

Amos Branson-Part 1-The House

Were we in a small plane or helicopter, flying over the midwest, we would peer down at the ineffable beauty of the green shades of corn fields running off in every direction. Here and there we would see the dots of homes and barns with roads leading to and away from those dots. Rather like a tinker toy construction with the joining hubs being the cleared land of the houses and the roads being the wooden dowels that run between them; from horizon to horizon.

Flying just a little over 15 miles west above this beauty we look down to see a surprisingly ugly parallelogram of devastation interrupting this expansive green sea. Standing as a scab in this beauty are about 150 acres of brownish, desert-like land. In many ways it appears as we might imagine a nuclear accident to look. We ask the pilot to turn and take us around the perimeter of this scar; our curiosity spiked, like one who gawks at a terrible accident scene on a highway. Looking down from on high we try to get a grip on what caused this horrible blemish on the land.

Our pilot banks into a gentle left turn tilting the passenger side of the aircraft down so that we might witness this inglorious intrusion into our sea of green. At the outskirts of this parallelogram we see the ruin of farming machinery; to numerous to count. There are small tractors, green and yellow fading into the abyss of elemental destruction. There is a large hole dug into the soil filled with debris which is an obvious dump site. Old washing machines, tires, indiscriminate machine parts such as harrows and plows, wheels and drive trains lying, baking in the midwest sun. There is also garbage and litter from household usage on which flocks of crows fight and clamor over small niceties of rotting food.

As we turn from the south and nose toward the north we see on the far reaches of this scar a home. At least, we assume it is

a home. A structure which rambles and appears to be at least two stories tall shaped like an "L" with varied, patchwork additions added on over many decades. It squats on the desolation in disrepair. A clothes line with a pair of pants dangling tells us that it is most likely inhabited.

As if to be the guarantor of our thoughts we see an older satellite dish looking to be about 10 feet in diameter on the north side of the home. It points west into the sky toward a satellite which may or may not be still in orbit. It's antiquity makes the question of its functioning suspect.

We've seen enough at this point. With an affirmative nod to the pilot we turn east to take us back to the field from which we took off. Our curiosity about this blight in the middle of so much beauty has, however, piqued our interest. This bears looking into as its oddity and starkness will not allow it to drift away without seeking answers to its birth and development. We will investigate this until we find answers to our questions. To start, who owns this mess?