

# Walking Through The Blind Spots

by

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The terrain is rough and damp,  
The earth below me moves, a slight buzzing.  
This is not a quiet ground at all,  
There is a buzz of whispers, almost a hum,  
The roots of the trees are deep and they speak.  
They wonder, what will happen next?  
There is sorrow too,  
The memory of a stronger buzz before.

I change my weight, a small plant, a ball of thorns gets stuck to me. This is the kind who if I was covered would get stuck to my clothes and would bother me for days, but at the moment it just brushes on my skin to let me know where not to go. There are more of these thorny warning plants but below them the earth is soft, alive and welcoming. Around me the air has a weight of heavy moisture. I feel though I can't get a full image, there is much left untold in this place, but much is not to be told in words anyway.

Neither by sight can you get the right image, it is more a story that has to be felt to be understood completely.

But, for the sake of those who should be able to receive these stories, those who need words to understand I will try to find the words for you.

Maybe I can try to find what has been told down the lines until now, while events can be still recorded by those who understand them. I will start with one of the oldest memories I have still under my skin.

If you were to continue this direction into the forest farther down, the ground would change, it would start to become colder and fresher, the air around becomes even heavier for a while but then it will change to a warm dry wind. Soon after would be a small village, here lived a little woman called Luisita. She would be the one with the words. A story teller but only if she was in the kitchen behind the *comal*, this is a kind of wood or charcoal burning stove with a large flat top you could place a big pot on or cook things like tortillas directly on it, the smell of toasted tortillas and fresh coffee were always coming from her kitchen while she would be stirring a big pot of spicy-sweet molé for hours, there she would start to tell us everything. Luisita could tell us every detail about this place, unfortunately she is not here any more with us, but her presence still passes through these mountains from time to time, as if to remind us of all those stories she had once told

“*Mija*” she would say, “*el hombre no entendio nada todavia, si seguimos así, ya pues, pa que todo? pa que?*” She would sigh.

“Little one,” “man has not understood anything yet” “if we keep on like this then what is the point of anything ? what are we doing?”

“You know, this place is not ours it was here much before our feet walked with it but the first feet who walked along this ground knew where to put themselves and where not to put themselves. I don’t worry any more for myself, I won’t be here much longer, but you, what ground will be left for you?”

“Before we knew that the earth could take care of us but we also had to take care of her. She provided medicine and food and we provided care and love as a promise to protect each other.”

“How do we do that ?” I remember asking her. I was four (this part I know) so maybe I didn’t ask, but if I didn’t ask it, I thought it, and she answered my thoughts anyway. “There are so many ways but it is all about your intentions, your hands are powerful and can give or take many things, so can your voice, you have to know what to do with it but it can do many things. We have to talk to the earth and listen to her too, we can always talk to her when we ask things from her, and we can always give her positive sounds through our hands, and the way we step on her she knows we care, she knows we respect her, much like when we step into church with your father.”

In retrospect I know Luisita was meaning vibrations  
when she said talking and I know she was trying to install  
carefulness and awareness into my child consciousness but  
this choice of words and care that she put in letting a child or any  
one who would listen understand her, has stayed with me  
and made me always look differently at my footsteps and footprints.

Look differently at natural landscapes.

Thinking of them as cathedrals and the care one has  
inside a church. Why should something so magnificently beautiful in nature  
be any different?

Then again we don't all walk the same way inside a church.

This I only found out later though.

My inner child comes in when I think of Luisita, thinking she must have  
believed what she said otherwise she would not have said it. Even if it was  
stories for children we have accepted it as stories because we are unable to  
understand these things any more as truth.

Now I stand on this same the terrain but there is a part missing maybe it is dryer then I remember,  
maybe this is what happens to every place twenty years later? It just got smaller. Or well I got bigger, but no, not THIS small.  
They were telling me it changed, that the place was not the same anymore but not that the land had been suffocated this way.  
They said the forest was gone, ok some forest is gone but those who told me are not from here they don't know as I do.  
The forest is still here. Yes it used to be thicker you could hide inside before. You would get so good at listening, to the sounds of everything in there because it would be so hard to see anything through the trees and the fog.  
Now I feel they are bare.  
A forest without clothes, like winter in Europe but this is not winter controlling things here.  
There was this small patch of trees, I used to hide in. I called it the fairyland as my mother did to play.  
This place was full of old mysteries but I will tell you about that later.  
It was just called the forgotten house by everyone else. Or maybe they didn't call it anything at all, but we all knew where it was.  
This was a playground made up by the ruins of a once impressive mansion. The house had been built deep in the woods,  
hidden from any one passing by. Now as I drive by I actually see the ruins of ruins through the trees that we used to hike into.  
Where we would stumble upon old fountains or statues, there was a three walled structure which we played school in after school hours.  
We would draw on the rough concrete wall with red brick pieces or pumicestones who worked like chalk.  
Now no children to be seen, and if they were around they would not be playing in lands that are surrounded by barbed wire fences and men with machetes in hand.  
Children are smarter than this... Hopefully those holding the place hostage are not the children I used to play with,  
I can't tell I don't want to tell.  
My memory might be full of fog from here but I remember it better than any face, especially the face of a child twenty years later.  
I barely recognize my own face sometimes but they remember mine, they say looks don't change, but  
faces do, I wonder if this is true?  
Maybe it is the other way around?

I wonder then if the forest remembers me too?  
Do forests have some way to remember?  
Would it remember my sound or my footsteps?  
Twenty years later? Ten?  
Five? Would it know the difference?  
Do those vibrations I heard of really speak?

Do I have a smell the trees know? As the earth here has still a smell I will never forget. This has not changed at all. It might be the only way I know I am in the right place but I am sure I am in the same place.



El Cerro Colorado what can I tell you about this place? At the edge of the city there is a range of mountains circling us in. The name Cerro Colorado refers to a cliff, one that looks like someone took a big slice of it away and now you are forever left with the inside looking out with a red orange center. The earth there is like the color of carrots, as if someone took a slice of a carrot cake. On top of this cliff there is a big white cross, at least from far away it looks white. If you've seen it you know what I am talking about you can't miss it.

The walk up to the cross is long but not too long, I think you can do it in 3 hours some say they can do it in 2 but I guess the point is not how fast can you get there, The way up itself is the point. There is nothing else there on top, just the cross. You can go inside this cross and you will just because you want to get out of the wind, no matter what religion you practice. There is a small structure, a shelter next to its foot but not very protective of the wind. People say it was once the roof of a monastery but it sank into the earth because it should not have been on this mountain. Others say this was the start of the construction but they ran out of money to build it. Finally the general thing that happens or is said is there might be pre-colombian ruins there but no one really wants them to be found. If they do the whole mountain will become an excavation site and the city a zoo, like the neighboring mountains. Sometimes we don't really want to uncover those old histories again either, they are not exactly beautiful stories.

The truth is no one knows anything, or if they do they prefer it to stay unsaid. The legends keep people going there in a kind of pilgrimage but also for the mysterious curiosity. Non religious people like to go there for the magic of how or why this cross is here with no church and no history. Others more religious like it too, they say there was always a cross there since the conquista, since christianity came to Mexico and that in the 60's they re-built it with a plan to put a monastery that never came. The way up is hard it is desert most of the way up and then it becomes tundra.

Something like a desert forest and mountain brush. You can find *epazote* growing wild there, this is an herb that grows in the mountains and we use it for cooking black beans, rice or sauces for seasoning meat or everything you know this kind of herbs that just go in everything, but it is also used for medical remedies. It has a smell similar to Oregano or Bay leaf but a little sweeter.

This is the closest I can imagine to it, but as everyone who misses home I will say "it is better". Now I am remembering a particular dish *Salsa de Jumil*.

The Jumil is a little insect that we can eat it is small and red and tastes like raw cinnamon they have anesthetic properties and are very healthy.

Recipe.

1 handful of live Jumiles

15 green tomatoes

3 garlic teeth

2 large epazote leaves

1/4 of a white onion.

Then it is very easy: you take a mulcazitzl/molcajete a “stone bowl and grinding stone” you grind all those together for a simple fast sauce. Then when sleeping in the mountains you can just grill some Nopal to go with. The cactus which grows prickly pears “figs of india”, the part that looks like a flat hand or an ear as the children here say, yes this part is the best. But not everyone knows how painful it is to get, we just get it in the market from already cut and de-thorned. My guilty pleasure of not having not done anything for my nopal. Anyway when camping or walking much longer then expected this can save us just pick a few baby nopal leaves when they are young the thorns are soft and easy to remove with a knife for the best process you can boil the leaves then remove the thorns. Keeping it simple then just cutting them into long slices and grill them on a comal or camp fire until they become soft. This would be the best in a tortilla. *Taco de nopal con Jumil*. Now I am getting hungry, I am not even sure how many times I have had tacos of nopal and Jumil, but it is wonderful and full of energy. \*you don't need it but grilled long onions would be the perfect thing with this.

Now I understand the meditative state the women in the kitchen would get into or the ones I remember from the market taking out thorns for hours. It is a test of patience cooking nopales when you loose that, this is when you get thorns in your hands, and they are the nasty kind that you can have them under your fingernails, in you clothes, through your gloves, invisible but so present for days.

I found my memories of nopales recently on a trip To southern France and later southern Spain, even though those countries didn't know how to eat nopales they had them growing everywhere. Like home.

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In the cerro as you go higher, the smell grows stronger of herbs, earth and fresh air, the path also grows narrower. It gets harder to climb and the way gets rockier, where as the first hour is more like walking on a dry river bed, full of caves the whole way up. The higher you go the more caves and the more brush. Once walking with my sister I remember half way up when she started to scream, she had found a dead bat on a rock that she was using to pull her body up, I laughed as it was only a bat, and not going to hurt us once dead, but then another one came flying out of a cave towards us, we both screamed this was bad luck a bat in daylight. (but it was so fast maybe it was just a bird) at least my mother said it was a bird, we calmed down and continued, my brother was the smallest but just laughed at us.

When you arrive on top as I said before, there is nothing but the cross, there is not much flat space to sit, but enough to rest after the long walk up. The reward of looking out over the valley is not really there. On a clear day maybe but by the time you make it up there and to that height it is always foggy and cold. You can only climb the cross from the inside of it to get out of the crazy wind who is ready to blow you off the cliff. Maybe this is why they never built anything else up here or maybe this is why people don't go there very much. It is not like other places I told you about where people traffic them every weekend. No here is quiet.

The definition of quiet lives here in my opinion. The definition of cold damp and windy also, but this only helps the place seem stronger. It stays in your mind this place. I don't think one can forget being there. There are some legends of witches here like in Puerto it is on the other side of the border though of where they tell us real witchcraft happens. "I have my doubts of this as I have stories that go differently." It is kind of the safe zone naturally. But what kind of mountain is really going to be a safe zone? When I was very young I thought if ever there was a war and we would be caught in the middle we could just go to a cave no one would bother us and we could find everything we needed from the mountains.



