

AN INVENTORY OF MOVABLE GOODS

I bought a stuffed toy fish for my five-month old son. *Scatophagus Argus*. The Shit Eater. A strange choice by National Geographic to market that one. Perhaps a little in-house joke. In 1766 this little fish was classified by the father of nomenclature Carl Linneaus. Its namesake comes from its 'bottom-feeding' habits and it commonly being found thriving in brackish waters often near effluent runoff. They are also used as fish aquarium cleaners, feeding on algae and all manner of waste.

A Rotifer parasite that lives on this fish was identified by Reverend John Harris. He was an English Anglican Priest, Scientist, Writer and in 1704 was the editor for *Lexicon Technicum: Or, A Universal English Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, the earliest alphabetical encyclopedia written in English. Harris had experts contribute to the book including the naturalist John Ray and Sir Isaac Newton. This book was the first technical journal, which defined 'Arts and Sciences' and their associated language and terminology. It set up the formula for future encyclopedic texts.

There is some debate surrounding the discovery of the rotifer parasites. It is said perhaps the father of microbiology Antonie van Leeuwenhoek was first. He was the guy that discovered bacteria and the microscope. He also was the executor of Johannes Vermeers will. Vermeers will included an extensive inventory of movable household goods. Clothes, furniture, paintings, cutlery.

I remember going through my Grandpas stuff one week after he died. I wanted to have some kind of a record of his life. I took a series of rushed photos of some of his things. Some of the little scenes left. Cobwebs on his shoes. Family photos on the mantle. The final arrangement of his reading desk. My mum didn't want to go inside. It was all a bit too close for her. Mum thought it was a bit weird I wanted to keep the coat Grandpa died wearing. I managed to bundle up a few books and trinkets, which I thought were nice mementos of my grandparents. Odd things. An old wind up alarm clock, an empty picture frame, a ring engraved with my Grandpas initials, a small pair of binoculars.

I would've loved an itemised inventory. I regret not being there when the house was finally cleared out. So much just went in the bin. I am forever considering my own mark. What will I leave? These texts and paintings? I am always trying to find a way to process all this living stuff and make my insignificant art speak to greater things. Maybe my sons shit eater fish will outlive us all and be included on his inventory of movable goods.

David Turley, 2019