

AGONY

STEVEN ZULTANSKI

BOOKTHUG

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AGONY 1

You can tell I'm alive and well because I weep continuously.

Given that the average person, in a lifetime, sheds about 4,167.921 cubic inches of tears, and that I'm somewhere around $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way through my life, then we can assume that, so far, I've shed about 1,373.034 cubic inches of tears.

Since water makes up 60% of a human body, and the volume of the average body is 5,064.97 cubic inches, then we know that the volume of water in an average human is 3,038.982 cubic inches.

And so, so far, in my lifetime, I've shed about 45.181% of my body's water in tears.

Since tears are mostly water.

Let me see here.

We can assume that if, instead of crying now and again, at moments in which my emotions are particularly pitched, I cried all my tears at once, in one single feat of spasmodic emotional courage, I would dehydrate myself.

This is perhaps why feelings are so constant, so as not to be simultaneous, which would end in dehydration.

The volume of each tear, on average, is .012 cubic inches.

So. I've shed, so far, at least 144,419.5 tears, more or less.

Which means I have at least 232,907.25 tears left to shed.

If I wanted to get all future crying out of the way at once, and was able, as we've implied is impossible, to narrowly focus my emotional energy into one courageous spasmodic surge, then I'd end up shedding 91.968% of my body's water, at once.

Which is 55.181% of my body's total volume.

And so, the consequence of this splurge, which would at least do me the favor of removing all future psychic obstacles from my path, would be complete disfigurement and, I suppose, death.

In fact, it seems that in order to keep on living, a human being must be willing and able to shed his or her tears at a rather slow and regulated pace.

Every now and then.

Say that I cry 28 times a year, which seems like an arbitrary number but which is my age. And which seems like a lot but also seems about right. Though perhaps I cry less if I have no lover that year.

So, given that the life expectancy of a U.S. male is 74.37 years, we can assume that I cry about 56.028 cubic inches of tears a year.

In a year with a lover or lovers.

And that I shed 2.001 cubic inches of tears every time I cry.

However, we can also assume that I cried more tears as a child than I do as an young adult, and that I will cry less tears as an old man, hopefully, than I do as a young one.

We can guess that in the end, the end being the end of my life, these dry spells will even out with the floods, and I'll be left with an average, as we've said, of having shed 56.028 cubic inches a year. Or so.

So then. Each year, I shed only 1.844% of my body's water.

And say I drink five glasses of water a day.

Given that each glass of water is, on average, 72.39 cubic inches, we can conclude that I drink, on average, 361.95 cubic inches of water per day. Not to mention the water content of solid food.

So I drink 132,111.75 cubic inches of water a year.

Or 4,314.331% of my body's water.

Therefore, crying at the pace at which I now cry poses absolutely no threat to my hydration, as far as I can tell.

But say there's a year in which I have a new lover every day, or one especially upsetting lover for the entire year, and I end up crying three times a day. At breakfast, lunch, and dinner, for instance.

Given that one doesn't cry continuously, we can guess that each crying fit lasts ten minutes or so, on average.

So we can further assume that one sheds .200 cubic inches of tears a minute, when crying.

Or .003 cubic inches a second.

So that, if I someday live or already have lived my year of tumultuous love, with either a new lover every day or one especially upsetting lover for the entire year, and cry for 1,800 seconds per day, I will or did shed 2,191.095 cubic inches of tears in that year.

6.003 a day.

Into my hands, or onto the bare shoulders of my lover or lovers.

But still in no danger of dehydration.

Unless, that is, as is especially a risk in the case of my one especially

upsetting lover, I cry near-continuously, or as close as I can get to near-continuously, which would be, in this case, crying continuously while awake.

Given that I'd be awake for 15 hours a day, on average, or 54,000 seconds. Given that I'd sleep more than usual because I'd be depressed.

I now shed 162 cubic inches of tears a day, or 59,130 a year.

Which is 45% of the amount of water I drink from glasses.

Other factors become increasingly relevant.

For example, a particularly upsetting relationship does not simply consist of heartbreak, but of passionate reconciliation followed by passionate reconciliatory sex.

Remember, though, I am crying throughout.

Given that one sweats during sex, and dribbles some amount of saliva into one's partner's mouth and onto their body, and so on.

So now. This year I am losing quite a bit of water-content, due to my especially upsetting lover.

Onto whose shoulders I cry from the moment I wake up until the moment I fall asleep.

And if we assume that 4,927,500 of my tears run down her shoulders, then we can also assume that I'm finally risking dehydration and death.

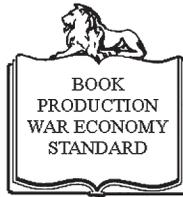
Leaving aside the big problems of evaporation and salt-content, for now, or for good.

COLOPHON

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