

Water is Life

It was at age six when I was first exposed to the oxymoron of “living dead.” We exited the freeway on our way home, and at the foot of the traffic light stood a man wearing baggy clothing, holding a sign. In illegible handwriting were the words “homeless and very thirsty.” As we pulled up to turn, our eyes met, and there in his presence I saw it - death.

Albert Gyorgyi, a Hungarian Biochemist, wrote that “there is no life without water,” and no one would think a homeless beggar would act as Gyorgyi’s advocator. Without verbally speaking, he testified that water is life by taking the image of death as he stood without it. It showed through the hopelessness in his eyes, the sulk of his posture, the dryness of his lips, and the failing strength in the weak grip of his sign. Only water could revive this dead figure.

Throughout the world, figuratively and literally, death is found in people suffering from lack of water in multiple regions including Africa, Pakistan, and India. UNICEF Children’s Fund claims that “884 million people in the world do not have access to safe water” and from this unclean water, diseases cause “1.4 million children to die every year”. Because water is so abundant in the United States, it is hard to grasp the numbers affected by the absence of safe drinking water. Our lives revolve around water, and we unknowingly continue to use it excessively, taking for granted this limited resource.

Looking back on the impact water has, it is difficult to see. It has become such a crucial part of our lives that its role is hidden, intertwined in life itself. Through its many uses, water circulates through our daily routines and has become the blood running through the veins of life. It is heard in the giggles of the baby’s first bath in the sink. It is seen in the smiles and

excited faces of the fifth grade water gun fight. It is felt in the breath of relief taken after a hydrating swallow from a cold bottle after a five mile run. It is in the silence and words we do not speak and in the gratefulness we do not show because we assume we will always have it.

Water is life, and it is tragic to see that its abundance has blinded us of Gyorgyi's belief that "there is no life without water". We cannot wait until we are begging on the street for it to realize water is life, and the more we conserve it, the longer we can live in the treasured moments it provides us. It is our choice whether to initiate the conservation of water today or continue to deny that water is life, and suffer the consequences that arise from another unavoidable matter the living just cannot grasp. The choice of action is ours to make, but then again, we are alive aren't we?