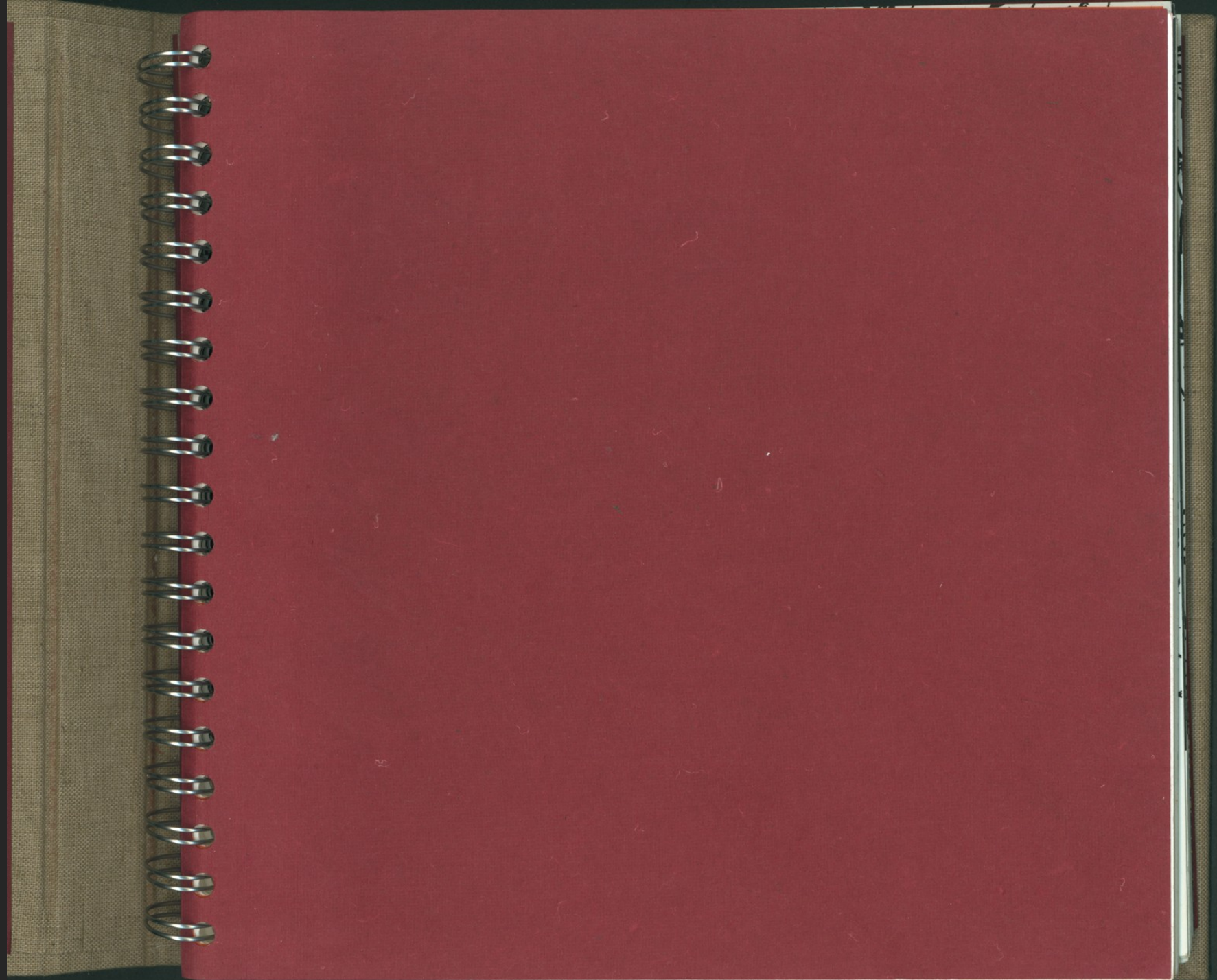


Some of These Days





Some of These Days

Drawings by Mini Gross $\frac{6}{21}E$.

Writings by Charles Bernstein

Granary Books. NYC. 2005



What I can't describe is how beautiful the day is in New York; clear skies, visibility all the way to the other side of wherever you think you are looking.



