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HAUNTING GROUNDS: JOEL STERNFELD'S CRIME SIGHTS

A TREE IN A PARK, a section of road, a little girl's bedroom, a billboard. All of them eerily familiar. Looking at these sites, I think: I have been here before, I know this place. But where is it? What is it? I have the uncanny sensation that something is missing. Narrative? Evidence? The story is found on a wall tag: I'm seeing the weeping crab apple tree where Robert Chambers murdered Jennifer Levin in Manhattan's Central Park, the spot on Foothill Boulevard where Los Angeles police beat Rodney King, the Iowa bedroom where Jessica DeBoers lived with adoptive parents for two and a half years until returned to her birth parents by court order, a billboard outside Petaluma pleading for information about the kidnaping of Polly Klaas. I'm looking at Joel Sternfeld's new and revised American landscape, and the longer I look the more complicated these seemingly simple scenes become. Sternfeld's

— A. M. Homes

