



Moisture Surges

Hydrologic Poems by Francis Raven

Argotist Ebooks

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Prologue

The Poetry of Water

That wet poem slips through brooding fingertips,
Nurtures gumplant, heals your burnt morality.
Possibility's ode connects empty sips'
Hope and confusion; shatters ploughed bitter sea.

Watersheds are but persistent arguments
For their molecules to join flotsam in flood.
Poetry is merely that ocean. Moist scents.
Both one and flux evaporate humid blood.

If owned, basic needs politically fade...
But if inspired, humid art flourishes;
Drops on self before I am prepared to wade
Prime inventive skin for wind-blistered blushes.

Across wine-stained sea: hissing waves' infinite.
Closed cycle's resource: endures that floating fleet.

(1) The Meaning of Flow (in itself; metaphysical lessons)

The formula for water is H_2O . Is the formula for an ice cube H_2O squared?
— Lily Tomlin

You cannot separate water by beating it with a fork.
— Indian Proverb

How many feet of whirlpools?
What is a year in terms of falling water?
Cylinders; kilowatts; capacities.
Continuity: $Q=0$
Equations for falling water. The streaming motion.
The balance-sheet of energy that flows
passing along its infinite barrier.
— Muriel Rukeyser

Overwhelmed Symphony

I am out of deep or shallow water;
I am where water hunts for a poet who hunts for water.
I wanted to give you a ring. Perhaps a birth stone,
A mood ring, a palace laced around your finger
Or a pendulum at its still point in silver.
But all I could give you was water,
That unsticking voice in a jug,
Ephemeral crystal, scatterer of light.

I shall walk between the glorious fire and the demonic one,
Not because I did not receive the holy water of baptism,
But because it is the poet's function to walk between
The phenomenon of rain drops and the noumenal ecstasy of drips.
Poets are translators between the all-encompassing unknowable Word
And the lulling words of man as he loves and dies.

Each substance follows into a home of its own.
Give me your best mossy limbs and I will find
The water on the leaf waiting to fall
To its destiny in puddle
Or into the jug that sits beside
Neruda fulfilling the fate of liquids
In the truth of their wetness;
With his sorcerer's tongue, flow of poet's wand,
Invoking the object into poetic clay.
He must be the speech of Prometheus' hand.

Place a small pebble in your mouth.
It cures the worst of thirst.
The desert and its dehydration claim me.
Alone with God,
Though guided by love's residual sandy tracks,
I am led towards her brilliance.

The stone under your tongue is a jewel
Of skipping-stone camping laughter,
Carrier of your humanity
As you approach absurd judgments:
Trials where you must lay prostrate,
Unaware of the crime or virtue.

See how the stone is blessed,
Worn and polished,
Washed and stained by irretrievable time.
See how it follows the floor of the stream as bed-load
Traveling from one absurd affair to the next and the next,
Yet traveling with joy nonetheless.

See how that way is sublime
And smooth as the lyre in Orpheus' forest.
But still I wish the unmoving grace of a poem,
Somewhere an equation of Rilke and of Eliot;
Somewhere a mержence of poetic form, its meaning,
 And ecstatic truth behind—
 A framework or skeleton as is The Word
 From which all is based and must return
 Like the osmo-regulating salmon
 From stream to ocean to stream again.
Throw the bones in the river
 Burn the flesh!
This pattern I begin with, like the length of a step:

 Constant, yet moving.

Circulation Records

Invisible circulation through an ocean; being washed ashore is another method of founding a city.

—Ivan Illich

Moving other water out of the way conveyor belt (causes:
density differentials,
temperature,
salt)

clutching the last item you put on interrupted by obstacles, ridges, canyons
carried away
sunk surface water
carrying salt sinking
becoming dense Atlantic deep water
spending time away from the sun
(200-500 years in the Atlantic;
1,000-2,000 years in the Pacific)

but the sun
peers through
midway down;

untangle yourself from the sky (relieve) get mixed
it's only stuff, material stuff,
souls don't circulate

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A metaphor is a carrying over,
a circulation of meaning,
coming back again
to what we said before:
continuous flow, how many times has the water been here before?
Conveying blood to your heart (blue)
and away freshly oxygenated from lungs
(better to hit a vein,
transporting towards matter's center,
body heat,
magnified pumping
keeping the carrying
carrying:
potentials becoming
actual causes).

Pre-Socratic Arguments¹

Primary ripple passing
is one or many
supposed: everything distended with moisture
succumbs to the
condition of rivers²
(tension behind a log
governs —
moderated by universal principles
of proportionality)
diverse waters flow in streams remaining the same,
however, the other,
but unity
is not identity:
we are always possible
: infinite(ity)
these small puddles: ephemeral(ity)
flux as I'm your...
(dirty river)

Another: ultimate familiar stuff:
water isn't a bad choice:³
our world is covered with each of its forms,
: Evidence,
living is moist
(originating).
If not science:
earthquakes: waves, earth as island
floating.

Abandoning single stuff
atmosphere maintains liquid
when you sink the globe,
pressing drops out of the water-clock,⁵
flows only if air escapes:⁶

Socrates⁴ delivered the child
straight into water
forcefully pushed the
student's head under surfaces:

displaced
something creative.

¹ 'Water' is derived from the Indo-European root 'wed,' meaning water or wet. Derivatives include water, hydrant, redundant, otter, and vodka. (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed.)

² Heraclitus, rejecting calm coexistence: "On those stepping into rivers staying the same other and other waters flow."

³ Heraclitus argues that sea-water can be both pure and polluted since it brings life to fish and death to humans.

⁴ A well known anecdote about Socrates' angry wife, Xanthippe, that she was so angry with her husband she threw a bucket of washing water on him. The philosopher then replied: after thunder comes rain.

⁵ Empedocles: "Water mixes easily with wine, but not with oil."

⁶ Air had stolen water from the "water thief."

“Boy, when you were underneath the water, not sure if you would live to see another day, what did you want more than anything in the world?”

The Leavings

“Are you constantly left thinking about what remains after high tide?
Are you obsessed by it and equally obsessed by others who are obsessed by it?”

What is found is a list, a laundry list, not a theory.
Intended flotsam gestures
cannot hold
a choreographed pose.

Yet, we are all merely laundry to sea,
sudsy white webs (never milky),
diffused souls, soil really;
writing plaintive S.O.S. messages
while continuing to doubt their efficacy
 (“no bottle ever rests or lands
except in fragments”).

Sediment, debris, surplus, residual
postmodern shards,
natural collages:
mirrors, flipflops, twigs, shells,
dolls’ heads, meaningless plastic,
makes you want to say
‘braids’.

Still, it is only always after high tide
that we want to know what it has meant,
what we have meant when we are lying there, leftover.

Headwater's Ambiguity

For Leah

Where is the stream large enough
to be singular?
Or is it everywhere, a dispersal of drops?
Is the headwater
A source beyond identity?

How do you decide when a person is a person?
Embryo? Infant? Brain dead? Demented? Murderer?
We have walked to humanity's font
Where there are no humans.

If you've ever tried to follow a creek upstream
To find the spring marking its source
Deciding which branch to pursue is no simple matter.

Headwaters of the Mississippi: 31 miles south of Bemidji, Minnesota on US 71.

Headwaters of the Missouri: Three Forks, Montana
(Convergence of the Gallatin, Madison, and Jefferson Rivers).

Headwaters of the Nile: Thousands of kilometers south of Egypt in the Sahel
Controlled by Sudan & Ethiopia.

Headwaters of the Yangtze: At 16,000 feet elevation in the Kunlun Mountains,
Southwestern section of Qinghai.

Headwaters of the Seine: 18 miles northwest of Dijon.

