

A shark in the mind of one contemplating wilderness assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Shark in the Mind of One Contemplating Wilderness by Terry Tempest

Williams Terry Tempest William's written essay, "A Shark in the Mind of One Contemplating Wilderness," delivers to us, with intended purpose using shocking truths of greed and destruction. Actions took under the cloak and disguise of the needs of civilization, creating more jobs, or even to boost the rich man's governmental legacy of our badly raped and abused the national economy.

How continued acts of greed and wanton disregard for the environment, are endangering nature the wilderness areas we have sought to protect? Acts that leave behind damage and destruction where once nature and wilderness thrived. A land no longer able to maintain and support the natural balance of the animal populations as it once did. William's uses Damien Hirst, her example of art, that's not art, throughout her writing of, "A Shark in the Mind of One Contemplating Wilderness. She cites some of his displays. I looked up one, and disgusted I went no further.

He is as much an artist a butcher working in some cattle yard warehouse is. Displaying the mutilated carcass' of slaughtered animals, is not art. I agree with William's disregard of this as a form of art. It is a display of a nurtured talent for cruelty. Nature's very own version of, "Jack the Ripper." William's spoke of bringing Hirst to the wilderness, "let him bring along his chain saw, Cutting Ahead (1994), only to find out somebody has beat him to it, creating clear-cut sculptures out of negative space, eroding space, topsoil running like blood down the mountainsides as mud.

Mud as material. He would have plenty of material. " We should invite him to southern West Virginia. Mountain Top Removal is exactly that. Communities once rich in family and generations of mountain tradition, now broken. Homes flooded, mudslides, with some of the no longer passable. Destructive actions not only damage the area of where they are performed. These actions have far reaching impact. Communities that once sheltered and gave home to generations of mountain folk, gone.

Small valleys' rich in mountain tradition, and blessed with the raw beauty of the mountains and nature, gone. Leaving behind echoes of remembrance of a way of life, forever gone. Many have paid a high price to fill the pockets of so few. William's has spent the majority of her adult life with her pen as the sword of environmental enlightenment. Seeking to educate and inspire social consciousness and responsibility in mankind. She opens the eyes of her readers not to entertain, but to awaken them to the beauty of nature's wilderness, and the very real threat it is under.

She is a strong environmental activist, a legendary writer, a visionary realist, and driven with a pure purpose. She is the voice of the earth, its people, animals and the wilderness area's. She cautions us to listen to the earth, seek the quietness in the wilderness, and see it's irreplaceable value before it's to late. As a writer and naturalist she has worked diligently to spread awareness of the very real hostile attitudes and acts of violent behaviors and

Gwinn pg 2 greed threatening the survival of nature and the wilderness areas. Her tireless efforts are well known to many. Now they are known to one more. They are known to me. Through the reading, rereading, and then

rereading, " A Shark in the Mind of One Contemplating Wilderness," I finally understand what she intended. As she writes with shocking awareness revealed is the fact that we as civilization are losing our connections to the natural world, the land, and its wilderness.

Her vivid words showing her own personal connection to the tiger shark mounted on the wall of the wall of the American Museum of Natural History, and then her thoughts turning to the killer whales kept in tanks for the amusement of humans, " day after day after week after month, how they go mad, the sea of insanity churning inside them, inside me as I feel my own captivity within a culture-any culture-that would thwart creativity: We are stopped cold, our spirits suspended, controlled, controlled sensation. " We in the name of civilization are destroying nature through selfish and shortsighted actions.

We capture, contain, and control the very wildness of these animals, we so admire them for. We decorate a large bucket of water, or a box of bars to resemble a shallow shadow of the wilderness they should be in. These animals held captive in collective groups as a means to entertain us. We are trading the wonder of nature, seen in it's own wilderness area for animal showmanship and entertainment. Losing the remarkable sensations of hope and renewal we experience, as we stand in a wilderness land, quietly observing animals and nature in the wildly beautiful and raw lands.

The absence of our own lack of realization that nature and the wild places we call the wilderness are under attack. They are in danger of being beyond repair. It overwhelms the senses, and is not to be tolerated. That is the

message William's words left echoing in my mind. Invisible seeds, deep in my awakening imagination. William's words, written with her pen, that acts not as a pen, but more like a sword striking out against environmental injustices. Clever words, delivered with careful and planned precision.

Crafted to alert, outrage and then inspire in each of us. To become environmentally and socially responsible. She is more skillful than you realize at first. She channeled her own history of personal and outrageous sorrows, and took aim against those that would destroy. She is a literary artist and a talented master of words. She weaves us into the fabric of her words, leaving us aware. When I put down her writing, "A Shark in the Mind of One Contemplating Wilderness," I returned to it over and over again.

