

Dealing with the drought, but starting to dream about water

We are all aware, except for Los Angeles, that there's a water crisis in California, and that we all have to do our part to conserve this precious natural resource. (*Editor's note: People in L.A. use less water than people in Sacramento, but we hate L.A. for that whole Lakers-Kings playoff game.*)

For example, in Hollywood, residents are limited to five Maserati washings per week. (*Editor's note: Teslas?*) In Malibu, residents have been asked to keep swimming pools filled with Dom Pérignon 2004 instead of water drained from Owens Valley. So they're doing their part.

But we can do more. I know this because I, too, have started practicing sensible water usage. True story: On Monday, I felt some stickiness on my hands because my editor had brought back some weird jam from Estonia, somehow got it on his hands and he wiped it on the group office key. (*Editor's note: It was a jar of olives from Sweden; the goat cheese was from Estonia.*) I needed to wash it off my hands.

I walked into the washroom to clean my hands of this sticky olive juice, saw the prominent "Don't Waste Water" plastic sign over the sink and thought, "What can I do to help California save water besides selling my lucrative almond tree farm?" I'm willing to dump my senior water rights, but I'm not a communist.

I saw a fairly large puddle of clear water on the sink top. So I gingerly stuck the side of my hand into the water, rubbed it and carefully wiped it off with a paper towel, which only kills trees, unlike cartoons. Wait, they do, but I try not to think about that.

Mission accomplished.

Then I thought there must be other small economies that I can perform to make sure that Lake Shasta boaters have plenty of clean, fresh Mount Shasta runoff so they can operate their Jet-Skis for generations to come. I have come up with the following economies:

- Stop brushing my teeth. I have crowns, so they stay clean-looking for days. I know this because I forgot my toothbrush once on a backpacking trip. Of course, my gums turned purple and no one wanted to look at me or come within 20 feet of my mouth.
- Deny myself drinking water for 24 hours. The first six hours are hard, but you go into a fugue state after 12 hours, so it works pretty well. And now I don't have the middle-aged-guy problem of getting up at 3:30 in the morning, although I miss listening to the BBC for 90 minutes because I am stone-cold awake.
- Eat more almonds. I used to eat them on rare occasions, usually preferring them when inside dark chocolate bars. Now I suck down as many almonds as I can each day, vicariously enjoying the water they absorb.
- Order golden Mexican water flavored with hops when going to restaurants. It conserves precious California water and helps me stop thinking about the drought. We all have to sacrifice.

I used to take water for granted, but now I notice it a lot more. I'm surprised when I see any water at all. The other day I saw a puddle of water while walking under the railroad overpass I traverse each day to get coffee. I considered bringing it into the coffee shop, then changed my mind. I ordered my coffee without water, and that fulfilled a food function, as well.

I also have water-themed dreams. When I lived in Oregon, I used to have lots of desert dreams. My hair was wet all the time then, and I would dry out my clothes over an open fire in my bedroom. (*Editor's note: Jack, do people want to*

read about your dreams or your hair, which is a lot like an overgrown, water-sucking yard?)