

The arrival of the god Tlaloc in Mexico City in 1964

Isidoro and the apparition in the ravine.

The forest receded each day, leaving only grass and parched saplings. That's what Isidoro thought as he moved away from the commotion and laughter of the communal dance. It wasn't that he disdained the revelry of his fellow villagers, who were busy clapping their sandals on the hall floor. Participating in the festivities was embarrassing for him; his small stature and delicate face made him look like a child. The ladies had to bend down to dance with him, provoking jeers that no longer hurt, but weren't forgotten either.

That night he chose the plains. He walked toward the Santa Clara ravine, worried about the planting and the rains that hadn't come. As he walked, he savored the "spider bellies," the

black fruits of the capulin tree, that pious tree that nourishes without asking for anything in return. One must have serenity not to be frightened by the lament of the persecuted souls of Christ the King that hang from its branches. They confess secrets that were hanged, the bees watch over those stories, and each fruit is a dead memory. That is why, before picking it, one must ask permission.

Isidoro filled his satchel with those mementos and squatted down by the stream. Beside him, the little pine trees cried every night, missing their mothers. They sometimes disguise themselves as humans to steal milk from newborns, not for revenge, but for the desire to acquire a skin that would protect them from being trampled.

He was idly watching the capricious curves of the water when the landscape began to darken. Everything blurred, except for the

crystalline flow, which shimmered like sequins. From it emerged a toothy head, a mix of snake and badger, which inhaled the entire night. Its body was enormous, its fangs menacing, but its gaze, sad.

After vomiting a mouthful of foamy water, the creature spoke:

—"Bad times are coming, Isidoro. You must warn the people."

—"I'm afraid."

—"It's not me you should fear. Gather your courage and listen."

—"Tell me what I need to know."

—"From the Valley of Lights, a wicked man, blinded by flattery and pride, has ordered my son kidnapped. They will chain him and drag him around on a wheeled bed. He will be exhibited like a freak show attraction before men and women of a thousand races. They will

see him for a few seconds, feign a smile, and forget him forever.

—Are you talking about the Lord of the Tecomates?

—The same one who today rests in his mud nest.

Back in the village, Isidoro walked through the streets with his head down, trying to erase what he had just experienced. He wasn't one to believe in legends. He was sure it had all been a hallucination brought on by a green capulin tree. Then he saw Ramón, the mischievous dancer who was always at the fiestas, being cradled like a baby by Chocacihuatl herself.

The arrival of the broken ones and the dispute between wise men.

Isidoro never spoke of that night in the ravine again. He kept the secret like a seed in dry soil:

waiting for the moment to sprout. But the town, unknowingly, was already walking toward the fulfillment of the prophecy. The rains didn't come. The capulin trees stopped bearing fruit, and the pine trees wept louder than ever.

In 1962, the first signs appeared: a few young men in suits and ties, carrying notebooks with graph paper and cameras that didn't ask for permission. They came from the Valley of Lights, just as the creature from the stream had warned. They didn't bring machetes or rifles, but they did bring sweet words and promises wrapped in official paper.

They arrived in San Miguel Coatlinchán accompanied by some sallow, hunched-over blond men dressed in gray robes. They had come to take photographs and measurements of the Lord of the Tecomates, who rested in the

ravine where he had been hidden from the Spanish conquistadors.

Their arrival was quite a sight: children and adults alike followed them with curiosity. The children showed off stone figurines unearthed from the cornfields; the adults muttered under their breath; and the elders watched them with stern expressions and distrustful glances. Isidoro, however, felt a pang in his chest: something sinister was about to happen.

Meanwhile, in an elegant hall at the Ministry of Public Education, the scene was like a Baroque painting: two eccentric personalities, an august lady, and several mestizos dressed as British gentlemen gathered under a high ceiling. Earlier, a battalion of waitresses and butlers had laid out trays of croissants, sausages, Spanish kebabs, and a few bottles of Italian wine.