Today I wonder why I had these kinds of strategies as a child I don't remember who or why someone said that we would have to go away if there was a war as if there was one coming soon, it stayed in my mind, and my solution to not go far away as well.

Apparently I was not the first to think this thought. Now people avoid going too far into the cerro for different reasons, exactly because rumor has it this place is now a hiding ground for well, anything that needs to be hidden. Or anyone who needs to hide. It is not clear who, or what but everyone knows who and what they mean. The wolves have come to our mountain they will stay there as long as we don't go too much in their territory. Any other thing who needs to hide just hides and no rumors go around but we need rumors to install fear and to install territory I guess this is how it works. In this case, when I say hiding,

I mean occupying

Or borrowing

This also works

As we know sometimes

When we borrow

We mean

Steal.

Did you ever hear an expression don't look at the sun? or don't dig into a blind spot? I mean they have to get there somehow right? and those kind of wolves aren't exactly invisible. How do they manage to seem as if they are? Yet maybe they exactly manage because of this idea we have of them? I wonder where the legends start and where the truth lies? But one thing is sure, no one is willing to find out if that rumor is true. We have just traded one witchcraft black magic for another sort of witchery/trick. What do I mean by witchcraft?

One of the rumors of the cross is that it is not a cross at all but that it was a ritual place for the Shamans and the witches of the time, it was a sacred place for them as the highest you can go by walking it was as if you walked into the clouds, a meeting point for the areas of Oaxaca, Puebla and Veracruz. Then when they needed to hide, authorities were not really bothering to go to the mountains to get rid of them, until they realized that maybe from that perspective they could control the valley through spells. Finally at some point the Catholic church decided to put a cross on top of the cliff to scare off the spirits who stayed in the area and the witches from going there any more. But well one belief seems to co-exist with another so I don't know if it served its purpose this cross but for sure we feel more protected and identified by it. I could not imagine the Cerro Colorado without the cross looking over us. Much like the opposite mountain in the range who has written "*Honor a Mexico*" across it, in case we should forget where we were or who we are for a moment we could just look at the mountains to remind us. "I wonder what happens if you ask the streets about the past?"

"In the Cerro once there were witches living in caves, they had a spell over the valley people were happy but would die young and give the extra years to the witches. This way they were immortal."

"No, no, it is not like this, in the Cerro there was nothing maybe only dealers or thieves hiding at some point but then came the church and put a cross to symbolize the new religion of the state."

"Don't talk about the bandits we don't know who is listening or who will get ideas."

"I heard that in the Cerro Colorado there are fire balls that appear in one place then in another but it is only men who can see them because those fire balls are witches."

“No, no, the cross was always there it just has changed form first it was a lonely priest who went there because he didn’t like the way we lived in the city, he went there as a hermit ... lived in a cave, he made this cross as a sign of having found peace with God and hoping to protect the city or save the city.”

“Of the Cerro I know a story, it is a comun one, the one of the disappearing girls, this is why young women are not supposed to go alone to the cerro, at least not in the spring, the thing is that every 21 of March a door opens in the mountains, this door only opens to young generally virgin girls they say nature herself calls the girl in.”

“Yes, and once inside she sees strange things and loses sight of the way out, we don’t know what one sees we just have a few stories of women who think they have been inside, this other dimension experience we could say, only lasts a few minutes for the person inside where for us outside a year passes.”

“And if the following March 21st no new young woman finds the porthole the girl inside will be trapped for another year, that’s why you should not go alone in the spring to the Cerro.”

“And this is why we think some girls don’t come back”.

“I built the cross not long ago it was the 60’s me with some friends we were commissioned by the city but the project lost money and interest so only the cross stayed.”

“You were only 14 in the 60’s and I remember it was there since much before, my grandparents had told me about it”

“No, there was not yet the city when the cross was built. But yes I think the priest story is true, the witches were not there, they were near the old city, near the water.”  
“you know like the llorona was seen recently there.”

“That’s another story completely, she was not a witch the llorona and she didn’t have anything to do with the cross she just ends up where ever there is water.”

“She seems like a witch to me”

“I am telling you I built it. But yes it was already there, but it was much smaller”.

“It was an old grave for the popoloco people, a priest liked this location and wanted to take it over in the name of God, he ordered a cross but died before seeing the cross built, this was much before the city was really a city he was hoping this would help us be more christian.”

“Only God can remember, just don’t go there anymore  
those days are over.”

“What about the Malinche, was she a witch?”

“Well if she was real the Malinche she was not that kind of witch  
but she did get us in some heavy dark spell”

“We are all versions of her I would say by now.”

“Of course she existed, but is what they say about her true.”

“Well if you ask this, I guess you are really asking if anything we know is true right?”

“First came Malinche and then after her the llorona and this about all she has to do  
with witches, this is where the legends start well  
that part of them she is a legend in herself Malinche but any way  
true or not we are all still her children.”

“you know that part they failed to put in the book  
but I promise to get back to her later. You were asking about the Cerro, no?”

“They say it was a burial ground and a pre-hispanic tempel a sacred ground  
but also was a battlefield this we always forget to say.”

“That’s right in the revolution time the rebellion against  
Porfirio Díaz were hiding there and it became a battlefield.”

“So much blood has been spilt there, this is why so many people see it as a dark place  
a place of bad fortune.”

“My child has hiccups what should I do for her? I tried to scare her but it didn’t work!  
do you know a trick?”

Dear child of 1995,

Do you remember a red ribbon? Does any one share this memory with you?

Did you ever have hiccups as a child? Do you know what to do for a child with hiccups? What did your mother do when you were sick as a child?

It depended what I had, we had a whole cabinet full of medicines she had made from herbs of the mountains. She had also traded yogurt or cheese that she made for medicines from the local herb doctor so we had a mix of medicine from all the regions. But this is if I was really sick, for hiccups was more simple.

She would have to find a red ribbon make it damp with warm water and stick it to my forehead, (this is a very local thing I think, not every one did this if I remember well, maybe yes and I didn't know.) Well my mother never did this alone, but if I had hiccups and there were other women around this would always end up happening.

The roots of the red ribbon?

Well I know one red ribbon story but not the one about a hiccups,  
This one is an old tale I remember hearing from my mother's friends a common magic story,  
do you have time to listen?

Once Upon a Time,

There lived in a province in Japan a King, who had heard about the witch who could see the invisible red ribbon which linked people together for life.

According to this belief all people had a person they were meant to be with, and there was a red ribbon

attaching them that extended out from the pinky finger and reached the other persons pinky finger. This bond could be lost, twisted, knotted, stretched, shortened and even forgotten but never broken. The King called the witch to him wanting to know who was on the other side of his ribbon, he sent her to follow it and to find who was to be his bride. The witch explained it didn't work like this, you had to

find it yourself because destiny also knows when you should meet the right person. You can't jump ahead.

But the King would not wait, he wanted to know who his loved one was right then. The witch now threatened by death went out on the mission. She followed the ribbon through the forest through the Kingdom and through all the land but as she was not finding any end she started to think maybe her powers were weak or the King had no match, how would she tell him? Just then when she had almost given up she started to feel the ribbon tighten like a fish on the other side. She followed the pull and she arrived to a young peasant woman sitting by the well outside of the city, she was

holding a  
small child

no older than a few days, the witch asked the woman if she would be there at the same time the next day. When they agreed to meet again she went off to find the King. The witch returned with him and told him "here your ribbon ends and hers starts", pointing to the woman and baby by the well.

The King

was furious he thought the witch was making fun of him. He went to hit her in his rage, but he missed and pushed down the young woman, causing her to fall and the child she carried to hit a rock, leaving a large scar above the baby's eyes. The King left and continued to live alone for many years. Finally it came a time when he was getting lonely and his counselor advised him to take a wife who would take care of him. The King no longer believed anyone could be destined for another but he decided a wife for company would not hurt him

and he called for arrangements to be made. He was to marry the daughter of a Prince of a neighboring village.

When the day of the wedding came, and the bride was in front of him, he wondered about that day at the well and if he would ever meet his destiny love in a second life, as he unveiled the brides face he realized how he had been wrong for so many years.

With tears building up he couldn't take his eyes off of the peculiar scar she had just above her eyes, the very scar he had caused from anger was now a sign of their destiny

The End

“But the hiccups?

Do you know why this red ribbon works for the hiccups?”

“Well, from what I understand from a friend who has just had a baby, she also investigated because what we normally hear is that “it works and because my mother has done like this, then I do like this”. Or “well by the time I find a red ribbon the child loses the hiccups.”

But what we have recently found is that it has a psychosomatic reaction on the body this is why it can also work even for an adult. We start with the idea that the body is divided in 7 chakras which are represented by different colors our root chakra the first one at the base of the vertebral column *The innocence*. When this area is equilibrated adequately we satisfy our daily need to create a feeling of protection, in which state this chakra becomes red and unified to the body, this explains why the red color helps us to restore a state of calmness in the body. Hence not just any color ribbon will do.

Now we go to the part of the forehead this point otherwise thought of as *The Third Eye* according to facial reflexology with a certain touch or pressure put on this point you can not only cure hiccups but many other stresses in the whole body too. So at putting the ribbon across the forehead we equilibrate also the third eye and in combination with the red you can stop the hiccups for any person, now that you are creating a balance in energy between two chakras through pressure and color. Now having this knowledge I realize not all magic is magic and not everything comes just with age, as grandmothers would like to point out or make us believe. “It works because it has always worked and we just have to trust,” maybe wisdom is in the art of making us believe in magic tricks rather than anything else.

“Tia, why does the red ribbon work?”

“Because it works it is a very old remedy it has always worked.”

“What do you know about chakras Tia?”

“This new age thing? I don’t know, we are not calling them chakras when I was a child but I understand what they should mean.”



*“And reflexology do know anything about this?”*

*“No I don’t know, but I know what happens with the body, the body can’t lie to itself but our mind can lie to the body this is where we get really sick, you have to take care of the nahual (your spirit), don’t let it wander to far from the house (your body ) only when it is in the house can something like your reflexology work, otherwise you need to do something stronger to pull it back in. They say that when you sleep if you dream too much you can get stuck in that world, the one of the Nahual, just like if you turn into the Nahual while awake you can get stuck in that body. There is the Nahuali evil spirit who can catch you when you are outside of your body, this is why you have to take care of your spirit and not let it lie to your body.”*

*“What do you know about the color red tia? Is it important?”*

*“I know it makes us feel warm, sometimes angry and hot but sometimes warm and safe, it is good for sick people to wear red, healthy people can wear serious colors....but I wear what I want of course.”*

*(she smiled)*

A Void.

Like a whisper,

A memory, I felt this before  
or is this the memory of someone else?

