

Daisy Drive, July 2015

Taneytown, Maryland

Nothing blooms on Daisy Drive, two blocks off Main Street, edge of town. Every fourth or fifth home sits dark, a smile of row houses missing teeth. On each blank face, a doorknob lock box and window paperwork: utility shut-off, eviction, vacancy, winterized plumbing. Here, plump boys chase each other with neon water guns; dogs run trenches behind rusted chain link. Unemployed pick-up trucks with stagnant mosquito pools stinking in flatbeds where tools used to rattle, leaves and sticks piled on the upstream side of their tires, languish like wrecks washed ashore in the recession tide. A gaunt woman's heavy-lidded eyes stare down her cigarette as I roll past her into this flung-aside galaxy at the loose end of time.

Previously secured. Perform interior inspection. The app says the gate's busted, mold inside, filth and grime throughout, animal feces, renovation of sliding glass doors incomplete, back yard storm damage, carpet removed. *Occupancy indicators: meters off; yard not maintained.* I tick off the wounds one-by-one, triaging the aftermath of an economic implosion. *Common areas, bathroom, bedroom.*

Afternoon sun spears into the kitchen. I ignore the holes in the drywall, get seven pictures of the gap where the refrigerator stood. *New damage: missing appliance. Location: kitchen. Estimated amount: six hundred dollars.* Outside, a round girl cradles a cat to her porch as I lock up under the shadow of a wind-bent oak cooling the cracked sidewalk where a child has chalked her dreams in pastels. Someone who cares has cordoned off her masterpiece, black and yellow caution tape waving in the breeze.

Matt Hohner