The attendees were:

- **Wolfgang Weber Gaona** , a distinguished historian, a man with greasy, yellow hair due to genetics and lack of water. Son of a Bavarian immigrant and a woman from Puebla, granddaughter of pig farmers. A connoisseur of pre-Hispanic art, culture, and wiles.
- **Davidovich Sánchez García** , expert in etymology and political science. PhD from the Royal and Pontifical National Autonomous University of Mexico. The son of a Communist Party member residing in Lomas de Chapultepec and recently recruited into the ranks of the revolutionary party.
- **Juan Montes** . Second Secretary of Presidential Affairs.
- **Teacher Daniela Cisneros A.** , professor of universal history at the National Polytechnic Institute, with whom the great

Tlatoani had sympathized during a lightning visit to the pyramid of the Sun.

- **The applause clan** , two silent spectators who simply took nonstop notes and laughed at everything that seemed like a joke.

With their stomachs satisfied, their appetites having evaporated the canapés as if by magic, Juan Montes took the floor:

—Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this historic gathering. Our President of the Republic, guardian of the people's soul, requests—with his characteristic humility—that we recount the story of the creator of rain, which will be the subject of his memorable address upon the arrival of this deity to our city. She will now be the guardian of the new museum of Aztec heritage.

—"***Strong ovation from the Applause Clan.***"—

—To whom, to be precise, are we referring? —
asked Wolfgang

—“Of course, distinguished doctor,” replied
Juan Montes, “we are referring to Tláloc, lord of
rain, corn, and butterflies, of the stars and the
eternal sky. The ever-generous president has
ordered the monolith to be brought from San
Miguel Coatlinchán to its new home.”

—***"New ovation of the Clan of Applause."***—

—“Wow!” exclaimed Wolfgang. “That’s great
news for me! A presence that will raise our
pride in our origins and the purity of our
Mexican blood.”

—***"The Applause Clan looks at each other
with expressions of bewilderment, disbelief,
and mockery."***—

—“If you’ll allow me, Comrade Secretary,”
Davidovich interrupted, “I must clarify that the
monolith you’re referring to doesn’t represent
Tlaloc, but Chalchiuhtlicue. Her headdress,
huipil, skirt, and sandals prove it. She’s a

female figure. And I disagree with seeing her as a deity; rather, I see her as a symbol of the rural worker's effort to transform rain into a tool for creating value."

—Let me speak, doctor! —Wolfgang retorted—. That figure displays masculine severity and hollows of dark circles, similar to other representations of the warrior God, creator of lightning to guide the armies of the cosmic race to dominate the world for a thousand years.

—“How do you explain, Comrade Wolfgang,” Davidovich replied, “that she doesn’t have the mask with the serpent-nose or Tlaloc’s fangs? Besides, she’s standing with her hands on her belly. That’s feminine. The people of Coatlinchán themselves know her as ‘The Lady of the Water,’ and the people are always right. Onward to victory, always!”

—“Not everyone in the village says that,” Wolfgang grumbled. “Next to her were found

figurines of children and offerings to Tlaloc. A people is only right if it is strong and faces the power of its people like a soldier. There is no homeland or life for the weak and the spineless."

—" *The Applause Clan is stunned, their face contorted in a gesture of facial paralysis and cerebral shock.*"—

— "The painter José María Velasco identified her as Chalchiuhtlicue in 1889," Daniela interjected. "Leopoldo Batres interpreted her as Tláloc in 1903. If the wise men disagree, let the people give her whatever gender they please. But it is these people and this city that concern me. There, she is adored and loved. Here, perhaps she is just a postcard for tourists and a bench for lazy people."

—» *Face of relief in the Clan of Applause.*»—

The meeting ended with a clumsy rendition of the national anthem, five repetitions of the first

verse by Juan Montes, a shout of “Long live the poor of the world!” from Davidovich, and a resounding tap of Wolfgang's heel. Everyone then set off to carry out their noble task. The Applause Clan took the opportunity to pull out two pambazos and a memela they had bought from Tonatiuh, the street vendor on Independencia Street.

They say travel broadens the mind, whether by plane, boat, or through a book. However, many are unable to see themselves in that world, and worse still, if they ignore the fact that you can't read with your backside.

It is common for some to only hear the echo of their own voice, the one that, with the metallic ring of money, turns into close friends those who, otherwise, would destroy each other.

The resistance of the people and the dispossession of divinity.

The people are rising up!

