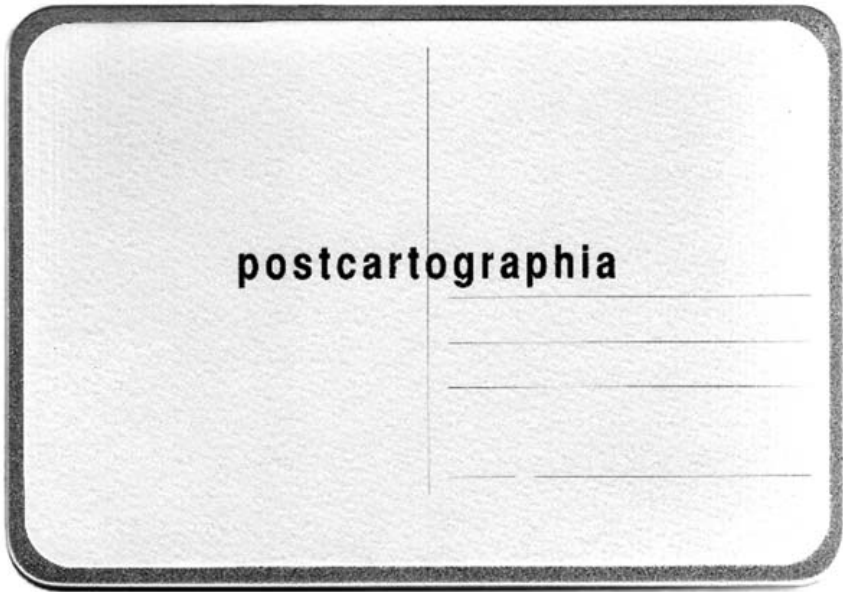


Postc[art]ographia: A Mapwork Project About Identity and Place

Wanda Hurren

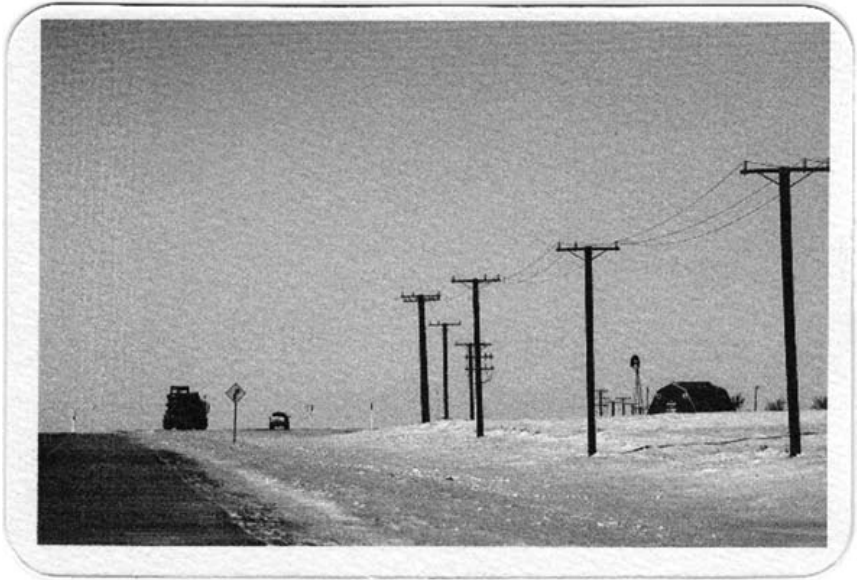


This collection of postcards, titled *postcartographia* is excerpted from an atlas of Mapwork¹ and was one component of a recent gallery exhibition with the same title.² Incorporating photography and poetic text, the postcards explore aesthetic approaches to knowing in the world, specifically, aesthetic ways of knowing places and identities.



February 23
Drive to Torquay

I took a couple of photographs, but then decided to just enjoy the drive.
There was snow in the air. I noticed that grain bins occur in pairs.
Hardly ever just one all alone. Pairs of trees too. Never one alone.
The gravel roads were still white, no one had made tracks in the snow yet.



Truckstop, Highway #11
Saskatchewan Highways

IT is mean, unkind,
unthinking, really
to paint
palm trees and a beach
on the east side of Penny's Bar & Grill
in the absence of trees (for miles)
in the presence of dirty snow drifts
the ice cream window shut and covered with the sign
CLOSED FOR THE SEASON



