

Gorging on a Diet of Words

by Dom Macchiaroli

After years of unsustainable binge spending and a global economic semi-meltdown, most people have had to cut back on their expenses. Many folks are struggling to make do in this new and bewildering economy and we are all learning to live on our means, rather than beyond them. Everyone has different ideas and methods of dealing with this new reality.

One way we handle the repercussions of our diminished income and a falling dollar in our house is by reusing old toilet paper to save money. You should do it too.

Most people cut back to the bare essentials when times get tough, until they pull out of whatever economic mire they find themselves in. They go on what I would call an 'economic diet.' I know my family has. A reset like this should be healthy overall, though painful in the short term. As you know, all this has transpired in the last four years or so.

Yet I can't help but notice that same amount it's taken us all to go broke, the Internet and other media has exploded with personal and self-important websites, talk shows, and millions of blogs no one reads (like this one). The poster child for this indulged but highly unreasonable sense of self-importance can be seen in ubiquitous Facebook status updates like the one I saw this morning:

"Just put too much ketchup on my fries at Cranky Hank's!"

This is not something I need, or want, to know. So along with the economic diet we're all currently on, let me suggest another form of self-denial; a Diet Of Words.

Consider that the world might be a better and more civil place if we *don't* hear about what you wore to your Cousin Eric's **Quinceañera**. Somehow we all survived not knowing your opinion

or your detailed personal information before. I expect we'll get by without the information now. But TMI has always been a problem.

History is replete with people who wrote and talked too much. For example, Marc Antony gave a painful three hour speech to a huge crowd in Rome after the murder of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. I looked at his diatribe and took the liberty of editing it down to a few succinct lines. Give a listen:

“Friends and countrymen, lend me your ears. Caesar is dead because some bad guys killed him. Bummer. (Applause) Thank you! I'll be here all week, enjoy your dinner”

In 1863, Lincoln's excessively wordy Gettysburg Address might have been better remembered if he had just cut out the airy platitudes and chit chat and gotten down to what was really important to preserve the Union of the States:

“Four and seven years ago our fathers brought forth a new nation of conceived men, who can now long endure. We should do this so our people shall not perish from the earth. Free Viagra for everyone! (Applause) Thank you! I'll be here all week, enjoy your dinner.”

Isn't that better? Imagine if the log-splitting chatterbox had had a laptop and a wifi connection.

As a last example, in the late nineteenth century when folks wanted to send messages over the telegraph, they had to pay the transmitter by the word. So a detailed message telegraphed from San Francisco back home to a grotesquely consumptive Aunt Flo in Boston might read as follows:

“Dearest Aunt Flo, I hope you're doing well. Your son says hello. He is dying to see you. He hopes you're well too. He is so kind; he has your heart. We will stop in Chicago also.”

But economic reality dictated that certain words were too expensive to transmit, so after a careful and more affordable edit, the final text read:

“Flo, Your son is dying. He hopes your heart will stop also.”

In the modern day, silly leaders like Castro and Chavez always use too many words. Has anything either man ever said or written

amounted to anything? Despite all those mandatory must-be-listened-to-or-your-in-laws-go-to-the-gulag harangues, aren't average Cubans still driving Oldsmobuicks that date to the Eisenhower Administration? And ordinary Venezuelans are lucky if the electricity is still on during all-important Spanish language reruns of "Gilligan's Island." Someone needs to shut them up.

Here's why: As you type on your keyboard, or ipad, Blackberry, Nook, or Quisnart, you have to breathe heavier for all the strenuous digit(al) exercise. Consequently you're expelling more CO2 (the sequel to CO1) and requiring more oxygen. So do us all a favor and give it a rest. If we say and write fewer words, there will be that much less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and less reasons for Al Gore to be seen in public ever again.

Keep this in mind the next time you want to tell the world via Twitter that "Little Jonny Jr. just farted the cutest little Jonny Jr. fart in front of the in-laws. LOL" Just don't do it. Keep such things to yourself next time. No one cares, honestly.

So many wasted words, so little time not to read them.

And where do all the wasted words go? Like sound waves, words leave our atmosphere and proceed out into infinite space. Consequently, fifty light years from here, some boneless protoplasmic life form lurking in the muddy swamp gas on the planet Zaltar is hearing all the chatter coming from Earth, and they're thinking, "Shut the florg up!"

So, a Diet Of Words it is, agreed? Only wait till after you've commented on this piece. Write lots of nice things about it.

