In recent years, the world has been captivated by the construction of so-called “ghost cities” across China. Reporters and scholars have delved into this topic at length. This article is concerned specifically with the photographic imagery that has been central to the ghost city phenomenon. By exploring work by three Western photographers whose images of ghost cities have been vital in shaping global perceptions of China’s ghost cities, the talk considers the politics of picturing urban development in an idiom of ruins.