

TONY HOAGLAND

Real Estate

I don't trust people who overuse the word *extraordinary*.
Nor those who tell you how much they *adore* everything,
as in, "I *adore* Susan Sarandon," or "this apple pie," or
"the way you wear your hair."

The branch will break from all that heavy fruit.
The tree will topple under all those promises.
I get lost inside of the exaggerations.

Why pretend? Not all human beings are beautiful.
People killed by bombs are not automatic heroes.
One Tuesday night's unhappiness
does not make this world a terrible place.

The four-star general on television says,
"Bombing that city was a serious mistake,
but it taught me a lot about myself."
Perhaps he should give a medal to his therapist.

When I hear how people talk,
I think of those great mansions built along the north
New Jersey shore
that completely block the view of the ocean from
ordinary people.
I think of the people who call that *investment real estate*.

My heroes are the ones who don't say much.
They don't hug people they just met.
They don't sing louder when confused.
They use plain language even when they listen.

Wisdom doesn't come to every Californian.
Chances are I too will die with difficulty in the dark.

If you want to see a lost civilization, look in the mirror.
If you want to talk about love, why not start
with those marigolds you forgot to water?

Tony Hoagland's books include *What Narcissism Means to Me* and *Donkey Gospel*. He teaches at the University of Houston. Recently he founded fivepowerspoetry.com, a seminar for high school teachers in the teaching of poetry in the classroom. Graywolf Press will publish a new collection of his poems in September 2015, called *Application for Release from the Dream*.

BEVERLY SKY

The Material World: Real Estate and Art, 2014
Fabric collage on canvas, 36 x 36 in



COURTESY: STEVE DUNWELL