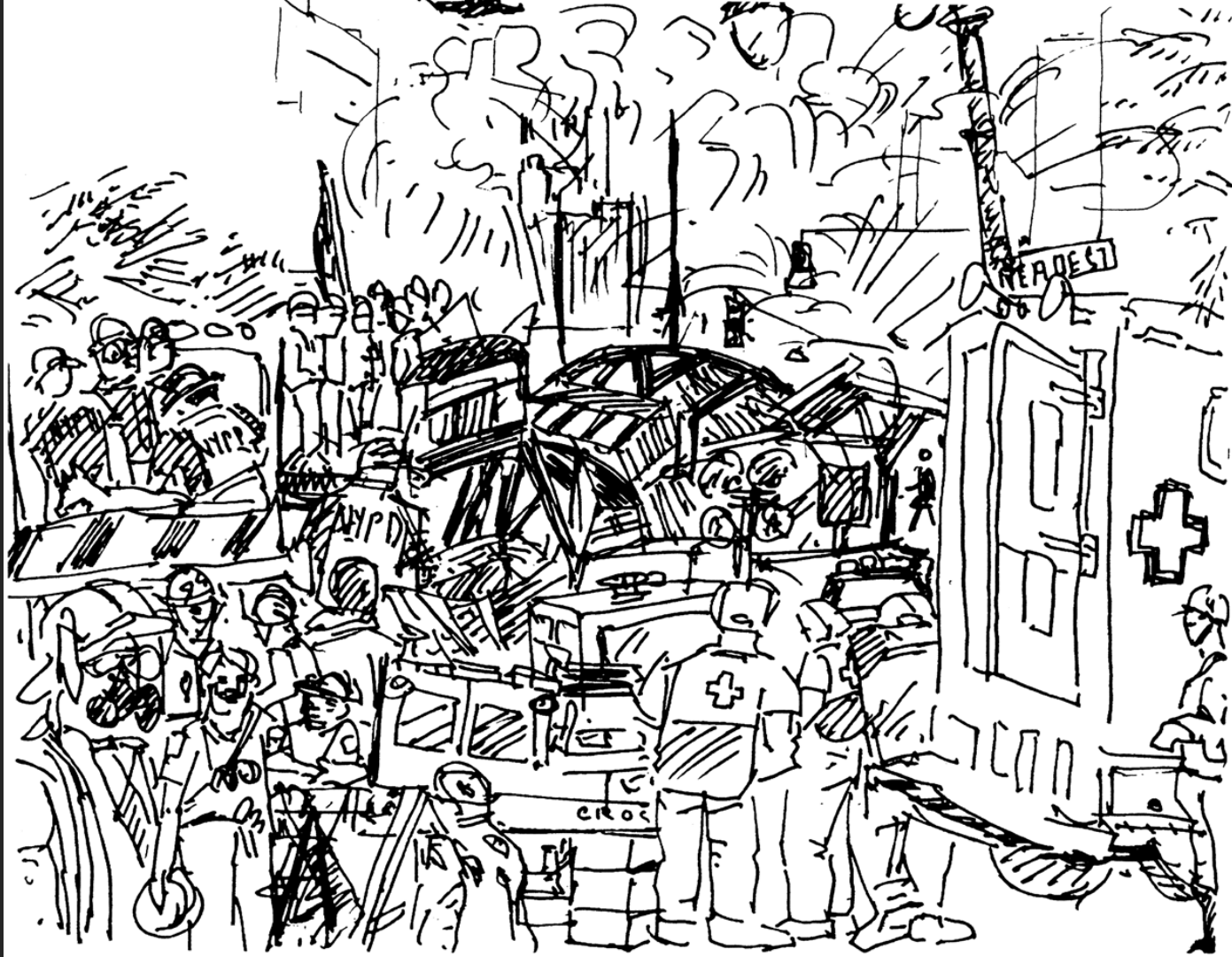
Or looking away.



Outside, two guys with work boots and cell phones slung to their waists yelled toward the coffee shop, "I can't believe these fucking people are sitting in a café when the city is being blown up."



And it didn't seem possible that this had happened
either.



At about 6, Felix, Susan and I walked down to the Hudson. I wanted to see New Jersey, to see the George Washington Bridge. The sun gleamed on the water. The bridge was calm. Folks were bicycling and rollerblading. The scene was almost serene; just five miles from the Trade Center.



Uncanny is the word



What I can't describe is the reality; the panic,
the horror.



I keep turning on the TV to hear what I can't take in and what I already know. Over and over. I don't find the coverage comforting but addictive.



This could not have happened. This hasn't happened.



This is happening.



Yp 8:23 in New York.