Opening

A Breath

Change

One day walking from Switzerland to Germany,  
Full stop at a void, The break in the forest,  
No, this is the forest! Just exterminated in parts. The void is heavy it makes  
me drop to the ground. My body's urge to touch the ground with my hands.  
While I realize where I am. I smell the air, I am not in  
Switzerland anymore. The air is flatter but has a taste a bit older or a bit more  
tired. There is one tree in the center of this "field" among others but this one  
is quite large and central. I feel it is calling for company, it was not always so  
lonely though. It is an old tree. Strong.  
Inviting.  
As I walk to it I think of something to say to this forest as I think of my own  
forest in mind. The change in smell as I move closer makes me realize the  
territory has changed. Was it always like this? Will it keep changing? I feel it  
is traumatized from some event, one that I don't know if anyone remembers  
besides the roots of this earth, and the rings of the other trees, but they are  
traumatized too.

Letter to a forest:

Dear forest,

I want to let you know: you should be informed.

we are working hard to keep you alive but I am afraid it won't be long  
before your memory will be mourned.

I want to ask you if you remember a hundred years ago?

What did you see? how old are you?

I know if you are still standing you are  
a survivor from the burnings of many years past  
of becoming fire to cook.

A survivor from the pests and our need of shelter,  
or a page in a book

You couldn't run away

yet you are very much alive.

Maybe you watched your cousins die,  
turn into doors to keep people warm,

Pianos to entertain us or teach the educated.

A map they could draw,

decide what language you would

speak, depending what side you'd gotten

You were used to hang those they hated  
you were used to engrave forever love notes  
your branches were snapped and sawed,  
to write powerful long lasting quotes  
to be sold nostalgically, not to be forgotten

Maybe you would just become a bench?  
that will be put aside because soon we will  
forget to sit.  
Then you become a coffin to be thrown in a pit.

I want to tell you the situation has not gotten better.  
We are trying to use you less for our books  
this much we've learned  
We are trying to plant babies back when we take you.

I don't think you hear me but I was told it was good to talk to the earth  
when she was concerned.

I wonder if you feel?  
I think that no matter how much you are kind to us  
Your family in the wild doesn't stand much chance.  
Maybe if you are lucky your location will be protected  
But then be ready, be warned!  
People will come and visit you for you are beautiful.

But your brother who is not on the protected line  
will become the path that people will use  
to take your picture and visit such a sight.  
I also want to apologize I have not been very concerned about you,  
I was not worried if you were here dead or alive.

Though you have always provided me with life.  
And without you I would't be... Still.  
I tell you the thing is

They were doing the same thing to my brothers and sisters,  
my cousins and my dreams  
and though farther away were their screams

they were louder to me.

They say when the screams are far the truth is near  
and when close it is like you don't hear.

There I could try to intervene at least I thought  
but I can't do anything.  
My energy for fighting  
has been consumed and fought.

I would love to go to the streets and save your family who  
has taken care of mine forever  
but as I do, they shoot my family down and then  
they will still take you.

I was not there, I have to say, honestly only sometimes, but others were  
when those who destroy came and wanted to drill into the soil to fracture  
the earth beneath to suck up any drop of trapped oil that could be under your  
roots.

My blood fought for you,  
fought for the earth for the water that we both need.  
We lost some and we won some, we have managed to slow down the process  
but at the loss of many things so I apologize my thoughts were more with my  
brothers than with yours

I wanted to tell you so that you will stay strong.  
Things are not changing but man wakes up slowly especially now that he  
never sleeps  
there is still a chance as long as....well I don't know that there really is,  
this is just my wishfull thinking I share with a tree.

Memory trip while walking to a temporary home.

Every day I take the same walk, though we could say every day is a new day, a new walk, and it will never be the same walk, at least every day I walk by the same things (well almost everyday).

I get a repeated feeling in this location every time even if I have told myself many times this place is just what it is, it is not what I think it is.

The place is like a bridge between the outskirts and the outcast, a no-mans land but there are men here! Where are they? The factories are lit up all night making it seem less desolate when I walk back, but the absence of people gives me the feeling I walk into the past every night.

But this place is always scary for its calmness the factory lights stay on. The vibration hums and hums all night long, I hear my own footsteps and some clicking just the plastic tip of the lace on my shoe.

But I am alone my own sounds seem so far away, on one side I have a factory who never sleeps, there is always movement at least from the machines inside.

This is far away though I have a whole field in front of me and there is only a wall from the factory no window on this side.

This field has changed itself every month since I know it, apples, grapes, corn, wheat, cabbage, now...grass?

I have never seen a person in this field planting or much less harvesting, but I heard that on some land you can take an income for planting and you don't have to harvest, I wonder if it is this? or the earth is just bad next to this factory?

Now it lies an empty field plowed down and ready for winter, and me in the center of the narrow road like a bridge linking the industrial with the sweet houses on the street just after. On my other side is the sight that scares me.

The ditch. Like a desert it is wild but not over grown. There is some waste left from the factory but so long ago it seems to be sculptures now.

Why should I be scared of a ditch?  
I confess I shouldn't  
it is only my mind my visual fear.

Do you know what a *fosa* is? A mass grave?  
This is what they look like in my memory,  
but this a memory that I don't have for myself so  
I don't know why I am afraid of a ditch, maybe I  
fear to be lost inside? Waling on the edge at night.  
if anything needed to be hidden it would be here.

Why? If there was nothing hiding, people would have already taken over such a place that seems so ownerless.

But ok we are not in my nightmares  
right now we are in the present

I have to remind myself.

And in my present this is just a forgotten ditch, it  
looks like once there was a building here that  
someone dug out and took with him one day.

The *Maquila*. That factory light is always on but  
no one is inside, the hum of machines doesn't come  
from there either yet the light is on all night.

It is a dim yellow compared to the bright white  
lights of the others and in this strip where I walk it  
is the only one as the other has no windows and the  
rest are on the street behind me.

Once I get past this street and over my fears once I  
manage to realize how bright the stars and the  
moon are in the Valais. Even if I am sure we are in  
the present I feel like I am in another kind of past  
maybe not my past.

It is like being nowhere floating between the sky  
and the earth, perhaps this is why the street before  
seems a graveyard. But the moon is so bright as if I  
was back home.

I can see the rabbit in the moon so clearly. This is  
what we say the moon's shadows are, they form the  
shape of a rabbit. I don't know what people here  
say, some say a woman dancing some say a face  
and many other stories I have heard over the years.



At home we all agree that the moon has a rabbit in it, or maybe because we love this story so much then we all agree in order to keep telling the story. It is one of the favorites for children. Many muralists have included this in the history of the country. Diego Rivera's home of Anahuacali included a *Conejo en la luna* mosaic in the ceiling for example. But strangely it is one of the few stories where I am not sure there is a moral it is just a sweet story. Sometimes I wonder is there not a part missing? Maybe lost in the translation somewhere.

The story goes that one day

Quetzalcoatl *god of creation and wisdom*, maybe you have seen him? Or heard of him? He is the feathered flying serpent, he decided to visit the earth as he wanted to see what it felt like to be human. Taking over a human body he started to walk the earth.

He walked all around the earth discovering the world and it's wonders, marveling at every discovery, he kept going until it started to be dark, he started to feel a strange heaviness and pain in his stomach he didn't know what this was, he had never felt this before. He tried to continue but he was also starting to get lost in the dark and the growling from his stomach was scaring him. When he was starting to give up and could barely move any more sitting down by a tree he met a small creature who came out of a hole, a little rabbit. This rabbit asked

Quetzalcoatl "whats wrong? you look ill!"

Quetzalcoatl explained how he felt and how he didn't know what to do, but the rabbit understood "you are just hungry and probably tired" he said "you can eat with me it is my supper time I eat the herbs you are stepping on". After trying to eat the herbs Quetzalcoatl realized this was not easy he couldn't eat grass or bitter herbs he didn't know how. "I'm sorry" he said to the rabbit

"I think I am hopeless I don't know how to do this maybe I'm not meant to continue, I think I can't eat this."

"I see" said the rabbit, after thinking for a moment and observing the tired man he spoke again "you can eat me then" " I am not big but I think you can survive for a time and make it back to where you came from."

Quetzalcoatl couldn't believe the generosity and humility of the rabbit who would offer his life so that someone else wouldn't starve.

He was so overjoyed with gratitude that he picked up the little rabbit and threw him into the sky, the force of Quetzalcoatl was so strong that the rabbit landed on the moon, well

bumped into it really and left his imprint there.

Then Quetzalcoatl said to the rabbit,

“you are a very brave little creature now the whole world will see you in the moon and remember you and your generosity forever, whenever they look at the sky.”

That is where the story ends but we don't know what happens we know Quetzalcoatl didn't die we don't know if he just remembered he could back out of the human body and went back to his world? or if he ate the rabbit after all and stayed a tourist of the earth another day?

Should we learn we should be humble like the rabbit but risk to get eaten by the higher power? If we do at least we will be remembered for ever? Or should we be like Quetzalcoatl and try to live lower than what we can and take advice from unexpected places? Even when we have the power to do otherwise?

But do we let the bunny live or do we eat him to survive? We know Quetzalcoatl was one of the few peaceful gods who didn't like human sacrifice and for this reason was cast to his own planet from the other gods, but we don't know what he did with this little rabbit? Either way I always think of this bunny when I see the moon and I think of all the wonderful paintings I have seen of this legend and all the times I have heard it with no version of what happened to the rabbit. “I just like to imagine Quetzalcoatl let him go and returned to his world safely.”

It is not always about the rabbit though.

Sometimes it is about the moon, the moon has many different stories and effects on us, she is a seductress the moon we are not the same when she is full and completely present, nor when she is not there.

Many of my sleepless nights I blame  
or credit them to having them stolen by the moon.

A dream,

A memory that I am not sure is mine.

The moon she was my mother,  
she guided my feet and lit the path under me.  
The moon was my soul and to her I gave myself in.  
The moon was my soul but I would give her to you too.  
She was the guide under my feet doing all the steps for me.

As long as I knew how to look at the moon I didn't know what darkness was. There were days that I would just lean on her, giving her all the weight of the day. But there were others where she would take me the whole night long.

We would discover the world together,  
She would take me dancing and on many adventures  
keeping outside of the world but not either in a dream  
When the sun would rise, like a thief in the night  
my friend the moon would be out of sight.

This is how we would spend the nights my moon and I,  
sometimes my loving mother, sometimes my soul in flight.  
Sometimes she was my playful side, insomnia,  
driving me to discover every last corner by her light.

The moon blue.  
That beautiful blue that would accompany my nights,  
she would see with me the years go by.  
Until the last moments, where we spent the night laughing together at darkness.

Without a fear in the world this time,  
of the morning solitude to come  
for that night like a thief myself  
I climbed up the ladder of dreams  
and shining together the eternal night like a ghost,  
disappeared  
My soul,  
She had taken  
me  
  
with  
  
her

Sometimes when I am about to sleep at night in my little room of my temporary home listening just to the last sounds before shutting my eyes and entering the dream world, I hear the silence of the surroundings and make out the subtle sound of the machines still moving in the factories next door.