Headwaters of the Columbia: Columbia Lake at the south end of the Columbia Valley
On the west side of the British Columbia Rockies.

Headwaters of the Rhine: The Swiss Alps in East-Central Switzerland
At the juncture of two small mountain streams:
The Vorderrhein and the Hinterrhein.

But, on the other hand,
Everything is water,
So says Thales.

Finding the source, not merely of single rivers,
But of all water, is filled with religious importance.
All that gives and sustains life is moist:
Cum, blood, milk.

“Of course there is a starting point”⁷
From the origin,
Before we are people
Before we have blond hair & drink soda
Before we are teachers who enjoy sailboats
Through rivers, through solid channels of identity,

⁷Graham, Jorie. “The Spectators” from Swarm. (The Ecco Press, 2000) p. 27.

Ossified arteries of choices,
 Finally dumping into delta —
 Each cup of water flows to sea
 Because the sea is lower than any glass.⁸
A thousand strands of murky hair
Permitting individuality to drain
 Into sea.

But pollution,
 Alzheimer's, cancer,
 Gulf of Mexico's dead zone
 (20,000 square kilometers,
 the size of New Jersey)

⁸ Lao Tzu. Tao Te Ching. Translated by Stephen Mitchell. (Perennial, 1992) Chapter 66.

The Aral Sea Is Draining From Me

Claim to fame:

Once the world's fourth largest inland sea;
Not quite like "my daughter, she once won fourth place
In the Miss America pageant," although there is the same pride;
Except, 60% of the water volume was lost
To get rich schemes seeping into upstream cotton fields:

A parched lake split in two

Like a throat stuck together (Uzbekistan & Kazakstan)

On itself

After a night of heavy drinking.

Less water =

More salt:

Evaporation + concentration (doubled)

Opposing dilution.

Desiccation, men carrying sand and salt

Away on their backs, might say.

But, then again,

It's a job: an historical job we must regain.

An Ocean's Fable

Who was saved?⁹
Destruction has ended.
Bonding is near.

Kenyan tsunami survivor, Owen, a baby hippopotamus,
Chose a giant century-old male tortoise, Mzee (Swahili for old man), as his mother.
After disaster strikes you have the right to pick your parents.
When the whole world turns over you turn over too.
A hippopotamus cannot pretend; we must assume belief.

Tussled, roiled in waves, the hippo landed on the tortoise, floated to shore.
We must make a life where we find it; interspecies kinship is slightly more difficult
Than merely having parents, but only slightly. There is so much to learn:
Communication buildup. How do we swim together? What do you eat?

A family means protection from strangers:
Owen charges the unknown with a son's ferocity.
How Mzee became part of the known is anyone's guess.
Perhaps together they have answered the deep philosophical questions:
(1) What is it like to be a hippopotamus? & (2) What is it like to be a tortoise?

Love another species as your own.
Owen licks Mzee's face in the morning after rising.
Forget Noah's boat, the animals saved themselves.

⁹ Earthquakes vertically displace water on top of water,
sucked between plates.
Waves begin to speak when displaced ocean
attempts to regain equilibrium.

A wall of liquid
Under bridge
Conquers past,
Destroys bridge.

Destruction, with no one to blame.
Without God our hands fly up.
Our conversations circle an impossible idea.
Causes without reasons circulate scientifically.

San Francisco Bay

1.

(formerly pier 98
& a little beyond)
Franciscan environs
South to San Bruno
North to Marin Headlands,

In between, here we sing or swallow.

The weeds! The weeds!

95 percent of SF bay wetlands destroyed...
Bay also a third smaller.
Where did the water go?
Pushing it out, who pulled it in?

Poems of place pull in
not only weeds
but people, but people's words.
How far does context roam in this place?

2.

Grading down
rubble, cows' bones, bricks,
broken roads
my grandmother might have
traveled upon
in her early dresses,
elevator shafts, car parts' crashes;
all this landfill, all these things,
none of them quite beautiful
forming a base
forming foundations
of a full, or almost full-fledged
wetland ecosystem.
I know you could say
it's not really natural
because the area here
would naturally have been
under water
would naturally have not
been here at all
but now we say it's natural;
it could be a functioning wetland
at some point in the future, at some point

in environmental justice
(yes, EJ, almost like a timeframe).

It's not everybody's eyesight I'm interested in
although I will be accused of not asking enough,
not attending enough meetings.

3.

Great Blue Heron rising,
legs behind grace,
grace in power plant's smog,
power plant in the face value
of the housing projects.

Beauty counterpoised with politics.

4.

Twice a day
wetlands
allow themselves
to be lost unto themselves.

I rub blades of salt grass together,
seasoning my toxic salad
with their sweat.
Popping pickle-weed's brackish organs,
I am already in a New York deli
ordering my pastrami on rye.

Salt leaves its mark
or its signature of erasure
on pipes and seal corpses
of land's finger
sticking into the bay,
pointing at Oakland's port -
Oaktown, live oak, tan oak,
how do we measure water
when it is sucked away
into modern aqueducts
for migrant farm workers
to stare at, to notice
divergent possibilities?

Don't delve into every aspect
of a place,
it's too much,
consciousness splits out too far,

where we live
and cannot come back
to a coherent center,
to a center where
an idea might crack.

5.

*now here you can see clearly down
where toxic fires burned
from August to November 2000
and the Navy didn't tell anyone
about it for two and half weeks
and then they just handed out like a
hundred fliers
describing this fire,
which was bullshit,
and people were getting sick,
vomiting and getting the shits and nosebleeds
and then community groups started suing
and then San Francisco's voters
passed landmark legislation
saying they wouldn't take back
the land of a superfund site
unless it was cleaned up
to residential standards,
but alas,
the proposition wasn't binding.*

There are too many issues:
Overdetermination. It takes so long
To get at what you really want to talk about,
Cycle upon cycle
Of stuff we must weather,
Cycle upon cycle of class, ethnicity,
Racism, economics, ecology;
I can't even begin, the list is too long.

Up the hill and down the hill.
Fires burn and no one knows.
Who do you have to be
For sight
To equal knowledge?

6.

Fat headed Bufflehead;
White dabble on cheek
Dunks under

Too quickly
For many students
To notice
The inequality of sexes
In animal's kingdom.

Wind and sun,
Here on the point,
I hear there are many server farms
In the area.

7.

What level of toxins shall
We discuss at this current juncture?
Which current is running
Through us now & into political processes?
How are electrical currents
Also currents implicated in the cycle of violence?

Does protest exist merely for the photo opportunity?
Or is it for the people in the protest?
Does the protest attempt to instigate change
Or is it change incarnate?

Have you heard the news,
White artists
Are gentrification's first front?

8.

In waves
Peninsula's point
Almost becomes an island.

Just wait three or maybe four years,
This wasteland will be taken back
By these marshlands, seeds floating in with
Political action's rising tide.

Interlude:
Philosophical Conversation

A Philosophical Conversation about Water
(an email roundtable)

Participants:

Elizabeth McAnally, Sam Mickey, and Jason Simus: Graduate students at the University of North Texas and members of the Philosophy of Water Issues Program.

Arnold Berleant: Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Long Island University, and the author of *The Aesthetic Field* and *Art and Engagement* (Temple University Press).

Emily Brady: Professor of Human Geography at the University of Edinburgh and author of *Aesthetics of the Natural Environment* (University of Alabama Press, 2003).

Haj Ross: A linguist who played a part in the development of generative semantics along with George Lakoff, James D. McCawley, and Paul Postal. He is currently a professor at the University of North Texas.

John Goulde: Associate Professor of Religion and Director of Asian Studies at Sweet Briar College.