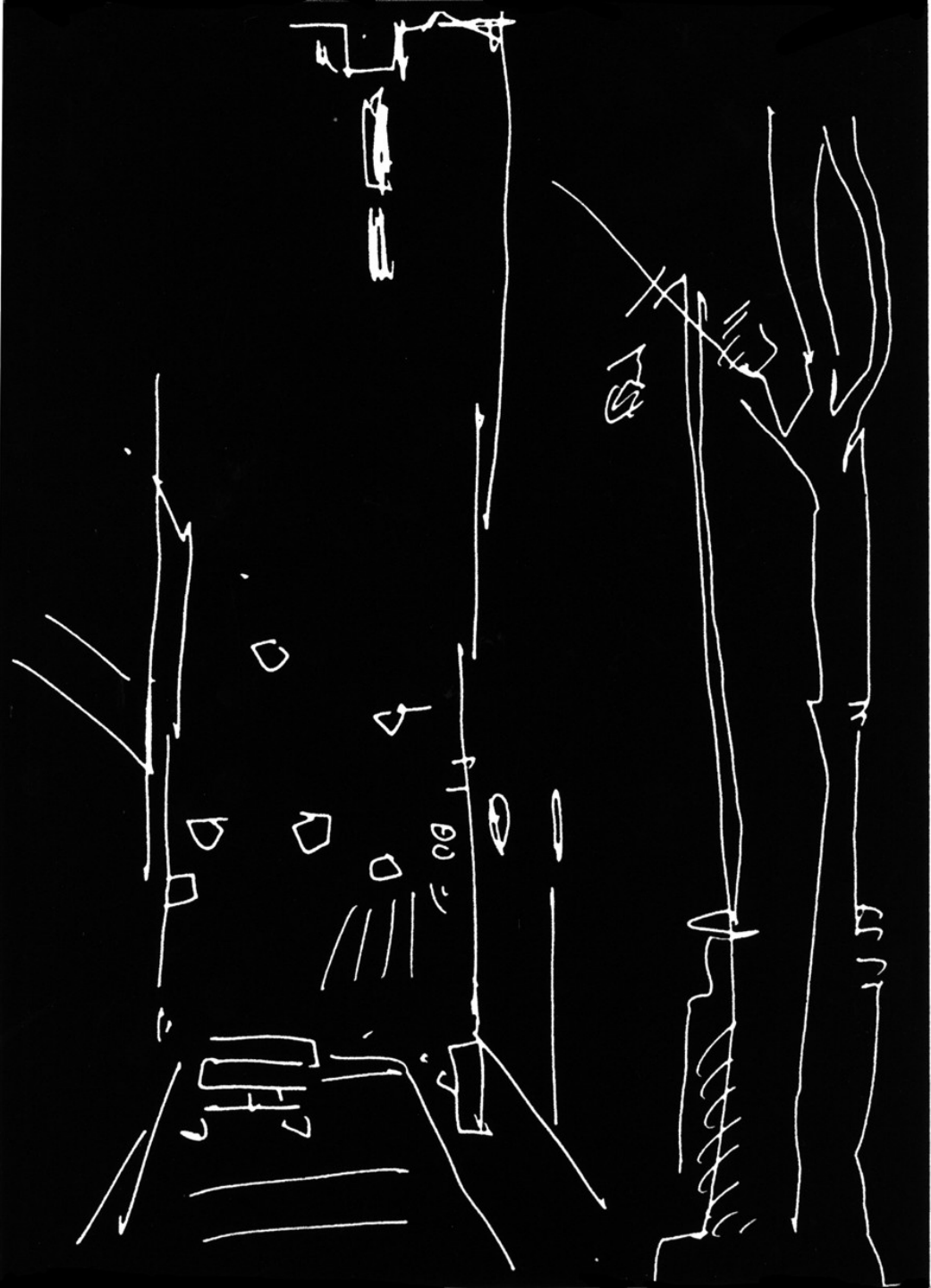
Today is the next day of the rest of your life .



all of a sudden tonight the smell of burning plastic pervades our apartment, making eyes smart. is it something in the building? no, a neighbor explains, that's the smell coming from down town.

