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Hurricane Ike's Detritus

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BRANDON McADAMS

HURRICANE IKE'S DETRITUS

AS DEPICTED TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2008

A tire on a wheel, no car —
a pot of water, no stove —
a hose, no spigot —
concrete bricks, no wall —
a tarp with nothing to cover —
two stone steps that lead to a puddle —

there is, of course, more
in this front page frame
that's "fit to print."

There is a man because
what would stories be
without the players?
Can a photographer's vision be so selective
without capturing a human pulse?

Isn't that why the press
focuses not on winds
that sandblast the products
of a 700,000-year-old eruption
just south of Mono Lake;
nor the downpours that dissolve
feldspars in frozen magma chambers
near 2 billion years old?
And why would they?
that is not news.

And this storm wouldn't be,
but for the homes built into its path.

And there must be some strand of coast
that isn't Galveston,
or Crystal Beach, or High Island
that we'll never see in pictures
or words.

But I bet there's a man
or a woman, maybe both, there.

And I have to wonder if,
like this man in the paper,
they are stepping into a puddle,
searching for a kitchen;

or are they lying still
in the storm-strewn debris,
eyes fixed to a sky
that will bring more clouds
to wash away their history?