Francis Raven: How do we begin generating a philosophy of water?

Arnold Berleant: I would think that one should start from the experience of water, or perhaps the experiences of water: sensory, cultural, seasonal, circumstantial, personal (historical, mnemonic), etc. Not a neat beginning, but an honest one. Neat ones tend to be dishonest (i.e. assumptive, formal).

Emily Brady: I think I would say that one ought to begin in a phenomenological way—by reflecting on one’s sense experiences of water, and what those experiences generate in terms of emotion, imagination, memory, attachments, sense of place etc. I would ask how our experiences of water matter to us and in what way they add value to our lives or enable us to value environments.

Elizabeth McAnally and Sam Mickey: A philosophy of water could be generated by asking questions traditionally accepted as philosophical and directing them toward water or things related to water. Questions such as the following: What do we know of water and how do we know it (epistemology)? What is water and how does it come to be (ontology)? What is the sense of water and how is water perceived in nature and in art (aesthetics)? What is the meaning of the lexical item “water” and how does it relate to the truth-values of discursive operations (logic)? How do we and how should we act toward water (descriptive and prescriptive ethics)?

What would a more radical way be to think a philosophy of water? Perhaps this has already been going on. Perhaps there has been an undercurrent throughout the entire tradition of Western philosophy that has resisted the clear and distinct categories of logical, rational, calculative thinking, an undercurrent that serves as a continual source of philosophical thinking, yet resists the categories and concepts that result from such thinking. We argue that philosophy, in its most radical sense, has

always been “of water” in the sense that philosophical discourse always takes its initiative from the experience of water. This philosophy of water is philosophy in its most radical (rooted) sense. This philosophy of water is philosophy initiated by the experience of reflection and transformation. If we look at the history of philosophy, we will find the undercurrent perpetuating philosophy of water.

Francis: And how has this undercurrent played out in the history of philosophy?

Elizabeth and Sam: The pre-Socratic philosophers speak of the elements quite often, particularly the typical four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. Thales is obviously the most aquatic of these philosophers insofar as he proposed that the origin (arche) of all things is water. But water appears as a subject matter for all of these thinkers, and perhaps more importantly, these thinkers all lived very close to water or even in port towns.

Philosophy didn't cut its ties with water with Socrates and Plato. In the allegory of the cave, Socrates notes that the stage between seeing shadows (within or without the cave) and seeing the things in themselves is seeing things as reflections in water. Seeing reflections in water is the first move away from the vision of normal opinion (doxa) toward the insight of knowledge (episteme).

With Hegel we have a great example of a philosophy of water. In his *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel is sympathetic with the idea that water is the mother of all things, because water is the element of “selfless contrast.” The existence of water is an “existing-for-others,” and because this element is itself as “for-others,” it is the epitome of the dialectic of the Spirit. In a passage from Hegel's journal, he speaks of visiting a waterfall and being quite touched by the activity of its passive flow. Like Thales, Hegel understood the image of water to manifest the origin of all existence (the arche for Thales, the dialectical Spirit for Hegel). And also like Thales, this was a biographical part of Hegel's life, not merely an abstract thought-experiment.

In short, from Thales to Plato, through Medieval philosophy, Descartes, Hegel, and the philosophers of the twentieth century (William James, Whitehead, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Derrida), philosophers have always spoken about philosophy as it is “of water,” born of experiences of reflection, mystery, purity, and flux. To begin generating a philosophy of water, we must first realize that the experience of philosophy is always intimately intertwined with the experience of water.

Francis: What do water environments tell us about our world?

Emily: I think here too I tend towards thinking of properties of water—e.g. fluidity and other dynamic properties associated with water, clarity, reflection, etc., and how these shape how we view our world and how these properties have impacted on our perception of our world.

I think also here, because I love to swim, I would be interested in how the central bodily experience can be of water. My mother and I are natural swimmers, and the sense of well being that comes with swimming is personally very important to me. I think it stems from the unique sense experience of the way water holds your body, and surrounds it and so on—ways you cannot experience terrestrial environments. Moving through water is a very special experience. Of course, for others it instills a sense of fear. And so a very different attitude would arise.

In terms of land, water has a huge influence on the shaping of the land. Glaciers are key here. That also brings to mind the way water can change to ice and thus another aspect of its dynamic character (and can boil—hot springs, geysers etc). I think it is also really important to remember water

environments that are a mixture of artifact and nature, e.g. canals, artificial lakes and ponds, garden water features, reservoirs and the new environments created through dams. Many of these are water environments that we can control to a great extent and may feel more at home in as a result.

Francis: In your paper, “Aesthetic Implications of the New Paradigm in Ecology,” you write that the new paradigm in ecology characterizes nature as in a state of flux and disturbance, (rather than in balance or equilibrium) as a result of this, our model of the aesthetic appreciation of nature must adapt to this new paradigm. What would this mean in terms of the aesthetic appreciation of water?

Jason Simus: I think water is the paradigmatic example of how flux and disturbances in the environment influence ecosystems and thus, how we aesthetically appreciate them. So just as I said in the other paper you read, what we appreciate in nature is formed by environmental factors plus what we bring to the experience in terms of scientific knowledge, especially the kind of scientific knowledge gained through the employment of appropriate metaphors like Aldo Leopold’s biotic “community” or ecosystem “health.” The point is that how we adapt to nature’s fluctuations must be as open-ended as the metaphors we use to guide our appreciation. But I actually have a question for you as a poet: what is the role of metaphor in poetry and how does it relate to our ‘way’ of understanding water in a philosophical sense?

Francis: I think that people’s everyday conceptions of water are actually watered down versions of poets’ poetic thinking about water. So, any philosophical understanding of water based in the ordinary language tradition will be based in poetry at some level. This means that a grammar of water will weigh heavily on metaphors of water (some dead, some alive, some cringeworthy).

On the other hand, water has no aesthetic properties of its own, but takes on the aesthetic qualities of the environment. All aesthetic qualities of water must be transferred to it and one of the mechanisms by which they are transferred is metaphor.

Jason: Perhaps water has only metaphorical aesthetic qualities, qualities that are not directly observable. Yet, as Frank Sibley argues, aesthetic qualities depend upon non-aesthetic qualities. So, according to Sibley, the descriptive, non-aesthetic qualities of water (i.e. fluidity, movement, etc.) may contribute to, or as you say, “transfer,” to water’s aesthetic qualities such as “shimmering.” This is probably too philosophically “in-depth” (another metaphor) for what you’re looking for, but the employment of metaphors in our ordinary language suggests that we not only talk about water metaphorically, but our actions are in accord with these kinds of metaphors as well. For example, when I ask my students to look “deeper” into the issue we are addressing, they literally act in a way that suggests going “deep” into the issue. This aspect of metaphor was brought to my attention by Lakoff and Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By*, which argues that metaphors provide conceptual frameworks for both thought and action. Thus water may be an ideal example of how this works.

Francis: What is the relationship between linguistics (or etymology) and water?

Elizabeth and Sam: Water relates to linguistics (of which we would consider etymological investigation to be a part) in a variety of ways. In general, water is necessary to linguistics because water is necessary to the physiology of language, the physiology of the tongue (*lingua* in Latin). The body needs water to live, and also to keep the vocal tract greased for communication. “Dry mouth” is a symptom of anxiety that can prevent one from speaking. Water is a necessary part of linguistic communication, and it can also become a matter of linguistic investigation.