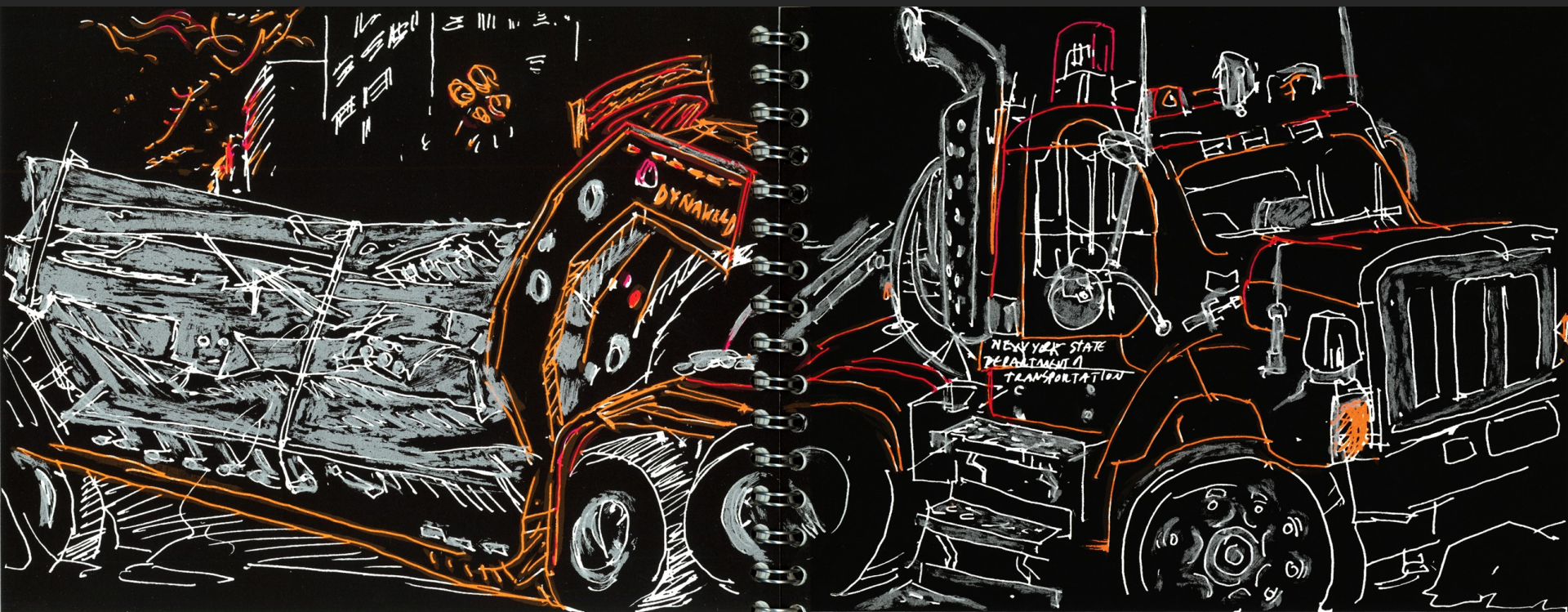


Mei-Mei Bessenbrugge calls; she's OK, hanging in a couple of blocks from the epicenter. I say to her I have trouble imagining what is going on. She says, oh you can imagine it all right, from the movies. You just can't conceive it.

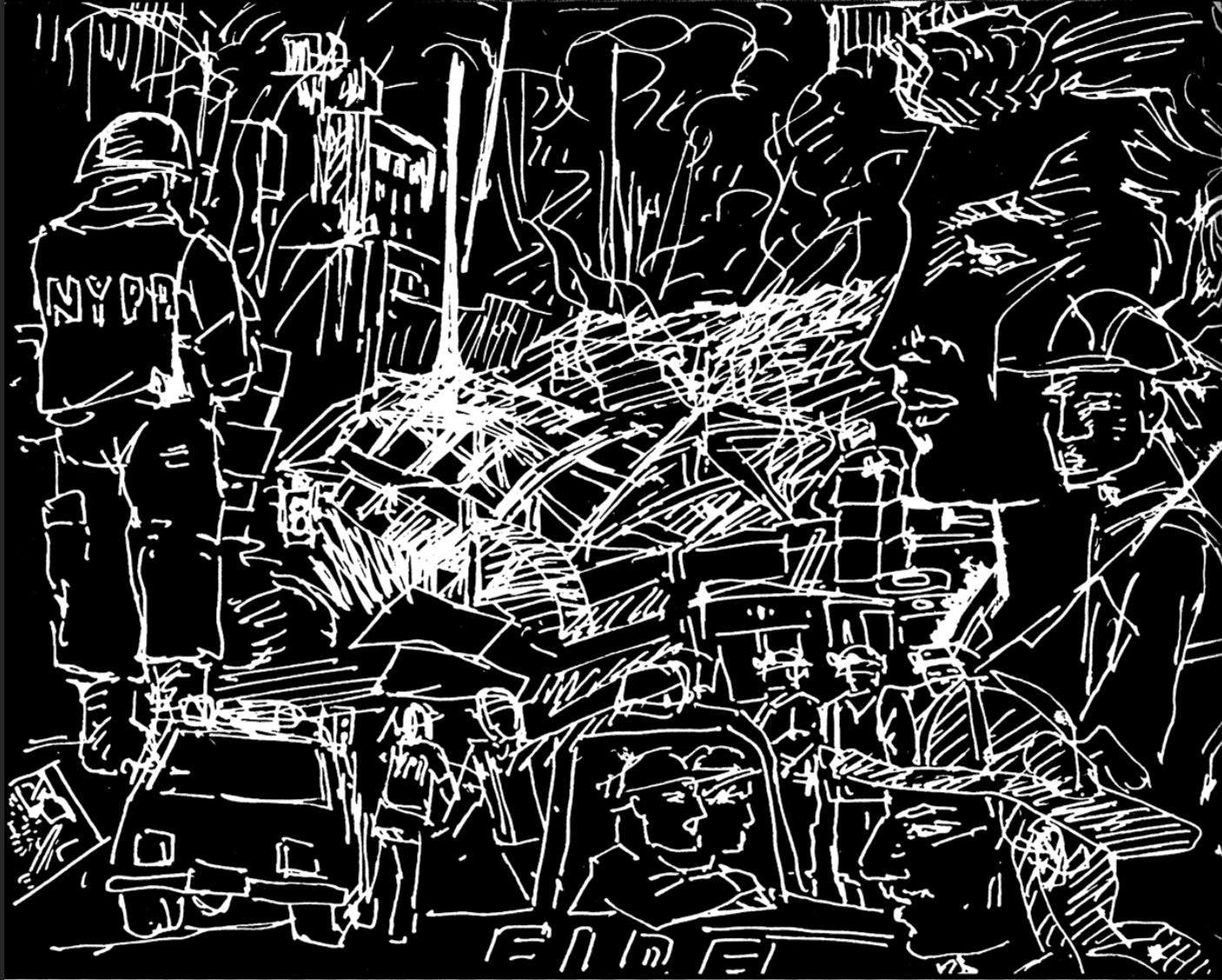


We drop Felix off at a friend's across from his school on 77th and Amsterdam. The fire station on the block, which we pass every day, is empty, with piles of flowers in the doorway. A wave of terror sweeps over us; after all, 200 to 300 firefighters have died. Later in the afternoon, I come to pick Felix up and there are ten or twelve firemen in front of the fire house, calmly, so it seems, washing the two fire trucks parked in the middle of the street. It's a relief to see them.