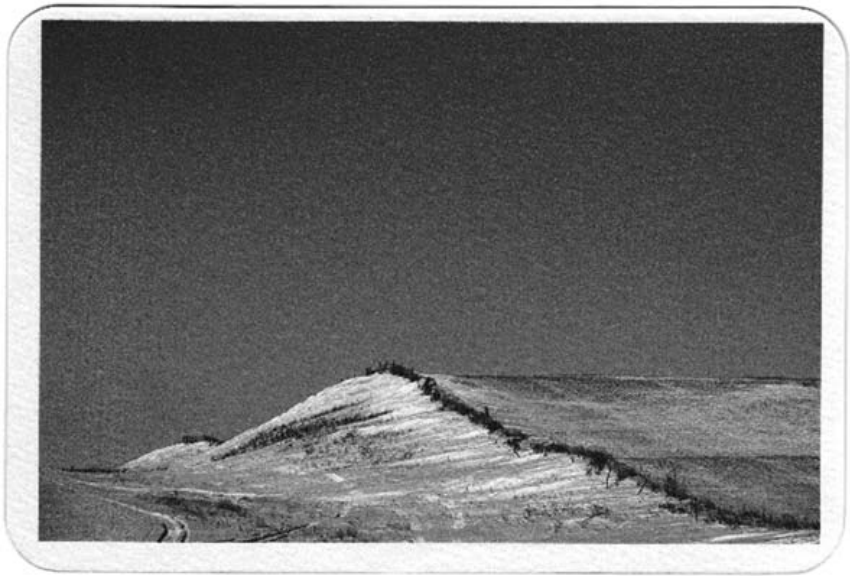
-48° Celsius
Saskatchewan, February 15

THREE QUESTIONS:

Do people breathe out that much breath in warmer weather but we just don't see it? _____

Do cars have that much exhaust in warmer weather but we just don't see it? _____

Would July be as good as it is even without days like this in February but we just don't see it? _____





Torquay, 1962

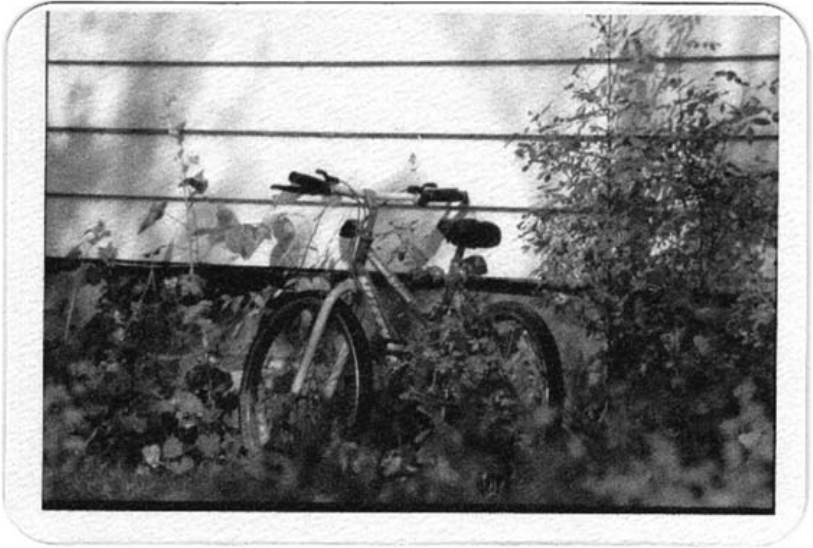
(What Might Have Been) Found Under the Wooden Sidewalks
(partial inventory).

In front of the school, two black pocket combs, half of a wooden yoyo, stubby pencils, three ball point pens from the Credit Union, an orange fish fin marble, a silver initial ring (J.R.).

In front of the Lutheran church, pennies, a pair of child's sunglasses with one arm missing, the knot from a popped balloon, a Christmas card with grey sugary sparkles on the front of it (*With Best wishes from Bud and Rosemary*).

In front of the Catholic church, rosary beads, plastic wedding flowers, penny matches from Ray's Grill, cigar butts with creamy yellow plastic tips, a broken cufflink, one clip-on rhinestone cluster earring and one with a screw-on post.

Along the main street, empty Macintosh Toffee boxes, popsicle sticks, bottle caps from Bohemian, Pilsner, Tab, Mountain Dew, Fanta Grape, and in front of the town office, a black and white photo of a young woman standing beside a television set in a living room. The date along the white zig zag edging shows • Oct 61 •. That was when she smiled at the camera and gave the snapshot to someone who later did not notice when it fluttered down from his wallet, slipped through the cracks, and landed beside the small plastic whistle no longer tied to the strings of a child's straw cowboy hat.



Small Town Remembered: A, B
 Partial glossary of words and phrases

A GOOD PLACE TO GROW UP

is what some people say about their small town. Especially the people who played on the hockey team or the volleyball team or the basketball team. Or the people who still live in the small town. If it still exists (see also **ZERO POPULATION GROWTH**).

BACK ALLEYS

with one exception, were never called lanes (see also **LOVERS' LANE**). Kids smoked and peed in them. They were often badly rutted and sometimes had sections of white ash where burning barrels had been dumped out. Back alleys were shortcuts we might take, especially at night, when the streetlights were out, and it was cold and windy, and we thought someone was probably following us, and we had to run. *What was that noise... did you hear that...*

BURNING BARRELS

were in every backyard. Someone was always burning garbage, usually in the evening. Never a pleasant smell. Most had holes in their brown rusted metal sides. Did look nice burning in the dark. Made it easy to say no, we had not been smoking.

Notes

- 1 *Mapwork as an Approach to Exploring Notions of Place and Identity*. This is a three year study funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, with Dr. Wanda Hurren as principal investigator.
- 2 Hurren, Wanda. *postcartographia*. Exhibition of photography and mixed media, Xchanges Gallery, Victoria, BC, May, 2008.