Háj Ross: One thing that makes ‘water’ interesting is that it’s a math noun (as opposed to a count noun) with some strange properties. Count nouns are objects which can be counted such as glasses, books, speakers, etc. Math nouns are things like rice or sand or sweat that cannot be counted. One way they’re different is that count nouns can’t show up without an article. With math nouns not having an article is fine. Also, primarily, math nouns can’t pluralize. So, in general, it’s very funny to say the sweats gathered on the glass. But what makes water strange is that there is a plural of water, “the waters.” Now can you say the waters of Minnesota? No. But you can say waters of Babylon. Usually water is a math noun in any form that it takes: ice, fog, steam, etc. So it leads you into a difficult area of trying to figure out what kind of a noun water is. It seems to be basically a math noun but with very strange properties.

Francis: What is the importance of water in people’s spiritual lives?

Elizabeth and Sam: Much can be said here with respect to the significance of water in cosmogony and purification—two dimensions of spirituality/religion/faith/holiness that are found in many (if not all) of the world’s traditions. Water offerings are made in a wide variety of religions, from the Christian use of holy water to the use of libations in Cuban Santeria. In many cases, water is used to purify and make the spirit clean. The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt involves crossing water. Christian baptism involves the purification of the spirit that allows for its initiation into the church.

Francis: What role does water play in Chinese religious traditions?

John Gould: Water is the primary medium of human birth and death. In folk legends, early Ch’u legends which became the basis for later Confucian and Taoist traditions, human life comes from and is recycled through the Yellow Spring, as are the stars and nine suns. The mythology of Great Yu, a hero in the Confucian classical tradition, not only portrays Yu as a water/fish/dragon creature, but also as the tamer of floods. Taoist alchemy (early and late) sees water as the primal form for the development of the 10,000 things. Water is also the second element in the reversion of breath-to-water-to spirit that is part of Taoist immortality transformation techniques.

Francis: How does the way we aesthetically appreciate the natural environment affect how we aesthetically appreciate art?

Emily: I would venture to say that our experience of nature enables us to expand or enlarge our experience of art, e.g., by bringing actual nature experiences to bear on the images of paintings or words and imagery of literature. The multi-sensory way in which natural environments are experienced may enable us to become more aesthetically sensitive when it comes to art, but that’s speculation! I think certainly there must be interesting crossover when it comes to music—birdsong, sounds of water, etc., and the melodies of music.

Francis: Why are coastlines aesthetically interesting?

Emily: Here it all has to do with the mixed environment that you get in coastlines—mix of sea and land and all that brings with it like the intermixing of water and sand, the effect of tides and waves on the immediate landscapes, etc. For me a lot of the aesthetic interest is also in the sounds and the birdlife (I love seabirds, maybe because they are so incredible, being more at home in water, under water, and around water.)

Francis: How do the aesthetic attributes of water impact an ethics (or a more general philosophy) of water?

Emily: One point is that water is in some ways the last wilderness (well, the deep sea anyway). And because of this we are still so unaware of how we treat water. There is SO much of it (sea not rivers) that we have less impact on it (or we think we do) than we do on other environments. So, I mean to say that the sea can still manage to look beautiful while all sorts of awful things may be happening to it. (This is not the case with rivers, which I guess just do look awful when they are damaged.) I also think people have mentioned how a lake may be a gorgeous color but that color is actually created by some awful pollutant. Of course with oil spills in the sea it is all too evident what damage there is.

Francis: What does water teach us about the nature of life?

Arnold: There are all sorts of messages: the origin of life, its fragility and extreme dependence on conditions, the necessity of water for life, its fecundity, etc. Water offers a distinctive perspective or perhaps one should say 'standpoint' on the world. Perhaps like wind, water environments are never completely under our control. The Taoist injunction to live according to nature is never more apt.

Emily: Here I would be tempted to get ecological and biological—that we are made up mostly of water, as is the earth and that water deeply connects us to our environment. And, of course, that we originate in water in the womb and have come from the sea in evolutionary terms: water creates a very deep connection between ourselves and our environment.

Francis: How do water environments lead us to respect natural processes?

Emily: Here I might try to stress the power of nature and the way in which water can both GIVE life and THREATEN life. So, we have water which we could not live without, and then how lack of water creates drought, too much water causes mudslides, floods, tsunami, etc. Water is so central to our lives it is hard not to respect it—our valuing of water comes through respect for its importance in our lives. The positive value may be both utilitarian but also a kind of respect borne out of awe or sublimity.

(2) Interactions (humanity's lessons)

The next war in the Middle East will be fought over water, not politics.

— Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Water is the mistress of liquid language, of smooth flowing language, of continued and continuing language, of language that softens rhythm and gives a uniform substance to differing rhythms....liquidity is, in my opinion, the very desire of language. Language needs to flow. It flows naturally.

— Gaston Bachelard, Water and Dreams

All water flows into the ocean or into the purse of the rich.

— Danish Proverb

Notes on the Distribution of Water

We use too much (insert resource). If you pay me, I'll use less. In fact, if you pay me I'll use as little of the resource as the poorest person on earth; that's what I should do, right? I mean, if I were a good person I would strip myself of my stuff until I had no more than was necessary (and yes, there are problems with figuring out how much of a good is necessary, but they are not insurmountable difficulties) – this is my moral obligation according to Peter Singer¹⁰. But, to extend Singer, if you pay me I'll have enough money to buy more (insert resource) than you and then we'll be in the exact situation we started in (with me having more of the resource and you having less). As political philosopher Michael Walzer writes, simple equality is where everyone is given the same amount of stuff, but it is an unstable condition because people don't consume, spend, and save their stuff in the same way.¹¹ Okay, so the thought is that if you give everyone the same amount of money (as opposed to water) then everyone will be really equal. But, of course, if you give everyone the same amount of money, they're going to spend it differently. Some people will invest it in houses and educations and the stock market, other people will buy fancy candy bars or poetry books or organic beef, and still others will give their money away. After a while we will not be equal anymore; we'll have to continually redistribute all the money so everyone always has the same amount. Of course, this strips the fun from money. I'm just not really sure what to do.

What if everyone were given a cup of water each day and couldn't buy more? They would die, that's what. But then, who would get their cups of water for the next day? Their children? The state? Those are serious problems, but here's another problem: those people (meaning everybody) are going to excrete their cups of fluid and it's eventually going to end up in some river and, you know, "we all live down stream." Of course, nobody wants their water to be full of pee and some people will pay not to drink contaminated water. These are the rich people. They'll get their water upstream. They'll get their water at the top. The problem is that there is no top: the earth just goes around and around.

I know we need more renewable energy, so there's this river, let's call it X. And I think everyone in the United States could have their own dam on X. As Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke write in their book Blue Gold, "In the 20th century, 800,000 small dams and 40,000 large dams (more than four stories high) were constructed [worldwide]."¹² So let's say there are 300 million Americans, this means that in the 20th century .0028 dams were built for each American. I think we can do a lot better; I think we could put 300 million dams on X. I know it's going to take a lot of work, but think how great it will be. Each of us will be able to name our own dam. But actually this might not be such a good idea because "the tremendous weight of water in a basin not designed to hold it deforms the earth's crust beneath it, sometimes causing earthquakes. There is now documented evidence linking earth tremors to some 70 dams. In fact, the shift of weight when so much water is moved by human technology is affecting the earth's rotation."¹³ So with 300 million dams on X the earth might rotate right into Mars in the midst of an enormous earthquake. Perhaps we need to bring a few more policy solutions to the table.

I know that fresh H₂O is not as common as one would expect. (Almost none of the 1.4 billion cubic kilometers of water on earth is available for human consumption – 97.5% of it is in the ocean and 2/3^{rds} of the remaining 2.5% is locked in the polar ice caps. Much of the rest is too far underground for

¹⁰ Singer, Peter. "Famine, Affluence and Morality." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1 (Spring), 1972, pp. 229-43.