It surprises me this sound the fact that it is so quiet everywhere else that I can actually hear this machine life whistling. The calmness used to keep me up it was too quiet to sleep, but now I have gotten used to this kind of quiet and the sound next door is calming, It reminds me that there is still work, there is still life and things to do everywhere at all hours, we are not yet in an abyss. It reminds me of home and when I was young the watchguard whistle

I would hear every night,  
knowing it was safe to sleep now.

Back home we have watchguards on bicycles. One for every few blocks. From 10pm on you hear every hour the whistle for the guard riding by a long metallic sounding whistle saying he is watching, nothing is out of the ordinary. If you see this person you should tip him so he keeps going on all night.

There is a job for everything back home, people will never get tired of inventing jobs but this one I like. I like hearing the whistle in my dreams letting me know every hour everything is alright. It reminds me a story a just heard from a friend, as we were talking about our youth and what kind of sounds stay in the mind.

When he was a young boy around 10 years old or even younger he remembered going to visit his grandparents house, he was always afraid of sleeping there because he would stay in a room that had a window directly to the street. Every night when he would not expect it he would hear a strange sound coming from outside. It was like a whistle or something of the sort and it would make the windows vibrate. The only thing that he could do was hide under the blankets. He would always ask his aunt and uncle or grandparents about that noise but as he didn't really know how to describe it, they never understood his dilemma or gave any explanations about what it could be. It was like a metallic bird whistling every night.

Some years later he noticed this same sound coming from somewhere in the street and he kept hearing it around in different places never understanding where it came from, finally once he could see what was the thing that generated this sound. It was coming from a person who was pushing a sort of cart, this cart had a little window that allowed the person to stir the fire that was inside the cart. Now that he had seen it was just a person who could generate this sound he lost all interest in it and forgot about it. But it was not until many years later that he realized what that man with a cart was doing and why he had such a whistle that had caused all of his fears as a child. One day a friend of his heard the whistle from a few blocks away, he jumped up excited and said "lets go get a *Camote*"! (a sweet-potato candy). He asked him where they sold them and why did he want one now? The friend then explained that the man with the whistle was the one selling the camotes and this whistle was to let people know he was around and they were ready. They went to the man and bought themselves candied sweet-potato. Finally the doubts about this sound were resolved nine years after it had first bothered his as a kid, all along it was just a man selling treats.

Now I must tell you about *La Malinche*, although my thought is that we are all somehow *Malinches*.

At least in the sense of the term *Malinchismo*. In theory she was the mother of all mixed race children her son being the first, Don Martin Cortes, but he rises up a rebellion against his Spanish father one day and he is killed by the very Hernán Cortes in battle. This story is not so much yet about him, but essentially this is Latinamerica's older brother if we take the idea that we are all the mixed race babies from that point on.

Malinche is also the symbolic mother for mixed race everywhere in Hispanoamerica, but she is also in a much bigger way the mother of the Mexican identity. *Malinchismo* can spread to many other places as well in the terms we have created for it and the story we tell of our protagonist, every time making her more and more a traitor but almost more understandable too. We are all like her, just as we are all potentially the greater mass. We still want to be the minority this is less work and more attention, is it not?

I think modern society started to live in some motto of "why be a hero when being the victim is more attractive?" someone will always come to help the victim and even if not the victim will always be remembered greatly and nostalgically. The hero generally dies and only then do we know he was the hero or if ever until much later. Our Malinche doesn't die until old age in our story, after she has given up her country she is left alone to mourn her lost nation who disappears through the battle. She is the legend woman before the story of *La Llorona* came around. We all know the *Llorona* much more than the life of Malinche\Malinalli "her real name we think" but I will fill you in, in the case that you don't know either. La Llorona is an ancient legend meaning the crying one she lived in *Xochimilco* in the *Tchinapas*, the lagoon's floating city near Tenochitlan before it became Mexico city. She was happily living with her beloved Spaniard husband and had two children, but one day she heard that her lover was bringing a new wife from Spain she was horrified of the idea of being cast aside and losing her love that she drowned her children and then herself in the lagoon while leaving her house to burn. When she arrived to Heaven she was questioned about her children ashamed after realizing what she had done in her rage she said she had lost them. Not being allowed to enter Heaven until she could answer where her children were the woman was trapped in between the dead and the living and still today is seen at night near water, she kidnaps

children that look like her own. This has been told to children forever to keep them at home at night and away from water alone. They are told the Malinche story also but to learn to not be traitors and to appreciate what they have. Somehow I feel it creates a backwards effect on us allowing us to think it is a heritage to be forever unhappy or in an unfair status against the rest of the world to be forever oppressed therefore “go out and look for something better even if you might have to sabotage your friends”. “The grass is always greener on the other side of the wall”, even if that side of the wall is a desert!

I have told you now about the Llorona but I will tell you now the closest to official story of the Malinche I know, so you see what I mean. Like many other myths legendary stories there is love, there is sorrow and pain and like many a telenovela there is mistrust backstabbing, confusion and drama.

From the beginning of everything Malinalli Tonepal *we think she was called* was born to a noble Aztec family but her mother dies when she is young and her father re-marries and has a son. Malinialli would be the next to rule the tribe after her father dies but he prefers the son to take his place so he gives her away as a slave to some nomadic tradesmen who are going through their village, here she gets taken to the Yucatan to a Mayan tribe with a new language. Malinialli is around 20 when Cortes shipwrecks in the Yucatan. She is able by now to communicate in Nahuatl the Aztecan and non-Mayan languages and in Mayan as she has learned the language of the Yucatan. When Cortes is welcomed by the tribe they give him 20 girls which he delegates to his men, Malinalli to his general sergeant as a wife, until he realizes she can communicate in language of Nahuatl as well as Maya and with one of the Spaniards Jeronimo de Aguilar who spoke Spanish and Mayan. This way Cortes would be able communicate with the Aztecs and he re-took her as his own translator and eventual wife.

From then on the story says Malinalli converted to Christianity and fell in love with Cortes, he always took her with him where she worked as an interpreter and helped him gain the Aztecs trust and territory eventually. However this is different in different history books, in some cases she manages to convert the Aztecs from their cannibal ways and sacrifices to Christianity and Cortes managed to make deals with them rather than kill them, In other books she promises to come in peace she gives orders of what they should do to work together with Cortes, Then when the Spanish would come attacking they would not be expecting it. Some just say she was acting against the Aztecs out of re-

venge for having given her away and she could never foresee the way Mexico would end up seeing herself then as a princess on a whiter more powerful side. Either way as we don't have the full story but in many versions, the term Malinche came about meaning one who gives up what they know to become what they don't know. Self hating or self sabotaging, trader of yourself or your own.

When Cortes had already won most of México over, his wife to be was going to come from Spain to see the "new world", he then gives Malinalli to his second in command to be his wife again, leaving her to raise his son alone, turning her into the rejected and mother of the rejected, the story teaches us that even if you can catch a bit of what is seeming superior for a moment it will come back to bite you later. We don't have a *one for all version* of this story we learn sometimes she was a traitor and sometimes she was a hero, but we also learn that she was gotten rid of eventually left with nothing.

What you can't predict will always happen. What was left over of this whole Malinche story was the nation México. So mixed up that we don't know how to really separate but we do anyway, a nation that for some reason always thinks it is inferior to the others, those that will continue to come, or that we could become, but more then anything the possibility to blame a legend woman for misfortune and unfairness rather than do something.

This is what Octavio Paz means when he says we are not all children of the Malinche but we are all children of Malinchismo. Sometimes it is greener on the other side but sometimes the others side is a desert, where even knowing it is a desert it is still better than our mountains or our own desert that we know to well. Will we still be happy in the desert because we at least have something to complain about? Because complaining is of the elite? "Then I start to believe we also want and must keep this story even if only half true, so at least we know who we are."



I camouflage as a white flower, I don't really know how to tell you my story though or how I have arrived to this point, I think the best way is to start from the strongest part I have in my memory and go from there.

For as long as I can trace I have been blamed for misfortune by the human being. Some say if they had never found me they would still be in good shape they say it is because of me that they've lost some of the things or people in life that they loved the most.

I must say this is all only half true but also only half false you see I never told anyone to use me as they have, this came about on their own but yes if you use me without knowing what I can do then I am dangerous!  
Please beware.

I ran into a sign of home the other day  
on the other side of the giant puddle  
not long ago  
With my mother we always say this joke,  
we say one day I did a crazy thing  
I jumped over a big puddle you know  
Then I couldn't jump back again  
The puddle had grown too much  
by the time I turned back around  
My atlantic puddle was keeping me away  
She says sometimes it shrinks dry again  
Then I can jump across easily  
but most of the time  
it is too wide to jump  
and too deep to swim.  
When it shrinks of course,  
something has to grow  
Nothing is free in this world  
That is the meter that tells me  
If that puddle will be  
growing or shrinking  
anytime soon  
Well it seems to be  
that something managed to jump  
or swim across this puddle  
much  
before  
me.

I left home some time ago, a long time ago actually it was not my plan but I ended up one day drifting so far that I ended up in a new place. My family is still in my homeland and in a way there is still a part of me there, though I have also found a new home in this new land. The place I had found was kind of empty and fresh perfect for a new beginning. The earth took me in and I let my roots grow. It became normal for me to be there I only regret one thing from this adventure, this is how they used me when they found me. I realized the people there didn't know me and didn't know how I could be used they didn't know they had to be careful I can be poison if in the wrong place.

In the wrong hands I can make people go mad and I can make them addicted to power. In the right hands I can calm you down, I can get you out of a tough situation, I can save you from someone who is too strong for you. But don't over use me I can make you mad and I can make you lose track of any truth. I can make you sleep and never wake up.

In my birthplace it got difficult for people to understand me and what I do it seems few people found out how to use me well but they are not telling for free I am free I grow everywhere you should never pay for me but they have the secrets of what to do with me, don't risk finding out for yourself as far as I know I have really hurt many who thought I was just a weed. Some who sell me as a secret potion might have actually found it.

But many are only inventions that do nothing, rarely am I actually in the potion you get. No one would ever risk giving me away even for a good price if they are not sure about the potion.

But in this new home it was different, they explored me used me for everything from a cleaning product to magical medicine for everything. Of course some had to pay a hard price for that but they found out what I can do that way. If only they had listened to me I have thorns for a reason! I have scratchy leaves for a reason too! I have a beautiful white flower and I bloom every day, I smell strange the kind of flower to look at in the wild

but not the kind smelling sweet in your home or in your hair. It is hard to take me out of the earth my roots are deep and hold on to the ground with all the strength they have. I don't want to be picked and I don't need your care if you leave me alone I will grow I will bloom but don't touch me. I am not predictable you see, I don't trust myself.

