

Holy water by joan didion

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Water is an uncontrollable force and people find joy living in the illusion that they can control the uncontrollable.

She is not cynical of people that don't share her intensity of love for the water, she merely shows in a very subtle and delicate way that people consider water another commodity, they take it for granted whereas it is a force of nature, and in some parts of the world, it is extremely scarce. A true value for this blessing can be observed in those remote areas of land where people collect it drop by drop. That is why people (including Didion) show due respect to water while others might consider that overdue.

The technique used in this essay is predominantly not of ethos or logos, but of pathos. Didion clearly states that she is simply obsessed with water, not by its politics but by its flow, how the water flows in ducts and pipes, and drains. She meditates thinking about this natural force. The weird thing is she was once caught in the river passageway in a military-raft when she was seventeen and instead of panicking, she was 'deliriously happy'.

She highlights how water moves around from one place to another and how it has become a commodity that is released or held according to supply and demand. UNIVAC 418 machine has been mentioned probably referring to the 'mechanics' of water control. People have devised water-speak like "putting some over the hill" and "pulling it down" to indicate the movement of water. They move around water in a mechanical fashion. Didion points this out when she missed her chance of 'draining the quail'. She deemed that a vocation that she missed and puts it as missing on her 'instinctive affinity'. To her, it was a matter of utmost significance to be able to control the magnificence of huge water reservoirs.

The complaint Didion makes is that people don't realize how water affects their daily lives. Even if there is someone she talks to on this subject matter, Didion doesn't feel satisfied when the other is unable to hold their end of the conversation. She expects more passion from people for water but she finds it hard to see it. She thinks that people only pay attention to this beautiful force of nature when it becomes a problem. Either when it is in scarcity or too much in the form of floods. She mentions an incident when a film crew had trouble finding a river deep enough to drown a big truck for a movie scene. That year no river ran that deep and that was when they 'accepted' the significance of water and moved to another location to shoot the scene. This is ironic as probably that is not a big enough problem when considering the purpose of water but still it is man's own need that makes him realize an object, in this case, the water.

Continuing the event of drowning the truck, the film crew had to wait till some grower orders more water so the river gets filled up and they can shoot the scene by drowning the truck, and they wait out in Needles, California where it is 110 degrees at 5 pm. That is the irony, water being controlled by supply and demand, a perfect commodity. Didion does a perfect job in her essay as the purpose of effectively conveys the message. Towards the end, she mentions that water is the only thing that man has control over yet in the same paragraph she mentions flash floods and aridity of California, logos is used here to annihilate the illusion of man's control over water.

People are unaware of why they even like swimming pools. Many consider it a waste of water when in fact once it's filled it virtually needs no additional

water. But they don't realize it is a symbol of control on the uncontrollable, a pool is nothing but water and sight of it soothes the eyes.