

ZACH WESTON

Nude and Coat, 2014
Black and White Film Photography, 16 x 20 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

DAVID WILLIAM HILL

Harold Griffin's Dream

Harold Griffin, our next-door neighbor, begins each morning by walking his dog, a lab mix, which is a polite way of saying she's half pit bull. She pulls madly at her leash, gasping and wheezing, lunging like a tethered jackrabbit as they bumble toward his truck. Harold shouts, "Heel, Luna! Heel!" But she never does. Like the neighborhood children who steal cherries and peaches by the bagful from Harold's trees, Luna exploits his age, mocking him. Soon enough, though, they're both in the truck, off to explore the open land around nearby Lake Dalworth (hardly a lake, more like a pond, or a swamp), or to roam the ridge trail overlooking the town, Harold beating out a rhythm with his walking stick while Luna runs, off leash now, terrorizing the resident pheasants and sparrows in the brush.

But that's not quite correct. That's not the beginning of Harold's day. Before the walk, every morning, Harold Griffin brews half a pot of decaffeinated coffee. He drinks it black, finishing the first cup in his kitchen before emptying the remainder of the pot into a small thermos that he will carry on the walk. He buys Folgers in one-pound cans, and every can he empties, he saves. He now has some four hundred cans stacked in his garage, and one on the floorboard of his truck, for those desperate occasions when his bladder acts up in a traffic jam.

Don't ask me how I know all this. Don't ask me how I know that he has never cleaned his coffeemaker, that a brown film coats the inside of the glass pot. His kitchen smells like moldy bread. Grease-caked dishes and pans remain piled on his counter, and in one remote corner is an empty, unwashed cat food can. Even the ants that once swarmed the can have now rejected its last remaining morsels. That cat has long since run away.

Harold has installed low-wattage lightbulbs throughout his house, and the only window in the kitchen faces west. As he sips that first cup, sitting at a small table covered in piles of paper—including several years' worth of tax returns, receipts for everything from utility bills to vehicles he sold long ago, and half-finished letters to politicians at every level of government—the only light is soft and indirect, creating shadows that lie across more shadows.

But even this isn't right. Before brewing coffee he relieves his bladder, having already done so two or three