

The Word Hoard

Volume 1
Issue 5 *Scum and Villainy*


Article 4

November 2016

Untitled Series (flies, shark, sap)

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Recommended Citation

Cull, Tom (2016) "Untitled Series (flies, shark, sap)," *The Word Hoard*: Vol. 1: Iss. 5, Article 4.
Available at: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/wordhoard/vol1/iss5/4>

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The *Word Hoard*

/wɔːrd/hɔːrd/ n. 1. A journal open to all Arts and Humanities scholars.

Untitled Series (flies, shark, sap)

Tom Cull*

17. Armageddon. Flies and resin on canvas (2002)

“I think it was Thomas Hobbes who said people are like flies brushed off a wall. I like that metaphorically. Your whole life could be like points in space, like nearly nothing. If you stand back far enough you think people are just like flies, like the cycle of a fly is like your own life. When you make that connection with the paintings... it is like all the people in the world who die in a hundred years. That amount of death is pretty black.” Damien Hirst

The physical impossibility of death in the mind of someone living. The physical impossibility of death in the mind of all the people in the world. The physical impossibility of death in the mind if you stand back far enough. The physical impossibility when you make that connection with the painting. The physical impossibility of death when you think people are just like flies. The physical impossibility of death in the mind of someone living the cycle of a fly. The physical impossibility could be like points in space if you stand back far enough. The physical impossibility of all the people in the world who die in a hundred years. The physical impossibility of someone living is pretty black. The physical amount of death is pretty black like all people in the world who die just like flies. The physical amount of a fly is like your own life. Is like your own life. Like nearly nothing if you stand back far enough. The physical impossibility when you make that connection with the paintings

**Tom Cull teaches creative writing at Western and runs Thames River Rally, a grassroots environmental group. His chapbook, “What the Badger Said” was published in 2013 by Baseline Press. He is currently the Poet Laureate for the City of London.*

is pretty black in the mind of someone living. The physical impossibility is like all the people who said people are like flies brushed off a wall. The physical impossibility of death in the mind of someone living back far enough is like all the people in the world. I like that metaphorically. I like that metaphorically when you make that connection with the painting. The physical impossibility when Thomas Hobbes brushed flies off a wall if you stand back far enough is like all the people who die in a hundred years of death. The physical impossibility of your whole life could be like a fly when you make that connection. The physical impossibility of death. The physical impossibility of death I like. The physical impossibility of death is like your own like all the people in the mind of someone living. The physical impossibility of Thomas Hobbes is like your own life. Like your own life is like your own life. The physical impossibility of death when you think people are just like flies. The physical impossibility of the cycle of a fly is like your own life when you make that connection. I like that metaphorically when you make that connection. I like that metaphorically if you stand back far enough.

14. Shark Tank

Mid-career, mid-level museum curators compete to curate a featured show at the MOMA. The judges include Damien Hirst, artist; Donald Trump, US President; and Jean des Esseintes, A.I. computer program extrapolated from the protagonist of J.K. Huysman's fin-de-siècle classic *À Rebours*. In the penultimate episode, three finalists pitch their exhibitions standing on trap doors emptying into a huge aquarium containing ravenous tiger sharks. The aquarium has been built by President Trump and is a fantastic aquarium, a really really great aquarium because no one builds aquariums like Trump, because he's the real deal, big league, and aquarium people, all people, really love him. At episode's end, Trump hits a big red button that says "you're hired," and the winner falls into the tank, quickly torn apart and eaten. In the final episode, the losing curators return for a reunion that concludes with one of the sharks being caught, killed, pumped full of formaldehyde, and dissected. The shark is displayed in a huge glass tank at the Tate Gallery. The work is entitled, *Art Explained*. Didactic plaques ask visitors, "Can you identify body parts in the shark's stomach?"

13. The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living

You guys have heard the story of how George and I met?
Cindy points across
the street to a front lawn where a white oak once stood

The tree was massive, symmetrical, the trunk 4ft in diameter
but the new owner
couldn't park his boat in the driveway, so it had to come down

News spread, citizens signed petitions, sought injunctions
the owner's resolve strengthened
people came, tied ribbons on trees up and down the street

George read about in the paper, biked across the city to see
talked with Cindy on her porch
a neighbor took notice and invited both for dinner

One night the owner girdled the tree with his circular saw
cut two parallel rings
two inches apart, then flayed the bark between the cuts

The wound spelled the tree's death but no local company
would remove it
he had to go as far as Sault St. Marie to find someone

The day it came down, the owner put the house up for sale
we look at the young oaks on lawns up and down the street
George appears smiling. He has drinks. "Progeny" he says.