



## Eric Klatt

Eric Klatt, a long time Bay Area photographer, is happy to affirm the strong formalist bent in his approach to taking photographs. He can speak clearly about how his choices of formal elements are intended to function and, obviously, over the years, has thought carefully about this aspect of the photographic image. However, in a recent body of work shot on an extended visit to Vancouver, quite a different question arose, which propelled him out on long walks, over a period of several days, through some of that city's neighborhoods, camera in hand.

What can be learned about people by simply look-



ing carefully at their back yards? That was his question. Many Vancouver neighborhoods, he discovered, lent themselves wonderfully to exploring this question, with their wide alleys conveniently cutting through each block along the back yards of each property.

The original photos shown here are all in color. I sat down with Eric in his Oakland home and we went through dozens of shots from this series and finally settled on about eight, all of which held up easily with the color removed, evidence of his feeling for the formal construction of an image. Finally, I chose these four to publish. Are they better in black and white? That's a tough call, but as far as I'm concerned, they're great as they stand here.

What do they reveal about the people whose backyards these photos show? When I asked Klatt what he'd found out from his informal study, he came up with quite a number of interesting observations. But why not leave the question open? — RW



