

Mother

The Wind Is Blowing.

My mother and I moved to Wilmington, Delaware following the death of my father in January 1978. We were originally from Wilmington, although we spent the preceding 18 months in Del Ray, Florida where my father worked as the general manager of a country club. In February of 1978 my mother and I moved into a house at 1011 N. Clayton Street. The home was owned by a long-time family friend, and functioned as a halfway house for people dealing with substance abuse issues. My mother acted as the live-in house manager, and in time, purchased the property and created a ministry called Christ the Bridge Inc. The Ministry was active and vibrant, providing housing and counseling for a broad array of clients and was a refuge for many people.

In 2004, my mother's parents moved into the ministry. Her parents were divorced, and had not lived under the same roof for decades, which created quite an interesting dynamic. Several years later, my grandfather died, followed by my grandmother. The house had always been cluttered, but now it started to get dirty. The property, which had not been maintained, started to fall apart. The roof and ceiling, over one of the guest bedrooms, caved in. The window fixtures were rotted and several windows were on the brink of falling out of the house. My mother's possessions piled up, making it impossible to clean the house. As time passed, my mother became increasingly isolated, and she refused help.

In April of 2018, my mother fell and broke four ribs, necessitating a three-week stay at a hospital, followed by a month of rehabilitation at a recovery facility. Due to the extent of my mother's injuries, and the onset of dementia, twenty-four-hour care was required. The fact that I lived so far away made the situation feel even worse. In July, I flew home to Delaware to help facilitate my mother's transition into a nursing home, and to sell her house. One year later, on April 5, 2019, my mother died.

Due to Covid-19, my mother's remains were delayed shipment to my home in Nevada for nearly one-and-a-half years. In the absence of instructions about what to do with my mother's ashes, I brought them with me to my artist residency in Taos, New Mexico in September 2021, with the intent to disperse them on the grounds of the Wurlitzer Foundation during my Fellowship. Instead, I wound up making a video about why I wasn't ready to let go of my mother's ashes.

I made the photographs and video for this project in 2013 and 2021. At the time, I did not understand why I was making the images. I'm still not completely sure, but the life-threatening conditions of my mother's home, and the severe deterioration of her mental health, compelled me to document her situation. A home that was once a sanctuary, offering people the possibility of freedom and a new beginning, had become an isolated prison.