Then we hear that nine of the thirty men stationed there perished.



"I may be paranoid but there really are people out to get me."



"It's a bit ominous," a friend writes, "the way the politicians are speaking about talking with one voice."



Many of the officials on TV say we will come out of all this stronger.



Someone quotes the Tao Te Ching: "Give evil nothing to oppose and it will disappear." I can't help thinking - give nothing evil to oppose and it will crash the program



The image is greater than the reality
the image can't approach the reality
the reality has no image



our eyes are burning



Thursday night it started to pour. The peering thunder claps echoed over Manhattan. We all woke up with a start and couldn't find the way back to sleep.



Tuesday morning I rouse my friend Stu from a profound slumber to tell him what has happened to the twin towers.

— "They're ugly," he says, after a pause, "but they're not that ugly."



It's as if the blasts occurred dozens of times, the actual blasts being obliterated by the constant replay.



NIGHTRO
13 MOS OLD

DAVID MARTINEZ

I can't get the film out of my mind. You know, the one in which a crackjack team of conspirators meets in an abandoned hanger and meticulously plots out the operation on a blackboard, Synchronise watches! This image stands in the way of what occurred in the way a blizzard stands in the way of the sky.



Things I do everyday like make airplane reservations on the phone are now fraught with an unwanted emotional turbulence.



In some ways the blasts are a natural disaster, like an earthquake or volcanic eruption. Though we might wish to fight it, human beings and what they do are also part of nature.



Now, Sunday, it's cold for the first time.
The summer is over.



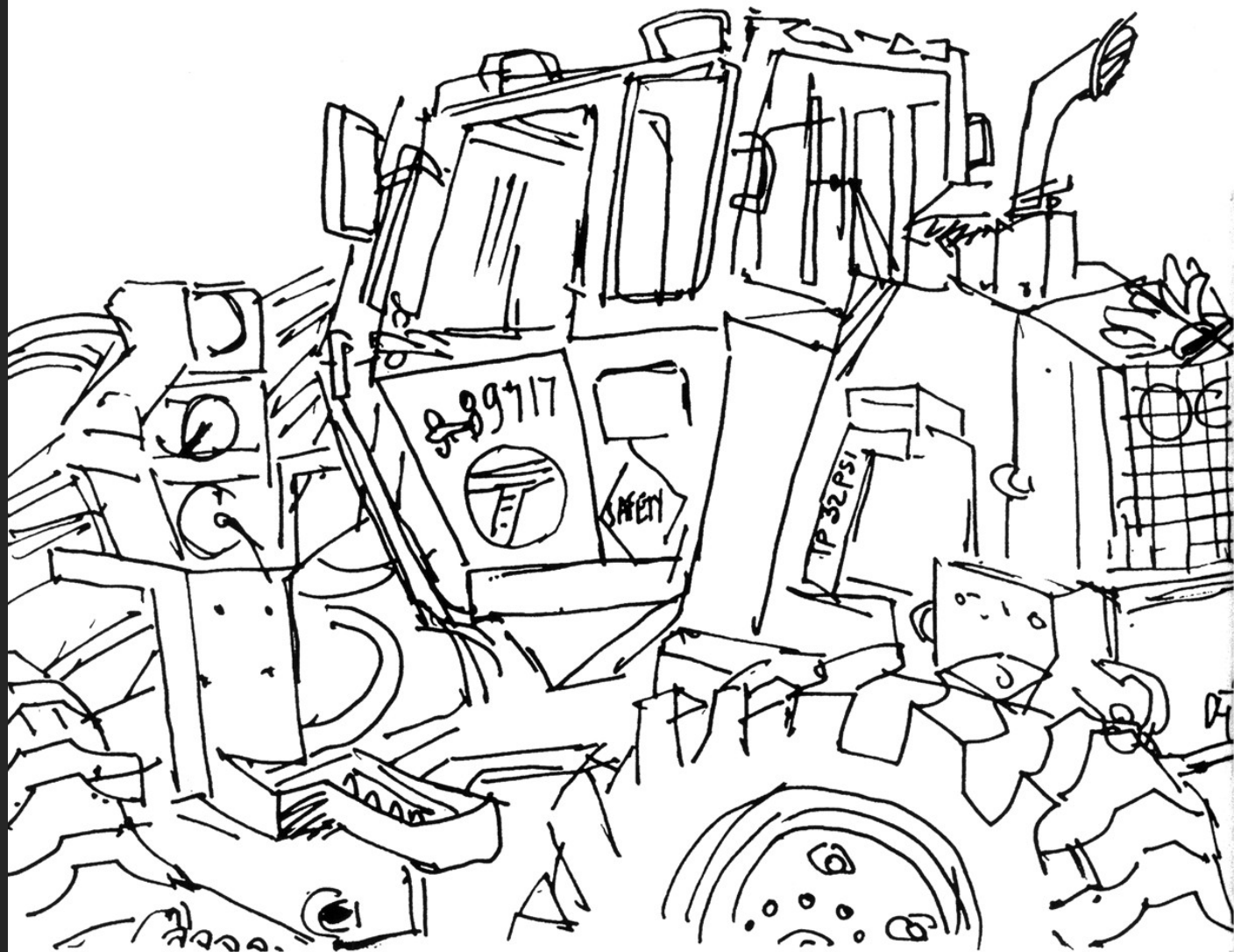
9 bomb you bomb
he/she/it bombs we bomb
you bomb they suffer



We're ugly, but we're not that ugly.