¹¹ Walzer, Michael. Spheres of Justice. New York: Basic Book, 1983, p. 14.

¹² Barlow, Maude and Tony Clarke. Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop Corporate Theft of the World's Water. New York: The New Press, 2003, p. 48.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.49.

human use. This leaves only 90,000 km³ of water, or .26% of total global water, in freshwater lakes and rivers (where we obtain most of our water).¹⁴ But I also know that water is not distributed evenly across the globe. Some places have lots of rain and lots of lakes and lots of streams and other places have none. What we really must do, if we believe in equity, is to find a way of efficiently transporting fresh water from places with lots of it (like the rainy side of the Big Island of Hawaii, which gets approximately 5,100 millimeters of precipitation every year) to the Sahara Desert. Okay, so this setup is going to be extremely costly, but I think it'll be worth it. I mean, we need to do it for the people. Everybody deserves the same amount of water as everyone else. We need to be equal with respect to our essential fluid, not just with respect to votes. It's a human right, or it should be: the same amount of water for each global citizen. It's going to take a lot of energy (and political willpower) to transport water from Hawaii to Africa. Fossil fuels are another resource, but I'm only interested in water.

It's not just that each person needs water to live their lives, but also that each person needs clean water. Unfortunately, although those who are alive have water (because humans cannot live for more than 3-4 days without it)¹⁵ many people in the developing world don't have clean water. In fact, according to Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, "Half the people on this planet lack basic sanitation services...So it is not surprising that 80 percent of the diseases in the poor countries of the South are spread by consuming unsafe water. The statistics are sobering: 90 percent of the Third World's wastewater is still discharged untreated into local rivers and streams; water borne pathogens and pollution kill 25 million people every year; every eight seconds, a child dies from drinking contaminated water; and every year, diarrhea kills nearly three million children, a full quarter of the deaths in this age group."¹⁶ This sickening prognosis needs to be reversed. And it needs to be reversed immediately. One of two things must occur in order to fully turn these trends around: (1) each person on the planet needs to be equipped with their own water sanitation facility. This would be very expensive but if implemented worldwide the costs would be radically reduced (economies of scale). The idea would be that each person should have the ability to take responsibility for their own clean H₂O. Currently, people don't have this opportunity. And if this is truly going to be an ownership society the first thing we should own is our bodies and the second thing we should own is our water. However, if this setup proves politically unfeasible we just might have to move to plan b: (2) all of the world's water could be transported first to a central cleaner (hopefully in a politically neutral country) and then transported back to the country of origin in a manner promoting equity and respect for individual life. This arrangement could not be accomplished on the cheap and would require several million helicopters to fly from the water's origin to Switzerland and back again. We could think of this second plan as the Water Santa Claus Plan. It's a logistical nightmare, but then again, so was a centralized economy and many countries tried that for a good long time. There is no reason why we shouldn't try this second plan as a political response to the problem of worldwide dirty water. I know that other policy solutions would work, but I think we have a real winner here.

¹⁴ Black, Maggie. The No-Nonsense Guide to Water. New York: Verso, 2004, p. 11.

¹⁵ Irvin, Jill. "Re: How long can a human live without water and food." Internet post. Ohio State University, 1999. Available online at: <http://www.madsci.org/posts/archives/sep99/937540022.Gb.r.html>

¹⁶ Barlow, Maude and Tony Clarke. Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop Corporate Theft of the World's Water. New York: The New Press, 2003, pp. 52-53.

Drowning: A Family Reflection

*For my four drowned family members: Charles Hamilton Raven Jr.,
Robert Magan, Shaen Magan, Will Hudner*

*Drowning deaths on both sides:
Roll over.
Fear death by water
No matter the technology.*

1.

Yellowstone Lake (maternal, obviously):
(20 miles long by 14 miles wide; Caldera's August)

White caps and those smooth glacial stones, wolf-eye blue water:
Distant (however, visible) hot springs, no heat here.
We Paid for This, a Family Fishing Trip.
Holding it together as summer vacation's month began to close;
Venturing upon a last early morning casting.
But the lake coldly spat, mother came back to shore fixing lunch,
A premonition of having to care.

Before departing the city for fish
Dapper step-father flippantly informed his tailor
"wait until I return
before you cut my suit"
A premonition of being free from care.

On all other fishing outings
He left his shoes untied
"so I can get out of these heavy boots
if anything happens"

What happens:
A capsized pulse Overwhelmed
Like a night's cup turned over,
Extinguishing a candle.

Submerging face into water
Mammalian diving reflex
Energy saving: reducing heart rate
Restricting blood flow, blood shift.

Immersion triggers asphyxia
Oxygen starvation Caused
Hypothermia's coma,
Swimmer's heart attack Else
Forced under by an object denser than water.

Discovering their bodies days later, the father figure prow speared.
Younger boy's fingertips etched into the elder's back,
As if trying to swim away, but his shoes sank, double knotted,
 A premonition of aspiring to care,
 Not knowing how.

2.

San Francisco Bay; Suicides off the Bay Bridge (a father's worry):

 An earthquake could never mean as much as we might
 When we strip our life from our life, alienating it
 From the 280,000 vehicles crossing the bridge daily.

 At least suicides' wood would float
 if asked...

"All three were supposed to be competition-quality swimmers, and they all jumped off."

A ripple is a wrinkle of self.
So calm and seemingly deep before cascades.
After: superficial shards.
With enough of them
The rocks at the bottom remain unforeseen.

Replacing Charon
With state of the art bridges.
How will we know when the water begins?
How will we know when we arrive?
The only way: jump off; know and die.

Bridge painters, ebb and flow,
Weather to weather,
Coats continuously worried peeling,
Reporting suicides first:
How we see into water again.

 As your last bubble
 Bursts at the surface
 Where you once gazed
 Until your motorboat
 Destroyed reflection.

 Is it an echo of yourself,
 Pebble falling from your palm?
 Not quite accidentally
 Plunging, ripples reverberating outward,
 Those, are those echoes?

3.

“Of course, the big question is WHY they jumped, and I can’t answer that.”

Spurning sex, for himself, staring then masturbating,
Depressed bed (sweaty sheets, water enough)

Son of a river god and a nymph.

Tiresias informed these strange parents, noting inner heart rate,
(As a doctor warns of congenital disease:

Preparing, a long night, preparing)

“he will live till fully gray
unless he gazes upon himself.”

Quality of mirrors, a history lesson for later.

In the saying, it was as if he was trying to be heard by others,
Annoyingly.

All the ladies (“a certain way”) fell for his expressive eyes,
Into his pools of smoke, always busy
Working on his abs, practicing guitar.
Shiny colleges wouldn’t care about his sex life, anyway.

One of his plaintive women, rejected Echo,
Withdrew into a lonely spot,

Playing again the last words she heard,

As a curse,

Finally fading

Until merely a whisper remained

In the distance, off a cliff. What spans?

The future of a bridge.

Who would build one if he knew saints would die?

Who would buy a cup of coffee if he knew the externalities?

Who would say a word if he understood causation?

Another curse, *a sting in the water, a life in a day*

Sent Narcissus’s fateful direction,

to know unattainable love’s rip

You ask yourself again, before landing.

You answer, before landing: knowledge is the curse.

Falling in love with...

Falling into...your second cup of tea.

Below Salty Borders

Although the contaminant—the saline groundwater below the seafloor—is natural, it finds its way into freshwater aquifers as a result of human activities.

— E.C. Pielou

1.

Slant drilling across borders

Below rivers

To steal tributaries;

You might as well form a multi-national corporation,

Privatize the entire water supply

(maybe we'll start talking about water rates increasing by 25%
and the protests that ensued, maybe)

Toleration: a game of percentages,

Contaminants' dilution.

