

For here or to go

You stop for lunch on the way to the lab. It's another blazing Saturday afternoon. Gun dealer ads on the radio. Wife is at home entertaining the kid while your thoughts are trafficked to more molecular realms. When did it last rain? Where you are from, summers only come in withering yellow, and here, where it looks like temperatures are past anything linear on a sigmoid curve, it is still so lush and green. You're trying to align the car, parking head-in, as the law of the land dictates. Surrounded by gallon displacing vehicular beasts, it's going to be harder getting out. So thirsty. The air is a hot and dense mass to the degree where it seems to reject every law of thermodynamics with its complete lack of movement. You push the heavy door. Unlike the irradiated mass outside, the restaurant feels like a dampened version of reality, preparing stomachs and wallets for the act of consumption in an existentially segregated, air-conditioned nirvana. Beans. Rice. Protein. You get it all in a tortilla, even though you know it will eventually misfold. You make your choices at the counter thinking of the infinite permutations that you'll probably never try, and find comfort in a perpetually unaltered meal. A mitotic uniformity gets hold of the weekends, dictating identical routines of emotionally abrasive rush hours, hasty replicable lunches and a couple of minutes trying to make sense of it all just before your eyes close. Nothing will recombine here. As the dish is being assembled, you roll on the assembly line. Toward the cashier, the soda fountain, work and a generally unforeseeable future born out of a significantly foreseeable present. Add another figure, do another control. Are you still clinically relevant? Every cell in your body is inundated with molecules from lakes that you never swam in, displacing molecules from lakes that you once knew. "What was that again?" the lady at the register asks. Four years, and you still can't get it right. "Just W-a-t-e-r".