♂, hey, Joe, don't you know — We is they.



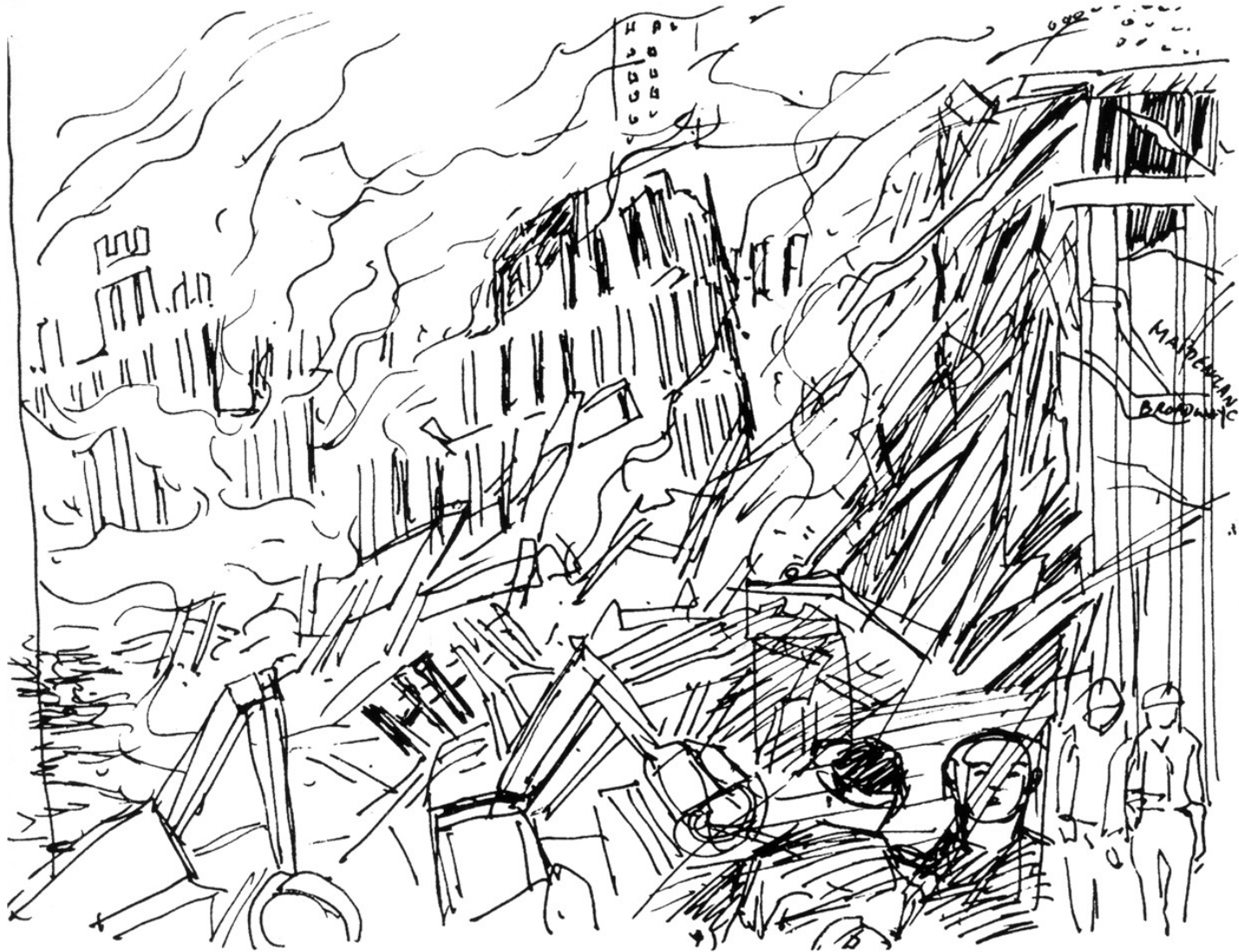
I took a walk on Liberty Street today. Only it was not the same place as I had known before.



They thought they were going to heaven.



Large crowds surge inside the police barricades,
struggling to get a glimpse of the colossal wreck.
All that remains of the drivers is two lattice
facades standing upright amidst the rubble.



These vast and hollow tunnels of steel are marked
by the impervious stone of the neighboring buildings
that loom, intact, over the vacant center.



National guard troops, many no more than teenagers, stand guard over us, the dazed and onlookers, the victims of the disaster, shouting gruffly, yet with a strange and unexpected kindness, "move on, move on, can't stop here."







