with antique oval frame  
5 x 2 3/4 inches, 25 x 18 3/4  
courtesy of Dart Gallery and the artist, Chicago

**MY TEETH ARE STILL NOT HEALED**

1992  
oil on two panels with gold-leafed frames, shelf, etched glass, handkerchiefs, false teeth and plastic-sealed painting on plastiform  
overall dimensions variable  
courtesy of Galerie Albrecht, Munich

\* *dimensions are listed in inches, with image size first, followed by framed size.*