



## A Multitude of Masks

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*As a liquid, water molecules on average last about 1 microsecond before dissociating with  
a hydrogen atom, breaking off.*

*Not forever on earth, only a brief time here!  
Even jades fracture  
even gold ruptures,  
even quetzal plumes tear*

*This period of time is so much longer than the other interactions between molecules, that  
this microsecond is considered permanent for the sake of experiments.*

*Not forever on earth  
only a brief time here!  
Ohuaya, ohuaya.  
(Excerpt from 'The Flower Tree' by Aztec poet King Nezahualcoyotl)*

1.

I've been thinking about human statues recently. Busking on the street, a kind of public meditation that transforms your body. Slowing yourself down as if moving in and out of time. Let's be honest though, no matter how good the illusion is, what people want to see is the slip-up, the puncture. Part of it is being impressed about how long someone is holding themselves still, but this is only emphasised when that statue transforms back into a person.

2.

*Tlaalahui, tlapetzcahui in talticpac  
It is slippery, it is slick on this Earth*

This Nahuatl (Aztec) proverb describes the danger of negotiating life, keeping our balance in an unstable and dangerous world. The Aztec universe was one of interconnected, ceaseless becoming where everything that exists emerges from and is part of, *teotl*.

The world is the 'flower and song' of *teotl*, the world is a self-transforming self-presentation. The world is a 'house of paintings', and what we perceive is a multitude of masks and illusions produced by this underlying, restless force, *teotl*.

3.

In winter, when I was growing up, I would watch the storms approach from the front windows. We looked over a harbour that had a strip of land on the other-side, separating the bay from the ocean. There would often be a giant wall of rain approaching across the water, which would take a couple of minutes to reach our house. As it moved, it ate the strip of land and slowly diffused any difference between the harbour and the air.

The word *cloud* comes from the old English *clud* –a mass of rock (related to a *clod* of earth too)– because of the resemblance between the two.

I'm writing this in a Google doc, meaning that it's being saved and updated, down in some basement somewhere, down in the clouds.

Clouds now are buried. Our collective thirst (and market) for data storage is pushing companies to find new and better places to hide their servers that maintain security, cut down on cooling costs and have cheap, reliable electricity. These might be decommissioned nuclear bunkers in England, an ex-paper mill in Finland, a barge floating through the oceans, or underwater where Microsoft have been testing out submerged data servers.

4.

There are 18 different known forms of ice though only two occur naturally on Earth.

The 18th, recently discovered, exists as a simulation.

*We will pass away. I, Nezahualcoyotl, say, enjoy!  
Do we really live on earth?  
Ohuaya, ohuaya.*