Interface encroaches

Due to overextraction;

If you pump enough

Cone rising

Water table escalating

Salt water intruding

Spat

You're salting my game.

“The blood spilled in Cochabamba carries Bechtel's fingerprints.”¹⁷

Forced to pay for the salt in your wounds.

2.

My neighbor's neighbor is far away

Too far for ethics

Unless he is upstream

Then I will bow

Institution: interstate waterbasin planning (equal authority)

Accounting inevitably follows

Some departments must be sacrificed

Some lambs' tongues will desiccate.

Charity plays a role in humane borders'

65-gallon barrels

Contents translated

“Agua”

We are a Christian nation

¹⁷ Oscar Olivera, president of the Cochabamba Federation of Factory Workers and 2001 winner of the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize.

Equipped with detailed maps
Indicating the GPS location of every dead migrant.

Double Divination

My people ask counsel at their stock and their staff declares unto them.
— Hosea 4:12

1.

Arrive at fresh pools
While recovering yourself, from self outward
Even travelers carry large amounts of fresh water
Gaze
Buoyant objects
Float an egg white
Predicting future husbands
Fertility eases along the surface
Using tools to contact...
Liquid symbols of the future:
Into a blue ceramic bowl.
Ask your question.
May cloud:
Glare into, indirectly.
When symbols cease forming, stop chattering,
Interpretation begins; post hoc reproductions take hold of your hands.

2.

Pendulum over map
Electromagnetic aquifer If moisture is a window to the soul...
If you're looking to walk on water
You must first find it.
Can you walk on the humidity within?

forked twig prospectors mining dowsers
plunging utensils transplanted practice underground selves

Y-shaped divining rod's dipping direction
Underground roiling; each branch held sweaty
Position suddenly jerking downward
Testifying to a witch; is he controlling the branch?
Drill a well (on your own property to be safe).
Sometimes water will be present at that spot; other times, it is not.
Sometimes you will see your soul; other times you will not.
(It might also be wise to seek a hydrologist.)

Harvesting an Army for God

For my Dad

And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. — Judges 7: 6

To pluck men for battle's tree
(cedar, shittah, oil, myrtle, box, fir, or pine)
Order each to drink from this stream's wetted perimeter
From this current's
(Find fastest flow just below the surface)
Tricks on the ear.

Some will kneel
Lapping like dogs
Those men know nothing of aesthetics
Nothing of how the sensible impacts the ethical
Let them go
Back to the drugstores on the Main Streets of their fine towns
Let them go
Back to weld cardboard masks for their rudimentary backyard plays
Those are not your men, but merely men of imagination
Dogs may be a soldier's best friend, but make no mistake
They are not soldiers themselves.
Besides, these men, these saplings, will one day have bad bony knees
From a thousand rippling sips.

The others, initiates you will one day revere
And trust with each of your sweaty hairs
Will interlock their fingers
As in prayers to be filled with liquid
To feel blood course and become human again
Forming a cup
(Body's Bowl
Vessel delivers
Message bearing life's meaning)

Lifted full to face
Attempting to observe
gross litter, sewage, dog feces, oil, stench (sulfur, cleaning fluid, disinfectants), surface scum,
foam, sewage fungus, cigarette butts, plastic bags,
diapers, soda cans, toilet seats, sheet metal, old cars...¹⁸
If any contaminants are found, these men will not gulp,
But will instead expect God to provide
Open rivers in high places, fountains in valleys,

¹⁸ In fact, these men have such delicacy of taste that they are able to distinguish iron and leather in any liquid, no matter what the critics say.

The wilderness as a singular pool.¹⁹
Cleanliness is not only close to godliness, it is close to life,
Crucial as shade in wastelands.

Bringing civilization to battle
This flock will serve without dripping.
As they stand, show your troops the enemy's whites
Veins inflamed with every storm.
There is a new tool for winning wars
Delivering grain to hand.

¹⁹ Isaiah 41: 18

Cocktail Cast

Come sing on my boat. Stand and sing. Bend your knees. Lower your source.
I will see your reflection as I cast my collapsible rod unto the ocean,
As I urinate from this sturdy raft built of fiberglass
And finished with hand carved mahogany and teak.

My boat has every convenience:

Intake: Starbucks on Times Square: Large Coffee (I refuse to say “Venti”)

Outtake: Starbucks in Midtown: Pee

Intake: The Red Cat in Chelsea: Alsatian Riesling

(“The Red Cat purrs with informal bonhomie and good unpretentious food.”)

Outtake: Gallery Somewhere in Chelsea: Pee

Intake: My Boat “The Noble Dolores Outlaw”: Orange Juice and Champagne

Outtake: My Boat “TNDO”: Pee

(I do not know how much,
but I could measure piss in shells;
bivalves or gastropods?)

Cocktails are served by your cousin who you urged
(begged I might say) me to employ.

I am too bored to argue. She is not a good bartender. She spills.
She does not know how to make a proper Martini.

She does not know how to prepare a gimlet or a Long Island Iced Tea.

But boy did she ever know how to play water polo.

“Swimming over offensive player’s back constitutes a foul.”

I watched her help her team win the

4th FINA Junior Women’s Water Polo World Championship.

Unfortunately, a shoulder injury meant she would never play again.

She hit the water wrong on a practice dive

And felt her right shoulder tear to shreds.

Now she bartends like a lucky fish
Slurping glory days’ remains
Off her latest drunk.

Cast your rod unto my reeds.

I assure you, it’s my land as far as you can see.

Don’t overwork your baits.

Learn to be more confident with what’s at the end of your pole.

You will soon catch a wide variety of fish,

Some as big as your heart’s error.

Perhaps you could mount such a fish in your den:

For the next trophy you release, the one you already have, or even that “one that got away,” we
have a vast variety of molds that will guarantee your fish a beautiful spot on your wall!

Water Modeling

You're wearing it
it's hot and
it was so so cheap
garage sale cheap wall drug cheap

Anyone can do it
just drip it on
you don't have to be tall
to drip it on

Everybody's doing it
dripping water on
and not drying it off
dripping water on and not drying it off

Modeling opportunities available now through top agencies nationwide!
want to be famous? we can make it happen
just pour it on display fling and spray
you surely meet the requirements for tendering hydrogeological studies

To be a water model you must
look special be sweet have a talent
know how to achieve that LOOK
not only drink water but splash it on on your best parts.

Screw the designers
screw calvin klein screw kenneth cole
it's free fashion is free it's free
and it looks so so hot broiling hot so hot it evaporated

The catwalk was slippery
but nobody died nobody minded
they were looking right through product's design
essence's shape shown through that elegant prism

Super Water Models
 they're not shy they drip drip drip
Super Water Models
 don't be shy you can drip drip drip

They don't usually let models talk
they just care how they walk
but these hotties are different
each persona gives her cent:

Francis Raven: Where did you pour the water?

Mairead Byrne: My head.

Jessica Areen: The crook of my elbow and I let it drip back into the sink.

Alyette Green: Back of my hand and my palm.

Francis Raven: How do you look as a water model?

Mairead Byrne: Impossible to say.

Jessica Areen: Like someone having the type of day where she doesn't have a song of the day.

Alyette Green: Jeweled. Microcosms of a river dripping down my fingers.

Francis Raven: How did it feel?

Mairead Byrne: Relieved.

Jessica Areen: Like someone having the type of day where she doesn't have a song of the day, although honestly, slightly less numb than before.

Alyette Green: Refreshed. Regarded. Not sure what to do next. There should have been a camera.

Francis Raven: Is there anything else you'd like to share about the water modeling business?