I am not meant to be eaten or harvested

I was not meant to cure I was only meant to make sleep a deep numb sleep.  
Droopy head they call me for this is how I hang and this is how I make you  
feel. But besides all my names: devils snare, trumpet of the devil, crazy  
weed, zombie plant, all of them people keep trying to use me to find out  
what I can do to or for them. I tried to make it clear why don't they learn? It  
is true sometimes I have helped I can heal,  
but don't eat me.

You will not get in trouble for using me even though I am the culprate of  
many halucinations, deliriums, craziness and death permant or temporary,  
It is not against any law to use me. This is why I am still around I suppose,  
why you know so little about me too. So my last try I just say, not all flowers  
are usefull and not all are friendly but if you are just looking at me and I  
make you smile, it is fine I like to look at you too,  
If you don't eat me I won't eat you.

It was in the land of green hills and foggy gray skies that I came across such a strange footprint in the land of a rainbow and a rainstorm a day with legends and stories at every corner. I found myself in a lovely neighborhood near the sea but the place where I found my story was in it's own spot within all of this. A field which seemed to have a past of not being crossed often but one of being turned and turned over once and again by the same feet and the same hushed words. The place was a paradox of being new and fresh with the whole future ahead of itself and being old, tired and having just too much of a past to even cope with the present. The place was large and had a wall all the way around it besides a few breaks for entrances and a few breaks where the wall became someone's house or the side wall of a school one of the openings would take you to a little church and the next one would be the one I would take to enter. Before entering you might notice on the opposite side of the road a large tower taller than everything else around with a large clock which I believe was 15 minutes off but I was not sure in which direction. Then again you might not notice this as there are two big distractions there; one is the wind that will be blowing you so intensely that if you don't keep moving you risk to blow away, almost as the wind from the cliffs of Cerro Colorado only here you risk to fly rather than fall down... Oh and here there is the gray fog which won't let you see much at all so you just keep moving.

Then even if you happen to arrive when it is a little clearer you might be hit by the second big distraction. This is where you are actually going! You will enter this opening to the wall and go into a kind of bubble a different world one of all different memories, narratives and stories but the most impacting thing at the moment is the distance between you and the building you want to enter. 200 meters of green field stand between the wall you have just entered and the building you want to enter. It reminds me of images from my childhood but I can't remember where exactly, maybe I am just making it fit to another image I have or maybe I am thinking of a book or a dream, whatever it is strangely I feel like I know this place. Once inside I noticed out the window in the direction of the entrance a set of football fields not in use at the moment, I didn't notice them on my way up but indeed this is where this story begins.

“Do people play in the field with so much wind?” I asked around to people working within the walls.

“No one for now” they said “The fields are new we have to wait one year before they  
can be played on.  
“so the grass can take it’s roots” they said.

“I see”, “but who plays, there are so many fields is it a school, what was there before?”  
I asked.

“Nothing really was exactly there before, there was a very large field of some weed,  
one that apparently is really hard to get rid of, it chokes other plants and seems to  
be even deadly to people” said one.

“It seems there  
was a doctor who lived near the patch of weeds and was using it trying to cure some  
illnesses of the mind, apparently it can make  
you very calm if you are very tense” said the other.  
“but many ended up too calm and some never recovered from such treatments” said  
the first.

“What was it called, why was there so much here?” I asked

“we don’t know” they said “It had many names that’s all we know and it had white  
flowers I think devil’s weed”  
they agreed.

I went to ask elsewhere, someone who had recently arrived and had also been  
looking at this weed told me more about it. I found out its name was Datura or  
Toloache. *(but this devil’s weed I knew, what was it doing here?)*

I wanted to ask the weed itself or the absence of it actually there were no longer  
roots or flowers or leaves but I asked the earth who had been its home for  
so long. Knowing I would not get a clear answer it is like asking a room where  
some one has just left “where did they go?” you can kind of find out if you  
look hard enough but you have to really look.

I came from the gulf coast my people there know me for either good or bad  
fortune but they all know me. I arrived here so many years ago though that by  
now I forgot I was not from here.

I was strangely comforted by this footprint of home and hearing Toloache's name and story, something new to discover about the past. I can't say I remembered or recognized it immediately upon hearing the name but I have heard much about the *loco-weed* (*yerba-loca*) its love potion was something quite whispered about when I would visit the sea villages. I was feeling quite happy to identify myself with a weed even one who has just been banished from the grounds and is an omen at home. I wondered what the recipe for the love potion was? of course being a top secret "*brujeria*" this was not possible to find however I started to think of something else a thought only, "*did they think to cloud the mind was to cleanse the mind as well? to fog it is to free it? Or is it?*" I don't know but thinking about what a doctor could have imagined before experimenting with loco weed maybe this is what he meant?

I could find something as a mind cleansing recipe with my newly discovered weed but I don't recommend to try this, in fact I trust my sources very little and everything I could find came with a warning.

*"Can you tell me something about Toloache, Tio?"*

*"Why did someone give you toloache?"*

*"Get rid of it if you find it it is too powerful that thing"*

*"Tio, I just found it in europe! But they are trying to get rid of it, it is a pest here they call it Devils Snare but it is the same as the one you know I think."*

*"Ahh, don't look into those things, it is to strong, this is a good name for it, it is a witches plant that one?"*

*"Yes, Tio, tell me is it true in the south the women put this in their husbands food ? To control them so the man won't leave?"*

*"I am afraid it's true from Veracruz and more south yes in Yucatan or in Merida this area there is too much toloache "la Trompeta del Diablo" they call it (devils horn).*

*But I tell you this never happend to me, the only time I had it was by mistake."*

*"Ok, I knew I was taking it, it was in a tea but this was too strong you know, I thought I was stronger. I thought it would just help me relax, ouff, I was a zombie for days you go crazy inside you can't control your body you can't explain anything about what is happening to you you are just there but you might as well not be, you think you are dead."*

Recipe to cleanse the mind \*as found not tested or recommended.

Preparation instructions and precautions:

Three days before you would like to perform this ritual you will need to fast allowing yourself only raw roots and warm water at night before sleeping. You need to keep calm and do simple corporal exercises and go outside in the fresh air as much as you can, your body should be healthy and almost empty.

Then you need

4 whole seeds from a Toloache Datura plant plus 3 of his leaves, (plant has many other names to find it by)

1 handful of Fresh Mint. -*Yerbabuena*

1 handful of Rosemary. -*Romero*

3 tbsp of clove oil. -*Aceite de clavel.*

Grinding tools Mortar and Pestle. -*Molcajete/Mecatl.*

First take the leaves from the rosemary, mint and toloache with the seeds, place them all in the bowl and grind them with the stone after you let them soak in the clove oil for 12 hours, then grind again until it becomes a kind of paste. When your body is prepared to take this potion \*see preparation above you can take 1/2 a teaspoon of the mixture and place it at the bottom of a tea cup then cover to the cup's rim with hot water. \***Don't stir!** but wait for it to steep it should turn into a dark honey or molasses color, by this time is should also be cool enough to drink. You must finish this cup within 15 minutes of the first sip. And allow yourself a full day with a relaxed schedule plan to be alone this day so the full effect can take place to many tasks can have a reverse effect on the mind leading to hysteria, schizophrenia or a number of other things. But please don't change these proportions not more than 1/2 a teaspoon.

\*Even a few drops with food gives an effect but that's another potion,

**caution always, too much is very risky!**



*“why does anyone use it then?”*

*“well the witches started to experiment with this a long time ago they said the soul could leave this way and the body stayed so it could go back to a different world to a past life or to the underworld to visit recently lost loved ones. They started to use it as a cleansing tea before such spiritual travels but you can imagine the results, you can't skip steps or add new rituals to old rituals. It would never work.*

*Many were coming back with such horror stories of their experience explaining that the weed was locking them in their bodies and not letting their spirits travel or letting any clear thought go through, slowly they started to lower the dosage of this tea and realized it was useful for other situations as the love potion or control syrup, realizing if you gave a few drops of this to someone they would become very passive and calm.*

*The witches started to make this potion and sell it to whoever wanted to take control over a person for example a woman who was worried that her husband would go out at night or leave her for a new woman or to gamble, but also to calm the nerves of loved ones, violent family members, nightmares of children or so on it was said this in a small dosage would just make people sleepy.”*

*“Tio! but did people know it was used on them?”*

*“well I personally think people knew just as you can smell a lie you can smell poison but sometimes you let it go only here sometimes especially around the 50's it seemed to be very popular and you would hear all the time men say that their wives were poisoning them with toloache but not only the wives, anyone! so people would be found in relationships that they could not explain or multiple relationships at a time explaining that they must have been under a toloache spell for a long time and they had no idea how this happened how they found themselves in such situations.*

*Toloache can maybe be usefull sometimes when you need to escape it helps when you want to control a person or your own rage a small drop can help stay calm but those who use this too much in the idea of love and control,*

*Ay mija!! They have not understood anything about love. Those are the kind of witches you can't trust as well, you can't find a solution and then create a problem for it. You I think we were just not meant to eat the flower, maybe it was meant just to be a flower.”*

I decided from a the recipe for cleansing the mind I could fabricate one for cleansing a place combining two recipes and adding some rituals from the place I wanted it to work on. Based on a few memories I have and some recently learned possibilities I know that for cleansing a place there has to be something from the place involved, it works better if you are physically there and of course if you believe it will work. So the recipe I could manage to make goes as such.

Before the action of cleansing ritual you will need to pick a bouquet of “devils snare” let this bouquet dry in the sun forget about it and only come back when the drying is done.

Now you need to gather.

1. One White stone. (small enough to move with ease)
2. Many other stones any shape color or size but that come from the place you are working with. One for every inside corner of the place
3. Wash each stone individually for 15 minutes each in a body of natural water (if not available then the freshest water possible)
4. Now place the white stone in the center on the location or the place you feel the heaviest presence of that which you want to clean. Place all the other rocks in all the corners in the location.

Now you take your dry bouquet of devils snare close all the doors and all the windows of the place and light the weeds on fire, as it goes out let the smoke fill the space you can walk around so it has an even cloud. Once the weeds are no longer smoking you can open everything let this cloud disappear taking everything heavy with it. Now to make sure nothing is left and nothing comes back pick up all of all the stones take them somewhere far away and bury them, this must be a place you will never return to so choose a place you don't have any attachment to and don't pass by often. This is the end, now your place is ready for a new memory.

I have to say I am not sure if it works but have quite a strong feeling it must if we follow all the steps and think that anyway, that this could be possible.

\*In any case I think that is all we need to begin.

Somehow this is not the only plant story that went over this giant puddle and back, only the one I think of now has a slightly different effect on the body. I heard a new version this old story from a dear friend very recently even around the same time that I was rediscovering the datura. I think it is worth telling it now especially with some recent discoveries of some old rituals. During the *conquista religiosa* - The spread of catechism in the country there were many plans and decisions about what parts of the original culture could stay and which would have to be changed to fit into the new religion.