That is the cry of those who rise up to expel the tyrant who rules them and to elect an even more ruthless one. But it is not everyone; it is always just a few. The rest merely hope not to be killed or to appease their fury in exchange for favors.

The insurrection came in 1964. It was not born in palaces or squares, but in Martina's humble dwelling, a few steps away from a platform with 64 wheels, parked to tear the Lord of the Tecomates from his nest of mud.

Isidoro, through his merits of spirit and conviction, was appointed commander of that guerrilla group. They were joined by a young outsider, a trinket vendor in the Huasteca communities, an impromptu spy, who traded risqué magazines and amulets with the workers sent by the government.

These workers considered the amulets essential. Since their arrival in Coatlinchán, they had suffered numerous setbacks. The timely arrival of the monolith for the inauguration of the Museum of Anthropology was at risk.

The platform's tires were frequently punctured, and other vehicles' gas tanks were filled with dirt. On one occasion, many workers were struck by a severe bout of diarrhea after eating snacks prepared by Doña Martina.

The insurgents did much to prevent the sacred stone from being taken. Martina organized collective prayers that sounded terrifying at night, as if the houses were reciting the novena for the dead of a thousand. Anselmo, the young merchant, instilled fear in the outsiders with tales of curses, comparable to those of the people who desecrated Tutankhamun's

tomb. The old man Melitón dug trenches to uneven the roads, like someone trying to bend fate with his own hands.

But nothing could stop the machinery of power. After a massive protest, the men in green arrived with rifles and shouts. Isidoro and his captains chained themselves to the monolith, like children who refuse to abandon their mother. The women offered flowers to the soldiers, seeking mercy amidst the roar of the engine that hauled 160 tons of history.

The crying was long.

The women covered their faces with shawls, not out of shame, but out of modesty in the face of the pain. There, in the distance, faded that 'which was not made of stone, but of time'.

The government called it a gift. The people experienced it as plunder.

They promised construction, roads, improvements. Nothing came. Only emptiness.

Isidoro was the only one brave enough to watch the game without flinching. Indignation made him grow until he was the tallest inhabitant of the village, but shame made him stoop. He could never again encounter the serpent of the ravine, for no warrior raises his face in defeat.

Martina was there, but she turned her back, that's what mothers do when a child leaves: they don't cry outwards, but inwards, until their insides are flooded.

Anselmo was just a dot in the distance, one of those that never disappear. They say he was seen throwing amulets into a garbage dump.

The rest of the town fell silent, leaving a void in the landscape.

A black cloud roars furiously over the great city: Tlaloc and the powers of a God.

In the skies above the metropolis, a black, serpentine cloud hissed in from the direction of Iztapalapa. It was adorned with lightning bolts like veins charged with light. Little by little, it took the form of fangs ready to bite all the inhabitants of the city.

That afternoon, Teresita, a second-grade teacher at the Revolución school, was making preparations with the parents to march on foot to the old Calzada de la Emperatriz, where the

students would welcome the great God of the showers with balloons.

Every excellent preschool should have a teacher named Teresita in the early grades. This name is synonymous with a second mother, dispelling the myth that "there's only one." She is the loving prelude to the older teachers, who demand order and civic values, and who are responsible for bad grades and the dreaded detention before the principal.

Despite the signs foreshadowing the impending disaster, the committee had to keep an appointment that would never be repeated. It was as important as finding an eagle devouring a snake in the middle of a cactus patch. Moments before, the teacher had confiscated Agustinito's slingshot, sent Ronaldito to the bathroom, and discovered where Angelita had hidden the bile.

The infantry commando would joyfully go to reunite with their ancestors, those dressed in loincloths or, failing that, in jaguar skins. A disturbing image that must have been the cause of many childhood nightmares.

The watchful parents, who were actually just the mothers, were prepared with bags containing a large wardrobe of coats. Their ingenuity in packing the most unlikely objects was remarkable: along with them traveled wooden benches, spare flip-flops, cardboard boxes, ceramic plates, and even a brazier with its supply of charcoal.

Moments before the arrival of the distinguished guest, the sky had become as thick as the smoke billowing from a tire shop's flare. The winds were gusts with the speed of the meteorite that wiped out the dinosaurs.