*We look on, perhaps not yet ready for despair, against our
stronger instincts, which well up, boundless and bare.*





At the checkpoint at Battery and West Street, four soldiers check the passes of every vehicle wanting to go north and there is endless stream of cars, busses (filled with workers), pick-ups, dumpsters, flatbeds. Even police in uniform show their IDs to the soldiers.



Battery Park has become a military staging ground,
filled with jeeps and tents and soldiers in combat fatigues.



WED. 3 AM.

Now, in our aftermath, we are overwhelmed by explanations for things that, at the visceral level, can't be rationalized. Anyway not yet or not quite. Almost everyone I know is on their own particular edge, our preset worldviews snapping into place like a bulletproof shield on one of James Bond's cars. Only the presets aren't quite working, which makes for an interesting, if unhinging, shimmer at the edges of things.



The movies keep playing in my head. Not TOWERING INFERNO; but, do you remember in FAIL-SAFE where the President, played by Henry Fonda, launches a nuclear attack on New York to show the Russians counterpart, "My wife is in New York today on a shopping trip and I have her on the phone right now.... Mr. Chairman, the phone has gone dead!



So it's almost no surprise to see someone with a tee-shirt that says, "What Part of Hated Don't You Understand?"



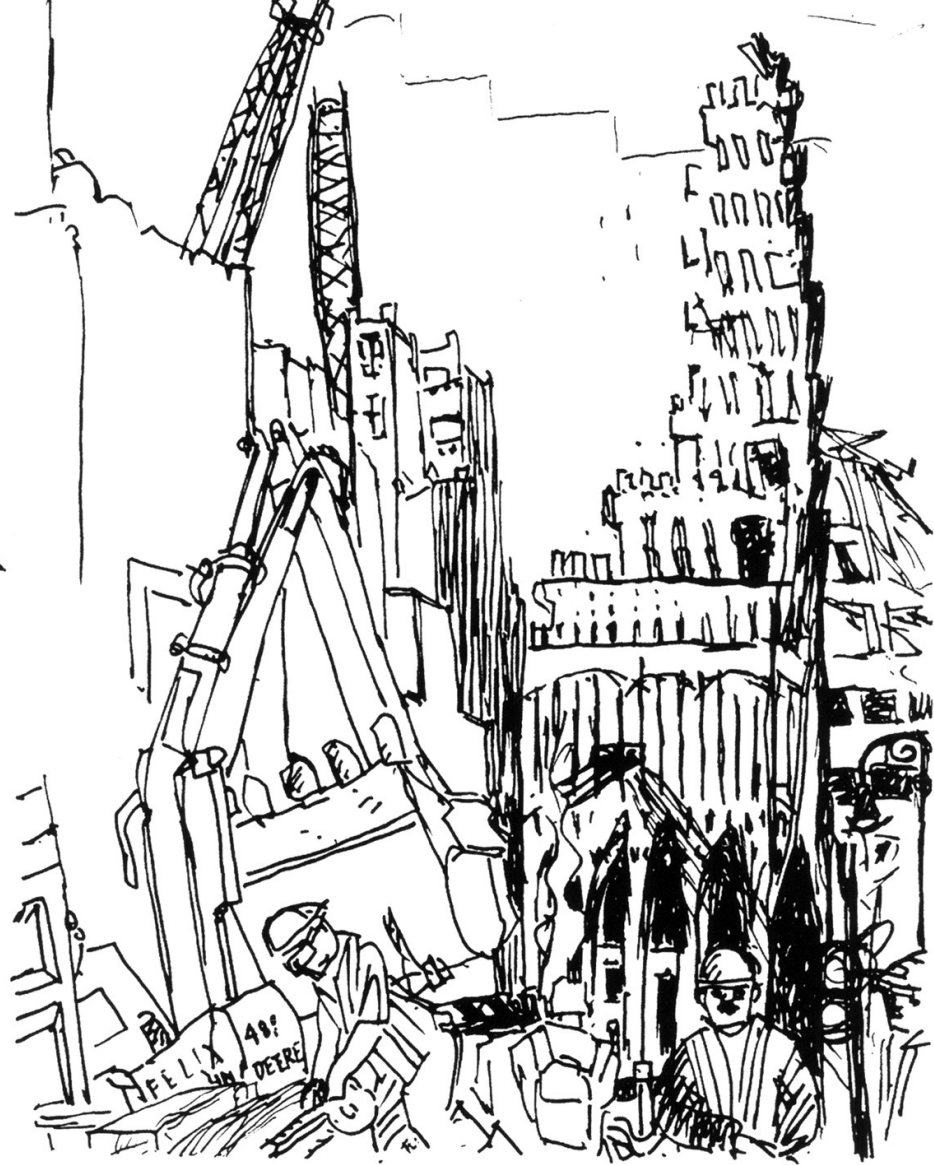
I guess when two planes filled with passengers and tanked up with more fuel than it takes to get my maped from here to Mars and back hit skyscrapers with 20,000 people in them, it doesn't take a political scientist to know there's alot of hate there.