Most rituals and beliefs managed to fit into the new religion in some way, but there were others who simply had to disappear and one way besides outlawing them was simply to erase them. The logic was if knowledge or traditions didn't get passed down then they couldn't be repeated and they wouldn't survive in the next generations and if people protested just let them protest anyway one day they'd get tired.

The story of *Amaranto and Xochilosquitte*,  
Of Little dogs and Pink Flowers.

The story goes around saying that in the time of the crusades the catholic friars burned many sacred *codices* which are something like a scroll or a map called codexes they would be used to tell stories, remember recipes, teach rituals and explain traditions as well as tell prophecies. They would be kept normally in the temples of the aztecan gods where only the aztec priests could read them and record new ones. But there were also ones that stayed with families recording personal traditions and secrets or stories these would be passed down carefully generation to generation. They could be on hides or wool cloth and painted with dyes from the earth around, this is how later we could find out from where exactly they came from.

It seems most of these codexes were burned by the church as the azteca temples were becoming new churches. Anything that would keep the memory of a past religion or beliefs had to go but to destroy completely was too risky perhaps they might lose any followers if they destroyed everything at once. For some reason some of these scrolls were kept as treasures secretly archived in the Vatican in Rome.

Some say so it was so one day the culture could be studied with some distance. Some say before the burnings those scrolls were given as a gift as the ancestors hoped by giving them over they would find a safer home already foreseeing the end of their own society and safety of their heritage.

In 1985 Pope John Paul II visited México for a second time this time bringing back with him 2 important scrolls that had been kept in the Vatican archive. The scrolls were in perfect condition and in full color as if someone had made them that year. They had been copied in 1985 by British anthropologists and the copies have already lost their color a few years ago, while the original ones can still be read today. It is said that they had a secret about a plant that was also outlawed and burnt away this plant is called Amarantho a grain growing from a plant that has bright pink flowers the color of *Rosa Mexicana*. When the flower dried you could collect the seeds and this would be part you use. The collection of the seeds is celebrated with a kind of dance where the collectors stomp on the branches to separate the seeds from the stem the dance is called "*La Alegria*" (The Joy) named for the rhythm that is catchy and puts everyone working in a cheerful mood stomping in the same rhythm and thinking about what they will cook with this amarantho.

According to the codex and according to a few other stories I heard amarantho used to grow wild in large fields of pink flowers and then it was cultivated by the Aztec priests. It seems this plant has a high nutritional value and gives a big energy boost with as little as a teaspoon, very much the counter effect of the Toloache Datura.

The indigenous society kept this food as a sacred food only to be eaten in ceremonial rituals or given as an offering to their gods this is why the amarantho fields had to be destroyed and the knowledge of them hidden. However amarantho did not disappear completely it is still found here and there in wild patches it grows on the foothills of mountains in the outskirts of cities and is sometimes found in flower bouquets but no one really knew until recently what to do with it and the habit to keep it for sacred events or as a high energy food had completely vanished. Today you start to see amarantho being cultivated again but very few people know about all of the benefits this plant can give.

Growing in the cracks and outskirts  
we find hiding a little patch of bright weeds  
little flowers that seem to turn into wheat.

In the sun she turns from pink to gold  
and her seeds heaven hold  
A few in hand keep us alive  
yet little plant she struggles to survive.

She asks the wind to send her far  
that she may grow again for another year

Her name it means  
“the one who doesn’t wilt”  
this is her promise and will fight to keep true  
and if you consume her she will unwill your soul

her only wish is to continue her path  
her job and her journey  
giving warmth and giving joy

She has been outcast and burnt away they hoped she would never return  
but the wind was kind to her and blew her to a new home  
she took new roots and spread again  
like a naive child hiding  
in sidewalk holes  
and parking lot cracks

hoping one day she would be looked at again  
lost her fame but not her beauty  
waiting and waiting she does  
to show her sweetness

Amaranta  
wilting not  
disappear not.

The second codex was even more surprising than the last.

This codex they say is about the dogs.

We have a dog we all know going by the name of Itzquintli. This word that now used to mean little cute one or short one, originally is the name of a tiny little hairless dog about the size of a Chihuahua but completely hairless so he is kind of pink in color with hair only on the head this hair is also kind of pink so it looks like a shaved Chihuahua with pink cotton candy as a hat. Well this dog I must say we ate it. I know this sounds horrible but it is a dog that for some reason got bread for food. Although this practice lowered very much and the Itzquintli is more a pet now than anything still in rural areas he might be dinner. Well it seems this second codex at least explains something talking about the same dog but by the name we use rarely now *Xoloitzquintli* apparently not used for food but was used mainly in ceremonial sacrifices to the god Xolotl who was represented as a dog-headed man almost in a skeleton state. The brother of the feathered snake Quetzalcoatl, Xolotl was the Tolteca and Mexica god of all things related to life, light and death. He would chase the sunset and would guard the sun as it traveled through *Mictlan* (the underworld) every night he would make sure it made it up every morning without interferences from the underworld spirits.

It is said that Xolotl created the xoloitzquitli dog from the bone that gave all life this dog he gave as a present to the human world so that they would have a companion during life as well as in death a guardian in both cases. Though eventually the aztecas started to believe that eating the animal as a sacred food would help them have better understading of both life and death they started to breed this dog as food. I knew this little dog was still eaten not that long ago but I never new any sacred ritual around this food choice.

In the Nahuatl Axolotl is a second name for this god translating to water-dog but this is also the name of a small water reptile who has a character similar to a dog. I am not sure which came first or if he is connected to the god Xolotl, it is just said that at one point during the creation Xolotl became an Axolotl to try to hide, in any case it is considered a great blessing to cross the reptile if you walk in the desert. Apparently he can hold secrets or messages from those who have already left the human world but this confusion doesn't surprise me as one of the greatest powers Xolotl had, was to transform himself into any creature he wanted, this was his way to escape sacrifice when needed.

In the ancient practice a little Xolotl "xoloitzquitli dog" would be sacrificed in ritual and buried with the dead to help the souls find their way through the underworld generally this was the family's pet who would have been the companion during life and would be the guardian during death traveling through the underworld to arrive well to the other side. In the surviving codexes from the Mayas as well as the Zapotecas Xolotl is depicted holding a torch known as the one who could give light and show the path. People also used to ask the little dog to help them transform when they too needed to escape hoping that he would turn them too into a strong Maguay tree (honey-cactus) like he had done for himself during the creation, but maybe this interpretation of the little dog's role happened because of the missing codex explaining the role of Xolotl and the xoloitzquitli dog.

Few stories about the Xolotl did survive despite the burnings of the codices and the loss of the practice in keeping the xoloitzquitli dogs, some Zapoteca or Mayan families have still their own codexes recording burials with ancestors with their own xoloitzquitli or with histories of gifts granted to the family by Xolotl for example being saved from near death experiences where Xolotl had lead them out of the underworld. For others though he has an ominous presence in their ancestry where he is better known as the god of the death and threat.

I heard a stories about Xolotl but I never heard the same one twice. It is even difficult to find any complete story about him unless it is the story of the 5th sun which is not really only about him but about us as well.

Without the moon he dances, the dance of most laughter.

The dog who howls all night lamenting over his good fortune.

His heart rejoices every morning as the spiralled shell is blown.

His hard night is over as its echoes wake up all the souls. He takes care of them while the underworld becomes a home around them he watches over them while the night consumes them lighting the way with his torch.

While during the day he rests he must stand in the side shadow of his twin Quetzalcoatl. His pride and his ears are wide awake again at night leading the sun to go around yet another turn. Thank you Xolotl for the first light of Tonatiuh every day is brought by you.

In the old myths it is said that Xolotl was the only god who was against the creation of man and against the sacrifice of the gods to create the 5th sun. It is said that the gods tried many times to create the human but had failed so much that they were ready to give up. Xolotl was not interested in creating humans and was afraid they would distroy the earth, but the time of the gods was ending and they had to leave a trace, someone who would remember them, a way they could continue to live at least in memory, but they had failed so many times before.

On their first try made the earth with the sun -Nahui Ocelotl- by the sacrifice of the god *Tezcatlipoca* (Jaguar spirited) but he was much stronger than the people and they all were destroyed by giant Jaguars that roamed the earth.

The Second sun -Nahui Ehecatl- was made by the sacrifice of *Quetzalcoatl* who controled the wind but his wind was too strong that the people hunched over everyday, and went into hiding in the trees so often that they turned into monkeys.

The Third sun –Nahui Quiahuiltl- was by the sacrifice of the god *Xuihtecutl* (god of fire) but this ended with horrible fire rain so hot that mankind turned into birds to avoid contact with the burning ground.

The Forth sun was by the sacrifice of *Chalchiutlicue* -Nahui Atl – (god of water) but this ended by too many floods every time it rained, so the people turned into water living beings to survive.



About to give up Quetzalcoatl decided to try one last time he wanted to create man out of the sacred bones of his ancestors so that man would be smarter and live longer a man that could think for himself to survive, he also thought that this time they all had to sacrifice themselves to create a world with balance and movement. They decided to do this one at a time after creating the first new humans.

One by one they went each one becoming a different part of the earth's movement Ollin but when it came to Xolotl he refused to die, he instead ran away turning himself into many different things. For a long time he hid as a Maguey tree but when he was found he turned into the water dog Axolotl only here was where he was finally caught and killed in sacrifice. However this stalling held the world static for a while and needed a push to start moving. The wind helped push the moon and Xolotle was given the job of guiding the sun, he then was given the job of guidance for the lost souls of the underworld where he eventually started to care about the humans, and he sent the gift of the xolitzquitli dog to them as a companion for life and death. Although there are many different twists and versions of this story, this is the version I like to hear the most whenever I am told the tale of the 5th sun.

