

Dark Pink

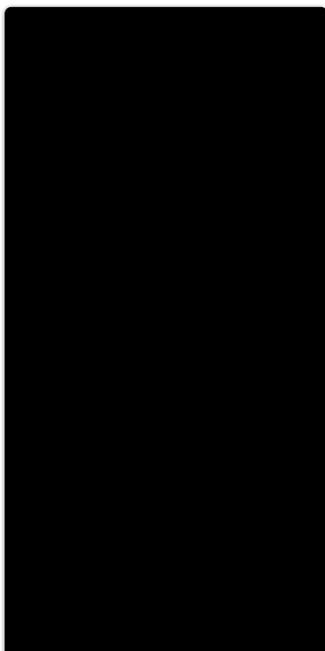
Kathleen Wakefield

Amy Brakeman Livezey
Game Load, 48" x 44"
acrylic on canvas

Dark Pink

He came down the road in a green Cadillac. I had a house to sell and he was here to make an offer. When he stepped out of the car, it was his boots I noticed first, snakeskin and off-yellow, large and pointy. His hair was all the way Elvis. I already had an offer of making the house into a bird sanctuary, the mortgage to be paid with bird profits. I was

also offered a woman's boyfriend, if I read the offer right. It wasn't actually a good selling market, and it was high desert. Still, the cottonwood trees and the river were worth the price, I thought, lower than market anyway. It overlooked a pasture across the river, and you could kick up good dirt almost anywhere on the property, look for Anasazi artifacts, beads and arrowheads. There were also scorpions, tarantulas, and centipedes, of course. He came up the driveway. "Hey," he said, "Hello." "Hello," I said back. "Let's sit out here," I said, after he'd told me his name. I had a comfortable blue bench under the window in the shade. "So, this is it," he said, and I said, "Yes. two acres, and a river, like the ad said." "Are you firm on your price?" he asked. "What did you have in mind?" I asked. "I'm willing to be reasonable." The cottonwoods were making that evening whisper sound they make, a breeze coming up, and the sound of the cicadas moving down the trees like a concert warming up. "You see that car there?" "Sure," I said, "Pretty." "It's driven a lot of famous people — Willie Nelson, everyone. It's a \$300,000 car. "What are you saying?" I asked. "Are you trying to make a trade?" "I wondered if you'd consider it," he said, and looked back at the car, shining now under a ray of bright sun. "I don't need a car," I said. "I've got the truck over there." "You could make a good living," he said, "put on a cute uniform and drive some interesting people." I'm embarrassed to say I took another quick look at the Cadillac. "What happened to you driving it?" I said. "I lost my heart for it," he said, and looked away. He twitched, slightly, and I was hoping he wasn't going to cry. I was suddenly nervous that none of my neighbors were home, in case he got weird, even though they were too far away to help. He seemed alright, though. "I'm not sure what to say," I said. "Like I said, I don't need a car, and I wouldn't know how to do that kind of trade." I was thinking of the cute outfit, though. The sun and heat had beat up the house over the years, and one of the barn doors had fallen off. "I might think about it," I said, surprising myself. He stood up and I could see that I'd made him happy, given him something to hope for. We all need something to hope for. "Tell you what," I said, looking toward the Cadillac. "You give me a full accounting of what's wrong with the car, and how I'd go about doing something like you said, with it, and you can take a look around here and at the barn, but absolutely no promises," He got up, and I could tell that he was relieved and had a new outlook on life. The cicadas whipped back around, and the clouds started to drop rain, the musty fragrance coming up from the river. I was feeling better myself. I didn't want to live in the house anymore. Some things are as simple as that—you just don't want to do something anymore. And maybe I wouldn't like that uniform he was talking about for long, but for the moment, I was picturing a dark pink.



Kathleen Wakefield is a writer and lyricist whose songs have been recorded by Quincy Jones, Barbra Streisand, Frank Sinatra, Michael Jackson, and many others. Her two novels are *Snaketown* and *In The Foam Of The Blue Waves*. She is at present working on a mystery in color, and page one of a graphic memoir.