The Lady of Cakes: The Arrival of the Giant of the Waters

A powerful flash of lightning startled Doña Aurora, who, along with her driver, was traveling in a Cadillac toward her Californian castle on Horacio Avenue. She was returning from picking up samples from *El Globo* pastry shop , whose exquisite secret she was determined to uncover.

—There's a lot of traffic, Demetrius

—It's because of the event, ma'am.

—What event is that?

—Don't you know? They've blocked Paseo de la Reforma to bring in a giant monument of the god Tlaloc.

—Where are they bringing it from?

—I think he's from some small town near Texcoco. They say he didn't want to come, I

suppose that's why he wants to punish us with the coming storm.

—"I've never seen so many people on these streets, stop Demetrio, stop. Look at those skinny little children walking on the sidewalk."

—Madam, please excuse me, but I don't see any skinny children. Look at those bellies! They must be students from some school.

—"That's not true, Demetrius. They must be hungry. How many days have they gone without eating? Let's get the cakes out to feed them."

—Doña Aurora, what those children eat most is bread. You should come with me one afternoon to the bakery in my neighborhood.

—No Demetrius, let's go now, they need me.

At that moment, the noble lady was, for the children of the Revolution School, the embodiment of all the gods and goddesses of the valley—five hundred years earlier she

would have been venerated with copal incense and a robust human heart. The creamy pastry, almonds, and chocolate were passed from hand to hand and mouth to mouth. The school's crest was covered by a fluffy vanilla frosting. It was all the powerful lord of the cyclones needed to see.

A lightning bolt passed in front of Diana the Huntress's arrow and then a storm began where each drop contained other drops of water, as if it were a matryoshka doll.

Even so, no one moved an inch. In the distance, the image of the titanic God appeared, pulled by two powerful rolling machines. The sky was a halo of strident lights that forced the angel to kneel upon his granite column. The father, giver of the life-giving sap, made the ground tremble, challenging any ant

that crossed his path, his gaze fixed straight ahead as befits the lords of Anáhuac.

Every man, woman, and child learned how helpless and ridiculous it is to confront the power of a God. In that moment, we were all a drop of water, one in a thousand, that the Lord of Rains can vanish beneath the earth. Learn, earthling ant, a divine prayer, for before you open an eyelid, you will need it.

More than just an image, it became etched in the memory of the inhabitants of Tenochtitlan. Respect for one's origins is not something to be taken lightly.

In the ravine of the snake, the stream was filled with the tears of a people. In the anthill there was no room for tears, only for a silence, like

that which will one day be called to account before the God of all gods.

The sugar skull of the mestizo nation

The weakling of the mestizo nation didn't deliver a memorable speech. He sent thanks to the notables who wrote one hundred and forty pages praising his diminutive figure. He was in more of a hurry to board an airplane, off to an international congress of weaklings.

Proud of his power to cut off legs and antennae. That said, he had the love of the people who made him the arbiter of truth.

The newspapers did the work by rushing the editorial ants to produce the honey and in some cases, the salt or the vacuum:

- **' Impressive historic maneuver by the president'**
- **'Theft or kidnapping of the sacred stone?'**

- **'Cultural victory for the Mexican State'**
- **'Tlaloc arrives in the capital and unleashes a flood'**
- **'The rain god takes up residence in Chapultepec amid an unexpected storm'**
- **'The Tecomates stone leaves Coatlinchán: gift or plunder?'**
- **'160 tons of history: Tlaloc is already watching over the National Museum of Anthropology'**
- **'Amid tears and gunfire: the people bid farewell to their god'**
- **'The storm of Tlaloc: coincidence or divine fury?'**
- **'Mexico City welcomes the Aztec god with rain, traffic chaos and controversy'**

Thus departed a god, dragging along prayers, rage, and memories. Today his silence is only a stone gaze dying of boredom. The unearthed

indifference of a nation that builds ravines with worldly serpents.

No nation is immune to being drowned; history tirelessly demonstrates this. We must be wary of imposition and dispossession, but even more so of the forces of collective memory, which pass from a mother neuron to its offspring.

This is how Mexico's memory is forged: with silence, with time. The homeland is not a nest of insects. At some point, a giant stone will come along with a storm.