Amoxtli-Libro-Book  
Amatl-Papel-Paper  
Tomin-Dinero-Money  
Chantli-Hogar-Home  
Yeyatepetle-Cuidad-City  
Koto-Camisa-blause  
Yeyatle-Mar-Sea

Kali-Edificio/Casa-Building/Hause  
Atepetle-Pueblo-Town  
Tepetli-Cerro-Vally  
Temachtlikali-Escuela-School  
Amoxtikali-Bilblioteca-Library  
Tepostli-Fierro-Iron

Tetl-Piedra-rock  
Atl-Agua-Water  
Ejekatl-Viento-Wind  
Tletle-Fuego-Fire  
Tlitik-Negro-Black  
Xoxktic-Verde-Green  
Nextic-Gris-Gray  
Xilo-Maiz-Corn  
Komojotic-Lila-Lilac  
Mostla-Mañana-Tomorrow  
ome-dos-two  
yei-tres-three  
mauli-cinco-five  
Mochilistli-Conocer-To know/To Learn  
Xochikuikatl-Poesia-Poetry  
Tokotl-Me llamo-I am called

Tlali-Tierra-Earth Pokli-Humo-Smoke  
Itsak-Blanco-White  
Chichtic-Rojo-Red  
Xuijitic-Turqueza-Turquoise  
Xochil-Flor-Flower  
Pitzcuak-Flaco-Thin  
Kostic-Amarilla-Yellow  
se-uno-one  
nau-i-quatro-four  
Atlaneyolo-Puro-Pure one  
Tlasonali-Musica-Music  
Yolilistli-Alma/Espiritu-Soul/Spirit

Uiliayan-cielo/Mora el Espiritu-Heaven/Home of the Soul  
Yuali-Noche-Night,  
Tonali-Luz-Light  
Auikyau-i-Vagar/Viajar-To travel/To wonder  
Nehua/Nehuatl/Ne-Yo/Mi Ser-Me/I/ My Being  
Tokli-Brotar-Bloom Itokli-Costumbrar-To Grow Acostumed to

Tonatiuh-Sol-Sun  
Neluayoltl-Raiz-Roots

Choka-Llorar-Cry  
Toka-Semrar-Sew

Toka-Sembrar-Bury

Kochi-Dormir-Sleep  
Temeki-Soñar- To Dream

Niquillamiqui-Recuerdo-Remember  
Niquilcaltua-Olvidar-Forget

We say for one to learn something new one has to forget something old, but what is old enough to be ok to forget? I wonder sometimes in terms of language who has decided that this will be language of this place and for how long?

Do all the people agree with this language and if not what was there before? What did the ground speak I mean? And what is language to us anyway? Does it have such an importance in who we are? As an individual does it make a difference what you speak? As a mass would we speak at all if we didn't have a language uniting us? Then if it can unite us it can also divide us, but besides this it can create us. I wonder what the first words uttered sounded like and why did it seem natural to call something whatever it was called for the first time? There is something natural to us in our mother tongue, about the sound of every word that we almost never question.

So much of our character is linked to how one expresses through language and the same goes for a group large or small. Those who can camouflage well in other languages are those who are able to adapt so well in the language that their character also changes and lives in the limbo of different characters inside of one. This might happen as the sounds that one needs for other languages travel differently in the body than those of their mother tongue, to make those sounds one has to hold the mouth or even the whole body differently and this can make character change. As everything that is going on to express outwardly is also happening inwardly, you would still be you but a different version of you with another language. Sometimes it is not only about the sound or embodiment of the language but also the mentality or logics of that language that make you change. I mean the emotions, even if we try to translate a word we will never fully understand it until we hear used it but even hearing it we need the emotion connected to it to be able to understand otherwise that word just remains a sound.

The more one starts to learn a new language the more he realizes there are some things that are just not exactly translatable, this is where one makes mistakes thinking he has understood or said something clear but there is just no way to understand the meaning without the proper knowledge of the language then we end up talking in circles to arrive to something we could just say with one word. One of the greatest phenomenons of learning a new language is also understanding the deeper meanings of the words you are saying in the

new or in the mother tongue. One could find home in a language that was not his mother tongue if this language spoke better what he felt. Just as one can find home when hearing for the first time after a long time, his mother tongue spoken near by. I wonder if one can ever become a stranger to his mother tongue, like becoming a foreigner to his motherland?

Then one would re-learn all of the nuances and even beliefs in a new way, he might even disagree now with those beliefs.

There are some beautiful words in different languages that personally I love because they mean different things at the same time like in Nahuatl the word "Toka" means both to bury and to plant into the earth. There are many words like this that sometimes I think I understand in my own way and they say better what I want to say than my own language could, I think it has something to do with growing up as a *pocha* child. Let me redefine this word for you in case you had a pre-standing definition already, *Pochola*: one who has multiple mother tongues and constantly thinks in different languages to express one thought, completely belongs to more than one culture but also kind of to none at the same time.

This can be useful but also strange as not everyone can follow their thoughts and then only other similar people can relate.

Then it comes to my mind that language is not only about words but also about thoughts or experience. Finally we are kind of all multiple mother tongue speakers naturally and are able to understand each other on levels that words can't.

Then thinking about this I wonder again "what is so important about the mother tongue that makes us create culture around it, or what is strong enough anyway to create a culture?" What do we need to tell a story? Maybe smells are a language too? Like cooking or dancing.

Can silence be a language? Not everyone is fluent in silence but many can share it. Then again silence only makes words more powerful when used and some of us really still need words.

They say that children who have the chance to grow up learning a foreign language have a higher ability to store knowledge as they learn it, they have more imagination, better memory skills, and tend to be more understanding towards others compared to children growing up monolingual. It seems though, it is important how the child is introduced to the foreign language. If to start with no one understands his language he might reject one of them either his own or the new for example a child going to a school where the class is in a different language than what he speaks at home. However if there is a small initiative from somewhere to welcome him in the new language, this will boost the interest and he might be more likely to value both languages and work well with them picking up both with ease, and then eventually more as long as he can use both or as many as he wants from time to time. It is important one feels welcome in a new language as much as it is important to feel welcomed in a new home. Like a host home if you feel uncomfortable or unwanted as a guest you will make your visit short and most likely not return. Another syndrome can happen though, one of complete isolation to conserve ones personal history or identity.

The story of the old man I was told by the friend of a friend.

This is the story of an old man who loved his mother tongue very much, an old Italian dialect. He spent all day reading it, writing it and speaking it, the only problem was this man was very old and there was no one left to talk to him in it or understand him. He out of principle would absolutely not learn another language for he was very proud to be able to understand finally in his old age all of the nuances and

poetics that his language had he didn't want at his age to lose time with a new language and what if this would change him?

What if a new language would make him think differently?

No it was better in his mind to be alone speaking to himself rather than risking to lose his notion of self.

Luckily there are many languages we all share that don't require words. This I learned only recently while listening to a woman who was telling me what life was like in the small town I was visiting, she seemed frustrated while looking for a word in her memory, I asked if she thought my understanding would be different if she could articulate them in another language, I was hoping she would feel more comfortable that way, and I was hoping I was correct in thinking her mother tongue was one I would understand.

I asked if it had been difficult for her to find people to talk to, as a citizen to a place but a foreigner to it as well? "I feel fine expressing myself in this language" she said, "this place has adopted me, so I have also adopted it." She answered, then after a moment "but I think if possible I prefer to articulate my feelings without words this way all those who speak the language of my experience would find their way to me rather than me looking for the right people to explain things to".

"Things like laughter or happiness are understood by everyone" she said "things like sorrow, loss, nostalgia, illness, tiredness, loneliness, depression, love or mourning all those things I don't know the right words to talk about them in every language but when they are present we don't need words when we can understand each other without them and we know the other person has understood us, what should I need words for?" "Just to talk about the little things? Well those words

I learned over the years just to make time go by and say a few mundane things to my neighbors, and somethings I would only be able to say in this language too, but to have people really listen when you need them to listen, all the words in the world wouldn't work, that kind of language is stronger then any and is something we were all born able to understand."

"But finally dear, yes I think my feelings for myself are linked to my mother tongue no matter how many years have passed, but I don't need anyone to know that, sometimes I just need to say things in that language wether you can understand or not. There is no translation that I know to say that feeling but I suppose something like *pour out the mind* works for what I want to tell you."

A conversation in silence.  
A random intrusion to my personal space,  
that I was occupying temporarily in a public space.

I forget that I am not alone sometimes  
and sometimes I forget where I am,  
that I have this body and it is somewhere.  
Sometimes it is hard to get out of where I am  
or to find time alone and sometimes it all happens at the same time.

On a late night train from Geneva to Lausanne.  
This train is always loud and today I am in my head, other days I enjoy the  
loudness and observe where I am but tonight I am already in tomorrow, and  
tomorrow will be long (*what does it mean when we say that ? Everyday has  
the same amount of hours yet when we say this it makes sense.*)

I take a seat exhausted and soar everywhere from the day's work my body tells  
me it is time to sleep but my mind is active and I have at least one hour before  
I am home and two before I could imagine sleeping. I start to work on tomor-  
row happy that no one is sitting next to me and I have not run into anyone I  
know, still loud though I start to listen through my headphones to an old voice  
and friend to my ears Chavela Vargas.

*(I remember thinking it is crazy that today everyone can listen to whatever  
they want and no one knows what that could be everyone has headphones  
these days but I wonder if people stop listening because of them? I mean if we  
can choose what we hear all the time then we can become kind of deaf to all  
the sounds of the streets and the voices of the surroundings.)*

Just then the person who was in the seat across the aisle moved to the one in  
front of me. I am not in the mood for this even if I have met some of the best  
people I know like this I continue my work “*don't distract me*” I say in my  
head. A few moments go by then he (a student about my age I guess) starts  
to write in a notebook tears the page out and slides to my side of the win-  
dow table “*Que écris tu?*” (what do you writing It asks?) Annoyed I answer  
“*trabajo, Je travaille*” (I work I answer)

*Then I realize in my alone sphere when I am tired my thoughts are in my  
mother tongue, I was not in the mood to change so I tried just to*

*make my body say "I don't speak at all" I don't make eye contact as I give back the paper and I go back to my book, but an answer comes back, "et dans quoi travailles tu?" (and on what are you working?)*

*sometimes we think we make things simple and short but we make them more interesting.*

The conversation continues as my attempt to say I am busy didn't work, *would a different version of myself had just not answered?* I wonder, even if it is interesting this whole thing, I think I know where it is going so I hesitate. But eventually, I don't remember how the notes switch to english.

Switching to a third language made the conversation much funnier and allowed it to continue longer all while never saying a word. Thinking in one language and writing in another makes you eventually think in the one you write in but you feel as if you observe yourself as if these thoughts you write don't actually come from you until suddenly there is no way they could come from anyone but you. In my ears is now Gustavo Santaolalla (*no words just images in my mind*) and the dark Lac Léman out the window but we seem to be nowhere I seem to have no thought or words.

I am quite involved now in this approach to not disrupt my silence but still start a conversation it is even enjoyable.

As we approach the destination he asks what I was listening to? He writes it down and keeps it then on a different one he writes what he was listening to and gives it to me.

A new way to introduce each other or exchange business cards, where you were from or what your name was were not important the only information needed was what do you listen to? He turns to make his connection and disappears in the crowd I continue my path slowly coming back to the world and eventually make my first out loud words as I answer my ringing phone. I wonder sometimes if that whole event really happened?

But I have never wondered what that person's voice was like he seemed fluent in silence so then the voice didn't matter but maybe it was all a dream after all I was very tired that day.