Sheila Murphy:

*rinse this tiny spot
upon the whole of Monterosa
within Phoenix Arizona
just a little while ago
this tiny spore of land was washed
consonant with ashes come to water
as I reservoired
fond exhibition for a respite
spit spit spit to mimic
all the water
the artistic water
the aristo water
generous water almost pure
the temperature of everything just right
this once this tiny place this tiny body part
this whole inference
this act of element*

Anyone can do it
just drip it on
you don't have to be tall
to drip it on

Everybody's doing it
dripping water on
and not drying it off
dripping water on and not drying it off

Plumbing: An Answer

It is revealing that the place at which the modern body is integrated into the circulation of city waters is called the 'bath' room.
— Ivan Illich

Networks of canals and crops (methodology: aqueducts, city's distribution tanks)

Course ways dredged through silt

Looming Leading flow

Original weaving Crossing territories Limiting

Except mirage: add modernism:

Disbelieving eye

Evolved into irrigation dams, drains, and basins

First flush (and a comfortable armrest) to be washed down,

Finally heated

Leaky faucets, replacing drains, cabling sewers

(by hours) beneath pavement

Pump controls located above grade;

Finally, our own theatrical wells,

Banks consolidated against floods.

Sponging behind closed doors

(discretion even in apartment buildings)

Bringing flow of excrement to clean—If we wash our bodies

If we carry our wastes

If we wash our wastes

We must wash our carriers

We must wash our water.

Millennium Development Goal # 7—

Halving, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Drains connect us to cities,

Also disease

{depending on the

of organisms

(density)

&

organisms' strength

(virulence)}

Unequally.²⁰

You do not know the common man,

He lives in another country and has no toilet,

No cloth to lay out his tools.

²⁰ 2.6 billion people worldwide (over 40 per cent of the world's population) live without adequate sanitary facilities:
<http://www.bcas.net/Env.Features/HumanHealth/2004/August2004/15%20to%2030.htm>

Ode to a Shower

People transform design. Design transforms water. Water transforms people.

— *Waterworks.com*

Replace this pitiful head with a caressing cascade.
Replace this crusty fountain with a gleaming spigot.

Your last word drips for weeks, pink stain
On the porcelain tub. The spray should pull us
Away from ourselves; a mythical water lily
Opens as your towel slowly mildews.

Bathmat twisted like that corner's dirty handkerchief.
The plumber scalps your embarrassing underwear
As he quiets the trickle. Finally, you have no regrets;
It's a modern apartment. It has many conveniences.

Slickly washing off humidity,
Externally regulating your body's thermometer.
These dog days need a splash in the face
After a jog offers sweat for hours to come.

We know your flat hair needs good water pressure to spark its part.
We know you need to squeak clean like a marker in space.

We know you need a shower.

from The Museum of Water Records Department

1.

Book of Presents

2-in-1 Refrigerator and Water Dispenser—\$500 (1980)
Water-Pik—\$52.99 (1989)
24”All Glass Aquarium w/ Deluxe Hood—\$129.99 (1993)
Tennessee Valley series of dams—\$281 million (1971)
Aquatic Gardens Democratic Angel Aquarium Ornament—\$32.99 (2004)
Fairy Maid Fountain—\$680.00 (1921)
DeLonghi Water-To-Air Portable Air Conditioner—\$1,099.99 (2005)
Under-Sink Water Filter—\$73.93 (2000)
Salt-Water Fish, Flopping—\$37.39 (1976)
1 Liter of Water from the Catskills—\$7.19 (2003)
Aqua Jogger “Take it to the Water” Video—\$18.99 (1989)
3 Speed Hand Held Water Core Drill—\$1200.00 (1997)
Male betta—\$3.00 (2002)
Hoover Dam—\$48,890,995.50+\$369,000 bonus (1931-36)
Personalized Fishing Pole—\$18.99 (1977)
Brooklyn Bridge—\$15.1 million (1883)
Titanic—\$7,500,000 (1912)
1 Liter of Water from Miami Beach—\$.19 (2002)
Submarine: USS Virginia—\$1.6 billion (2004)
24 16.9oz Plastic Bottles of Fiji Water—\$34.00 (1999)
Princess Cruise Ship—\$350,000,000 (1982)
Panama Canal—\$387 million (1914)
Water Filter Pitcher—\$12.95 (1986)
Irrigation Kit—\$918 (1956)
24 bottles 11.2oz Bottles of Evian Water—\$25.00 (1996)
Waterwise Water Distiller 7000—\$1,488.95 (2003)
Water Heater Pan—\$1.95 (1901)
Sprinkler: Spike—\$21.95 (2001)
Barrels of Water—\$5000 (1979)

2.

Percentage Water Content in Various Items

Adult’s Body: 60-70%; Brain: 70 %; Lungs: nearly 90%; Blood: 82%; Milk: 90%; Cottage cheese: 80 %; Vegetables: 80-95 %; Fresh fruit: 80%; Fish and shellfish: 75-85%; Bread 35; Desert sand: 15%; Kiln dried wood: 12%; Clay mixture used by potters: 35%; Earth’s Surface: 80%; Paper: 3%-7%; Lettuce: 95 %; Onion 89%; Tomato 94 %; Hamburger bun: 36 %; Cooked lean ground beef: 60%.

Water Descriptions: An Activity

I queried:

- (1) fill a cup with water
- (2) drink that water
- (3) describe water's taste
- (4) write this report down

Others answered:

Carolyn Kousky:

Sip 1) slippery snake;
Sip 2) oozing puddle;
Sip 3) hard done.

mIEKAL aND:

artesian calciferous with a back to wa'er.

Mairead Byrne:

dixie cup with blue & turquoise swirls
filled with emphatic water
so cold so delicious,
I think.

Gerald Schwartz:

thirst quenched I can say they neither were.

Brian Asquith:

cold liquid rehydrating my parched mouth,
not quite the taste of water more the sensation...sorry.

Alex Saliby:

(I added a twist and actually tasted water twice, first, as suggested; and second, blindfolded and with a clothespin on my nose. Drinking something you can't see or smell affects the taste sensation.)

Tasted with sight and smell:

Clear, clean, crystal, fresh-air-liquid

Tasted blindfolded, etc.

Cold, Wet, Silky smooth.

Richard Taylor:

Preamble: It made me think of my boyhood and also of a kind of liquid tongue sliding back into my mouth! Not easy to describe the taste without saying things about experience. My reaction:

unthisunthat
sweet saltless sea

good (boyonce) silky
tongue.

David Baratier:
Drank the water & thot: Be well.

Victoria Ludwin:
soft
salty
tin-tasting.

Brian Clements:
Moss on the winter rock.

Bill Marsh:
color
cut
tin
salad.

Lindsey Glickfeld:
My water is from the tap in lab:
tinny with a hint of sweetness.

One of my favorite sensations is the first swallow of cold water—how you can feel it running all the way down your throat. I'm always disappointed when the subsequent swallows become progressively less sensitive.

Misha Hoekstra:
zipless & wet.

Scott Lawrence:
Firm
Good minerals.

Stacy Muszynski:
liquid sand and silt

Tears Poured Like...