The scary thing is that maybe what they hated most about America is not the bad part.



I find myself walking around making up arguments in my head, but when I try to write them down they dissolve in a flood of questions and misgivings. I value these questions, these misgivings, more than my analysis of the situation.



"We got what we deserved" a shrill small voice inside some
seems to be saying. But surely not this person, nor this
one, nor this one, nor this one.



Not this one.



The question isn't is art up to this but what else is art for?



They thought they were going to heaven.

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"The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Click

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Beginning on September 11, 2001, Mimi Gross filled five sketchbooks with ink drawings made on the downtown streets, often working in the dark, directly at Ground Zero. Simultaneously, Charles Bernstein was also writing in response to the events of 9/11. Gross proposed a collaboration after hearing Bernstein read his new writings at the Zinc Bar in New York City on September 30, 2001.

Gross and Bernstein together made a selection of images and text for the book.

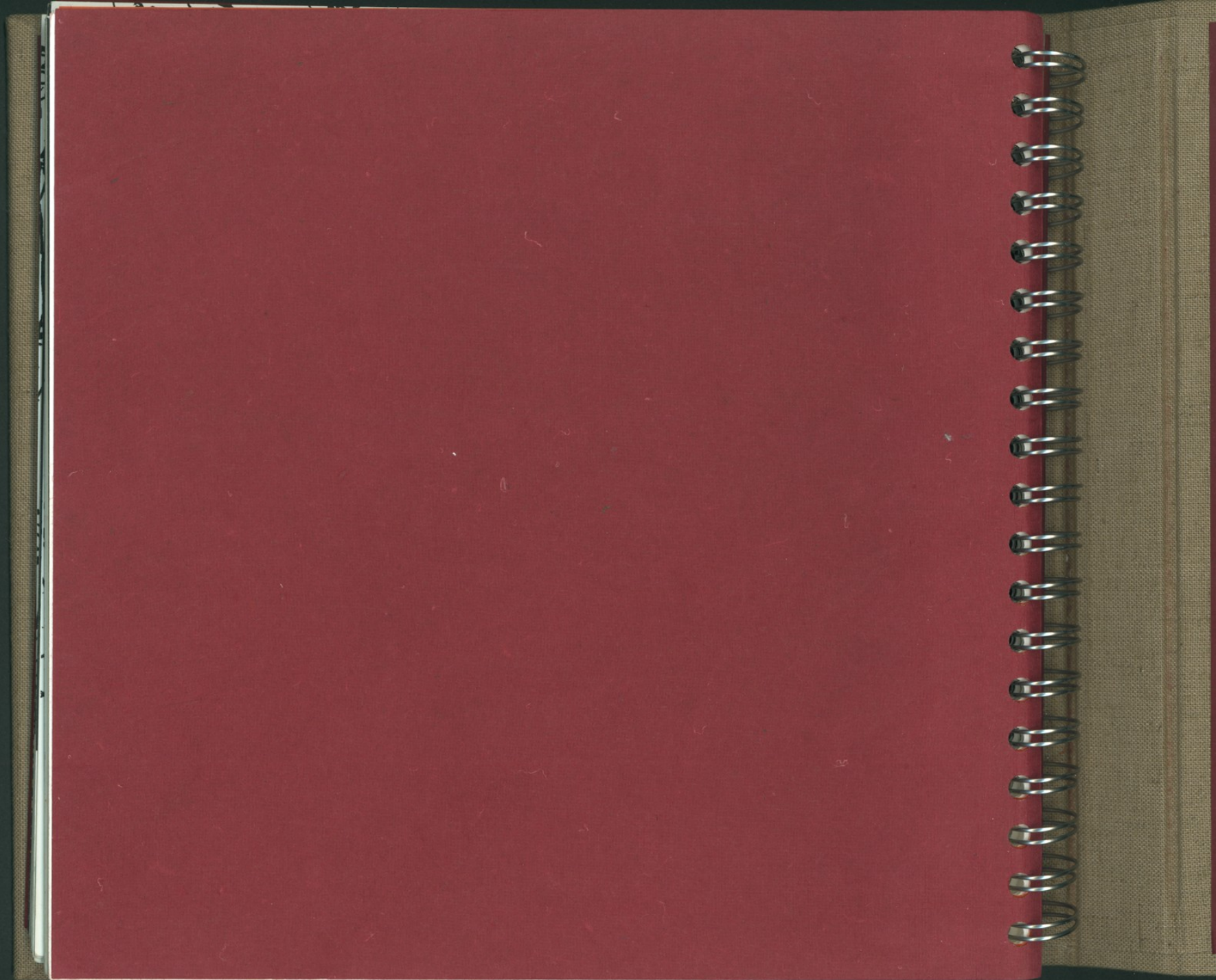
Printed in silkscreen in several colours
by Luther Davis, at Axelle Fine Arts, Ltd., spiral bound,
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Produced by Katherine Kuehn at
Granary Books with technical assistance from
Stefanie Victor, Sara Maysles, Satya, Tashi Tsangpo,
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Published by Granary Books, New York City, 2005

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