I realize sometimes words are so heavy and we hide so much inside of them. We  
laugh at or separate those who sound different from us  
even if they try to meet us learning our language  
we still separate them from us  
for some reason we think  
they want to be me or want something from me,  
then if they are me, where will I be? If I give, what will I have left?  
We never imagine they want to talk with us.  
We leave out those who don't understand  
and in turn they become their own keep their own speech  
they don't intend to teach.  
We become the isolated when we don't understand  
but even more when we are not heard  
let me tell you something please hear my words  
if you can't understand me  
let me please be heard.  
Maybe we put too much emphasis on hearing  
when there are so many other ways to speak  
but that matching of sounds is so important  
you speak the same language as me  
we are in the same boat  
we can play within the rules of the same language.  
I have my mother tongue even if I don't have my mother land  
to hide in, to take refuge in  
no matter how much time goes by  
I will always know the feeling of going home  
I will always recognize her but even more I will never leave my mother language.  
It always floats on the surface of my mind  
even when it doesn't flow like a river,  
fluidly  
it still drips like the leak of an old faucet  
or the attempt of rain during a desert drought.  
It is almost gone but still there  
In others it will never be gone  
it might in fact be the only thing one still remembers  
of home or of oneself when everything else is removed or turned upside down  
we still have our language whether we use it or not the important thing is  
that it is ours  
and in it hides our understanding of the world and our way to feel.  
Feeling takes no language  
but expressing the feeling  
this takes only the best and most perfect of words  
from every tongue.

Of Space, Of Stories,  
Language,  
Memory,  
History,  
People,  
Traces,

Personal affinities,  
Subconscious influences, Sources,  
Resources and References

Poet Ali - Talk -language of experience  
Langston Hughes - *Poem - a Dream Deferred*  
Chavela Vargas - *Song - Muerte*  
Orhan Pamuk - *Book - My Name is Red*  
Ntozake Shange - *Poem - Sorry*  
And *Theater Piece*

*For colored girls who ever considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf*  
Toni Morrison - *Books - Paradise, Love and Mercy*

Gabriel Garcia Marquez - *Books and Stories - Ojos de Perro Azul. 100 Años de Soledad*

and so many others that surface in my mind

Manuel de Landa - *Book - A thousand years of nonlinear history and Lectures - On Language*

Tracing The Pathway Collective - *Text - Embracing subjectivity*  
Mads Floor Anderson - *Text - Soft Activism*

Patrizio Guzmán - *Films - Nostalgia de la Luz and Botón de Nacar*  
Hakim Bey - *Book - Temporary Autonomous Zone*

And so many other words that act like food

Roberto Walch - *Book - Operacion Masacre*

Octavio Paz - *Text - Hijos de la Malinche*

Francis Yates - *Book - The Art of memory*

Yves Citton - *Book - l'Economie de l'Attention*

Andreas Huyssen - *Texts -Present- Pasts-Media-Politics-Amnesia, On memory and the yet to come and*

*Nostalgia for Ruins*

Griselda Pollock - *Paper - Life-Mapping*

Walter Benjamin -*Text - The Story Teller*

Laura Esquivel - *Book - Como Agua Para Chocolate*

Friederich Nietzsche - *Text - The Wanderer - from the Book - Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Mulino don Chisciotte - *Songs and legends of American Indians - Il Cervo del Arcobaleno*

Jared Diamond - *Book - Guns, Germs and Steel*

Universidad National Autonoma De México - *Archives - Of Historical Legends and Mythology, Traditions and Pre-Colombian History*

Gonzalo De Amézola - *Book - Esquizistoria*

National United University of Pedagogy Ajusco/educa.upn.mx/ - *Paper - La enseñanza de lenguas en México.Hacia un enfoque plurilingue.*

Jaques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle - *Books - Foreigner Question, Of Hospitality and Invitation*

Lewis Carroll - *Poem - The Jabberwocky*

Mirko Bischofberger - *Film - Old is the New*

Manuel Rivas - *Book - Voces Bajas*

Mario Benedetti - *Book - Una primavera con la esquina rota*

Nicolas Russel - *Paper - Collective Memory before and after Halbwachs*

Richard Gordon - *Book - La Polarite*

Juan Ramon Santos - *Book - Biblia Aprócrifa de Aracia*

Juan Jose Milas - *Story - La Parte de Atras*

Martin Heidegger - *Book - Holzwege*

Maurice Merleau-Ponty - *Book - Phenomenology of Perception*

Sergio Atzeni - *Book -The Bakunin Son*

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Strangers in different places those I have met and at the same time not  
particularly while traveling but not limited to.

For:

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Thank you for your love, stories, smiles, letters, laughter  
and all the memories that without, I would not be the same.

Places

that have been so curious to me or so much a part of me  
that it was impossible not to

Question,

Dream,

Write,

About

Or

With

In mind

Chippis on the border to Sierre - *Switzerland*

Renens and Morges on the border with Lausanne - *Switzerland*

Cerbère - *France* - to Portbou *Spain* - *The space inbetween*

Madrid and Ronda - *Spain*

Puerto del Aire in between Tehuacan Puebla and Orizaba Veracruz - *México*

Various Empty highway roads

El Cerro Colorado – *Tehuacán, México*

Leuk Charnel House - *Switzerland*

Basel Forest between - *Switzerland and Germany*

Cuenca and Montañita - *Ecuador*

Forests Northern British Columbia and Texada Island - *Canada*

Gorge de Chauderon in between Montreux and Vevey - *Switzerland*

Grangegorman (now DIT Campus) - *Dublin, Ireland*

Florida Wetlands - *Okeechobee Territory*

Alassio - *Italy*

San Lorenzo - *Italy*

Legends, Myths and Tales.

El conejo en la luna

El Quinto Sol

The red ribbon

On Xolotl

On Toloache

El Amaranto

On the cerro colorado

La llorona

La Malinche

and so many more.

What about experience? Do we now share one together? We've been now on a journey together, I suppose we might not have taken it in exactly the same way maybe you have already taken your own shortcuts and detours, your own long cut when you are in the mood for a longer walk your favorite roads that bring you to a memory or those that lead you pondering on the future. Now we have shared this version of my journey as yes I have decided where we turn, detour or slow down even go backwards, but I have to say I was just as surprised as you were the first time I made those turns I didn't know exactly where I would walk into or where I would end up, so in this case we are now two at least who share this experience and now this language. I have done this walk more than once and at this point it is less surprising than the first time, as any new path is I suppose I feel that I can guess what will come next and how it will be when it arrives but there are some little things that I always forget about and when I run into them I would not say I am surprised but I meet a new version of an old friend every time each time, as one could maybe re-meet a new version of an old memory when visiting a place they have not seen in awhile or when a smell associated to one memory now re-appears in a completely new place, the association is old, the smell is the same but the experience is completely new.

What would happen if I told you this whole story again? Or any one part if this story? What blind spots would you walk into this time? Or what would you expect to find, now that you know where I could lead you? Can I still surprise you for a second time or a third or more? Did this path we took lead you anywhere unexpected? Now you and I share a dialect of experience even if I took the role of leading and you the one of discovering, I had also been discovering just before you. If telling a story of silence is a language, listening to someone's silence is also one I suppose.

Taking a walk the same way I always do from my home -to train station - train to station - station to work - work to home- to work- to station - train - station - home my weekly commute, and sleeping space to work space to sleeping space back and forth every day. Not long ago I realized this had become my rhythm, I didn't see how I arrived to my work place from my living place I didn't see how one hour and thirty minutes went by during the trip then I came suddenly again to my ditch I stopped. The same place still managed to freeze me, it had been I while that I had taken that route and there I realized I had not paid attention to where I was, this ditch was giving me the same feeling it had given me on the first day I encountered it.

Now that I pay more attention and I know what to expect it still catches my feelings by surprise as if I walk into a dream each time, I am less afraid now but I am awake and I know that I walk faster by it.

Why does this catch me still, when I had forgotten to look at the Magnolia tree that greets me outside my window changing as the season does? I had forgotten to watch out the train window for the waterfall that appears halfway along my way or the city lights that appear out of nowhere between cities telling me I have arrived? I had forgotten to smell where I was until I found myself standing on top of old homeland that still smelled as it had 20 years before.

I wonder if I pay more attention again to all those whispered stories in the air, would my way really ever be the same twice? or do I just replay my version twice so that I can guess what to expect each time? I will never know if my neighbors house has just been repainted a new color or if it is true my impression that before it was blue.

A day as a tree

Today I was trying to be a tree, well, I was like a tree as close as I could try to be or I should say I performed a tree  
or I was treeing.

I stood planted in the ground until I could no longer stay just letting the wind dictate my movements I swayed slightly back and forth for an afternoon. When I started this was an open invitation to join,  
some people joined me here and there  
treeing with be for a few moments.

As a tree I thought it was nice when I was not alone and I could feel someone else swaying next to me but it was also nice to be alone.

The people around me started to forget I was there after a while,  
every once in awhile someone would stop in front of me for a moment  
looking a little perplexed watching my feet which had disappeared into the soil and  
then watching me.

Sometimes smiling, saying something about a childhood memory or being barefoot in the grass, sand or dirt but for the most part it was like I was not there at all.

If I closed my eyes and just observed through my other senses It was like being and not being in a place at the same time.

As a tree I could not choose what I saw  
or what I didn't see,  
what I heard or didn't hear.

I became an unknown witness to the events around me.

I also didn't directly understand the main language around me but here and there I heard pockets of people saying *der* "*Baum dort*" or "*sie ist ein Baum dort*" "that tree over there" or "it's a tree there",

as there were no other trees closer than a few city blocks away in this sort of concrete urban rooftop I, suppose they meant me, I was that tree there.

I don't know what the rest of the conversation was but it was strangely nice to be not there and there too.

By now I was very rooted we could say, into my place and it was no longer a question what I was,

I just was.

I couldn't chose what people did what the trees farther away did what anything said or what the weather did, when there was no wind I was tired but how I loved it when there was breeze that would allow me to move slightly in her,

when I was alone I was just enjoying my space and surroundings but when someone stopped by and interacted with me I felt awake again

this is why it is good to talk to plants

I remember thinking. I managed to stay for a short period realizing actually treeing is not possible but to try is nice.

ninety minutes

seemed an eternity to my human capacity it was enough for me to forget I had feet and when I took my first step out of the earth I lost my balance very quickly trying to regain feeling in my toes. I wonder if tree time is different?

It must be I suppose. Then I wonder if for them a few days would be a life span of mine? When I might visit a place that I used to know, many years and many changes

later, for the place, would it be only the blink of an eye?

Will the earth that I stood in for an afternoon remember my footprint once it is placed somewhere and turned into the home of a garden? Will the plants that grow in my footprinted soil recognize me if I was to ever find them again?

Perhaps I am starting with the wrong question, what about me recognizing them?

Would I ever find them any way?

Would I recognize my own footprint many years later?



My mother always told me that if I lose something  
I got lost or forgot where I was going I had to  
just retrace my steps to the last place where I remember  
where I were and start again from there.

The terrain was rough and damp,  
The earth below me moved, a slight buzzing.  
This was not a quiet ground at all,  
There was a buzz of whispers, almost a hum,  
The roots of the trees were deep and they speak.  
They wondered, what would happen next?  
There was sorrow too,  
The memory of a stronger buzz before.



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