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RALPH EUGENE MEATYARD

Although Meatyard toyed with a kind of down-home surrealism, involving rubber masks and such, the best of his photographs from the sixties have a tender, genuinely poetic quality. Of the nearly thirty black-and-white images gathered here, the most arresting are of Meatyard's two sons and other young boys poking about in what look like abandoned shacks. The brooding Southern-gothic aura can get a bit thick, but Meatyard's compositions are strong enough to dispel any false notes. In the second gallery, a group of pictures of the natural world slip into abstraction—the mysterious, seductive place always at the edge of the other work. Through Nov. 19. (Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868.) — Vince Aletti