*You lost your job
and she died
and you were about to die
and another she left you
and your car broke down
right before it was stolen
and tears poured like*

“a stream”²¹

*“hot rain down my cheeks as the realization that I lost
one of my dearest friends hit me.”²²*

“a flood”²³

“rains in the month of Sravana.”²⁴

“molten lava across her cheek.”²⁵

“an imprisoned element set free...”²⁶

“a raging river out of Markle’s eyes.”²⁷

“a waterfall from my sad-looking face into the ocean of my painful tears.”²⁸

“a river taking all makeup with it.”²⁹

“a tipped over canteen.”³⁰

“a flood until they lay in puddles on top of my feet.”³¹

“the summer rain.”³²

“waterfalls and broken damns.”³³

*“a thick tropical thunder storm, mixing with the violent sweat that was being produced by the
exertion.”³⁴*

“rivers from the pain and shame and anger at her failure.”³⁵

“raging currents and she whimpered against his shoulder.”³⁶

“falling rain each and every day, and at times, they still do.”³⁷

²¹ <http://www.teenadviceonline.org/innocence/sept1998.html>

²² <http://www.miskersden.com/memories/one.html>

²³ <http://www.faithandvalues.com/tx/Spirit-155/2/>

²⁴ <http://caitanya.krishna.org/Articles/2000/07/00022.html>

²⁵ <http://members.aol.com/velvtANGL1/Page103.html>

²⁶ <http://www.lifepositive.com/Spirit/world-religions/hinduism/kundalini.asp>

²⁷ <http://teacher.fonddulac.k12.wi.us/sabish/Review/BearFrameset-5.html>

²⁸ <http://www.amazon.com/gp/cdp/member-reviews/A27MW1FQ52O87S/102-4835845-2956162>

²⁹ <http://www.beautifulfreak.org/spunky/sterile/02.htm>

³⁰ <http://www.angelfire.com/trek/shortstick/chap3>

³¹ <http://www.spiritledwoman.com/online/articledisplay.pl?ArticleID=8505>

³² <http://community-2.webtv.net/JohnniesPoetry/JOHNNIESPoetryfrom/page2.html>

³³ http://www.writing.com/main/view_item/item_id/109437

³⁴ http://members.fortunecity.com/dorain/tb2d/btb_hotday.html

³⁵ <http://www.fan-fics-r-us.com/LMSmcgill/dragon06.htm>

³⁶ <http://wwfdiva.port5.com/fanfic/girl14.htm>

³⁷ <http://bbs.crystalcathedral.org/ubb/Forum7/HTML/001994.html>

Appendix

An Open Source Anthology of Water Poems

Introduction

What follows is a Wittgensteinian poetic grammar of water in all (or at least many) of its forms: rain, oceans, rivers, tears, floods, drips, etc. In these poems you will find how the poets talk about water and thus an idealized version of how we all talk about water when we talk about water. Poets have thought about water poetically. Many of their thoughts are collected in the poems that follow in the dispersed anthology I am presently introducing.

I have tried to keep the following selection short so that it may be digested as a normal book of poetry would. Of course, there are many poems that I would have liked to include but which are not to be found on the Internet. Off the top of my head Ashbery's "Umbrellas Follow Rain" and the wonderfully long "A Wave," Jorie Graham's "Prayer," and Ted Hughes's "A Hawk in the Rain" come to mind. I'm sure many of you have your own favorite water poems that you would have added to this collection, but water must be collected (and bounded) in a vessel and in this case, the vessel is my own.

Each of these poems can be found strewn across the Internet. They are connected by streams of electrons running through our networked lives. Of course it makes sense to talk about streams of electrons and the reason it makes sense is that poets have described water poetically and this description can easily be extended metaphorically to other subjects.

Water leaks through these poems from the page onto the reader. Get wet. Have fun in the wetness. Learn what water can do for you today.

The Poems

Introduction

Emily Dickinson — “Water makes many Beds”

<http://plagiarist.com/poetry/8869/>

Robert Lowell — “Water”

<http://plagiarist.com/poetry/9043/>

Philip Larkin — “Water”

<http://plagiarist.com/poetry/4891/>

Robert Creeley — “Water Music”

<http://plagiarist.com/poetry/1653/>

Rain

Percy Bysshe Shelley — “The Fitful Alternations of the Rain”

<http://www.cs.rice.edu/~ssiyer/minstrels/poems/416.html>

Thomas Hardy — “During Wind and Rain”

<http://www.cs.rice.edu/~ssiyer/minstrels/poems/96.html>

Robert Creeley — “The Rain”

<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/Robert-Creeley/1637>

Floods

Robert Frost — “The Flood”

<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/robertfrost/12142>

Mark Strand — “A Piece of the Storm”

http://www.poetryconnection.net/poets/Mark_Strand/2063

James Joyce — “Rain Has Fallen All the Day”

<http://poetry.poetryx.com/poems/7505/>

Emily Dickinson — “The Voice that stands for Floods to me”

<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/emilydickinson/11141>

Siegfried Sassoon — “Noah”

<http://poetry.poetryx.com/poems/7192/>

Rivers

Walt Whitman — “Two Rivulets”

<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/waltwhitman/13464>

Emily Dickinson — “My River runs to thee”

<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/emilydickinson/10114>

Oceans

Anne Sexton — “The Consecrating Mother”

<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/annesexton/617>

Emily Dickinson — “The Drop, that wrestles in the Sea”

<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/emilydickinson/10236>

Emily Dickinson — “We send the Wave to find the Wave”

<http://plagiarist.com/poetry/8879/>

Pablo Neruda — “XXXIV (You are the daughter of the sea)”

http://www.poetryconnection.net/poets/Pablo_Neruda/3084

Robinson Jeffers — “July Fourth By The Ocean”

<http://plagiarist.com/poetry/4531/>

Gary Snyder — “Regarding Wave”

<http://www.wenaus.com/poetry/gs-regardingwave.html>

MixTape for a Drop of Water

(excuse me, there are no tapes.
nothing else sounds good)

Artist	Song	Duration
Alison Krauss	River to Pray	2:56
Grateful Dead	Ripple	4:09
Joni Mitchell	River	4:05
The Unicorns	Sea Ghost	3:42
Jack Johnson	Drink the Water	3:21
Billy Bragg & Wilco	Secrets of the Sea	2:42
Preston School of Industry	Caught In the Rain	3:09
R.E.M.	Nightswimming	4:18
Dar Williams	We Learned the Sea	2:34
M. Ward	So Much Water	4:01
John Hiatt	River Knows Your Name	4:25
Modest Mouse	Grey Ice Water	5:05
Grateful Dead	Black Muddy River	5:57
Rolling Stones	As Tears Go By	2:46
Credence Clearwater Revival	Have You Ever Seen The Rain?	2:40
De La Soul	Tread Water	3:46
Beatles	Yellow Submarine	2:40
The Microphones	Ocean 1,2,3	2:59
Pixies	Wave of Mutilation	2:03
Bob Dylan	A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	6:55

Total Mix Duration: 1:14:13

Water Resources

Websites

The Environmental Protection Agency's Water Website

<http://www.epa.gov/water/>

Water Words Dictionary (from the Nevada Division of Water Resources)

<http://water.nv.gov/Water%20planning/dict-1/ww-index.htm>

The Bottled Water Web – “The Definitive Bottled Water Site”

<http://www.bottledwaterweb.com/>

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Water Website

<http://www.unesco.org/water/>

The U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Water Science for Schools Website

<http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/>

Water Industry News

<http://waterindustry.org/>

U.S. Water News Homepage

<http://www.uswaternews.com/homepage.html>

Freshwater Action Network

<http://www.freshwateraction.net/>

Water Online:

Digital Marketplace for the Water Industry

<http://www.wateronline.com>

Water Quality Association

<http://www.wqa.org/>

Right to Water

<http://www.righttowater.org>

International Rivers Network

<http://www.irn.org>

The Water in the West Photography Project

<http://www.robertdawson.com/WIW/examples%20WIW.html>

Ethos Water Company

<http://www.ethoswater.com/>

Books

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Strang, Veronica. The Meaning of Water. Oxford: New York: Berg, 2004.

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