

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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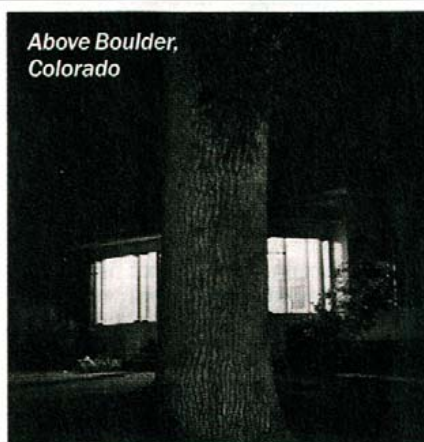
Robert Adams, "Summer Nights, Walking"

★★★★★

Matthew Marks Gallery, through
Apr 17 (see Chelsea)

Ranging around the streets and trails of his Longmont, Colorado, home between dusk and dark in the late 1970s and early '80s, photographer Robert Adams took a series of shots infused with a blend of tranquil beauty and ominous disquiet. A limited selection of these modest but highly affecting landscapes was first shown in 1985; this new exhibition includes—with Adams's blessing—a significantly wider variety. Among the 50 mostly small-scale black-and-white shots on display here are views of houses and cars, roads and sidewalks, scrubby local fields and distant, mist-shrouded mountains. And while evidence of human activity is everywhere, there is nary an individual in sight. Making highly effective use of light from street lamps, the setting sun and the rising moon, Adams captures an atmospheric interzone between town and country, day and night.

There is a crime-scene feel to some of these prints—it's difficult to look at Adams's image of a clump of roadside weeds backlit by the



*Above Boulder,
Colorado*

headlights of a passing car without imagining a body lying just outside the frame—but most entries in "Summer Nights, Walking" convey a subtler spookiness, more a shadow of anxiety than overt night terror. The celebrated veteran—a retrospective opens in Vancouver later in the year—conjures an unexpected poetry from muddy puddles and tangled telegraph wires, rectangles of white light from domestic windows and the horizon's gentler glow. It's wonderfully easy to imagine oneself in his shoes, trekking, alone, to the edge of a small town, then heading home to bed.
—*Michael Wilson*