Then, after a while I no longer come back to it. It came to me. The word nurture your imagination and awakens the need for everyone to become environmental responsible. To act on behalf of the earth, it's people, the wilderness animals, trees, rivers, streams, mountain tops. To use whatever your own personal strengths' are, as William's uses her writing and experience as a naturalist, and take action to protect and guard these valuable, breathtaking, and natural wonders that are irreplaceable and priceless treasures.

If we are permissive and tolerated the destruction of wilderness, what is our focus and direction as a civilization. As defined, "civilization is an advanced stage or system of human social development. Far on in progress and life. Gwinn pg 3 So where will we are as a civilization, if we do not listen to the voices of the earth, with the warnings it now whispers to us. If we do not take

actions and seek protect the land, nature, its wilderness, exactly how advanced are we in social and human development. What would remain? A normal day is filled with the abnormal.

Man-made wire's overhead, concrete paths, plastic and synthetic boxes, emissions and polluted air. All in the name of convince, and comfort.

Companies blowing beautiful and wild mountain tops off, for quick mining. Actions creating mudslides and flooding. Families uprooted because of the obvious and expected environmental repercussions. The ground beneath our feet, pavement. The landscape framed by blocks of buildings, seen as giant silhouettes against the horizon. The night is lit up with thousands upon thousands of electrical sources.

The wild places no the wilderness of yesterday's. Rather, being old, and broken neighborhoods, ruled by gang violence. Shrouded in despair, and long suffered by the struggling and forgotten poor. Areas where on some hot summers night, you close your eyes, taking a deep breath down almost to the bottom of your stomach, and smell the air. Smells that gag with their underlying decay. Strong with the smell of blacktop, covering the land as icing covers a cake. Smothering the earth, blanketing the ground.

Patches of soil, only where a dilapidated building collapsed in ruin. The very soil having no way to renew itself. No ability to mix with natures air and water, thus losing its ability for natural renewal and condensation. That is the art of civilization, running amok. Through lack of restraint, all in the name of progression, and self indulgence we are destroying the purest form of art the earth has ever, or will ever have, the wilderness. No, I do not expect that

dismal future. There is now one more person that William's mighty pen has enlightened.

There are many awakening to the realization that we as a collective people can demand the injustices to the earth, and its wilderness' stop. William's, her continued work, and works of people around the world will bring about the awareness that has birthed the actions that are helping preserve the wild places we call the wilderness. I will work against nature's destruction, and treat it with the reverence as I have always done. We will share with our children our wonder and delight only felt when you are immersed in nature in the wilderness.

To watch a family of beavers building a dam. Hear a hawk's keening cry, unseen, yet vibrating high up carried by the wind overhead. Feeling the pure and rawness of the sound, delighting in its wild beauty. We will lay in a field and watching the wind and clouds roll by. And at night, when the moonlight colors our path, I will take the hands of my children and we will go forth. Forth to watch the parade of the fireflies. When the woods are aglow with their twinkling dance of the dark. Where you can embrace your imagination, set free by the silence, sensing perhaps even creativity.

Breathing the same air the pharaoh's breathed. Sensing the earth's past, and future. The wilderness, felt and appreciated physically, mentally and spiritually by all. Gwinn pg 4 To embrace and respect all life is the only way to preserve for our future. All life is sacred, and each life form is connected to a bigger picture. When one species is no longer part of the big picture, a piece of the puzzle is lost forever. It is irreplaceable. We learn daily how a life

form, sometimes seen as a pest, is in big way of life a beneficial element in the natural balance.

We have just heard the breaking news how the pesky fruit fly has enabled a major breakthrough in cancer research. On behalf of the wilderness, Terry Tempest William's is a work of art in progress. She speak's for nature, using the art of truth as her weapons, painting pictures of the irresponsible disregard some people have, and the wanton destruction they have left in their wake. They're negative footprints in time. She uses the same art of truth, as building blocks to educate and inspire reverence and responsibility for nature, mankind, and the wilderness, all being beneficial.

Her suggestion to name the wilderness as a form of art, conceptual art, a living and breathing canvas is to direct attention to how very precious the wilderness is. That all forms of life—streams, oceans, plants, trees, animals, and humans are all in this together. We share the same earth. It is the only place we have. She implores us to take time to look at the earth, listen to it speak, protect its wilderness, and life. If we do that it will shelter us for a much longer time. Humans have the ability to have an extraordinary influence on how earth can be safer and brighter.

That is the message Terry Tempest William's delivers as she wonders if wilderness can be saved if it's marketed as art, " Perhaps if we bring art to the discussion of the wild we can create a sensation where people will pay attention to the shock of what has always been here. " " Art's about life and it can't really be about anything else. There isn't anything else. " " Can we not watch the habits of animals, the adaptations of plants, and call them

performance art within the conceptual framework of wilderness? As I suggested earlier, Terry Tempest Williams's is an Environmental Poet and Visionary Realist.