

INTRODUCING THE *SRPR* ILLINOIS POET:  
JOSE-LUIS MOCTEZUMA



Photo: Mary Lou Villanueva

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Jose-Luis Moctezuma is a xicano poet, essayist, and researcher. He holds a PhD in English from the University of Chicago. His poetry and criticism have been published (or are forthcoming) in *Postmodern Culture*, *Modernism/modernity*, *Fence*, *Jacket2*, *Chicago Review*, and elsewhere. His chapbook, *Spring Tlaloc Séance*, was published by Projective Industries in January 2016. His first full-length book, *Place-Discipline*, was published by Omnidawn in October 2018. *Place-Discipline* was selected by Myung Mi Kim as the winner of the 2017 Omnidawn 1st/2nd Poetry Book Prize. His second book, *Black Box Syndrome*, is forthcoming from Omnidawn in fall 2023. Born in San Gabriel, California, he lives and teaches in Chicago.

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## Noyol in Choca (My Heart Weeps)

*after Nezahualcoyotl*

I drank mushrooms  
bathing in pulque & now my heart  
weeps:  
I feel that the earth  
abandons me                      I sense  
that I am no longer  
glad     the earth tells me I am  
undeliverable

& death asks me when I'll pay  
the rent                      but there is nothing  
to show for it  
& even the terminally irate  
counterfeit their monies  
in empty winglike  
gesture;

Although we are  
crested in quetzales & flush  
in green affections  
unisoned as  
gems are  
on jade  
neck-  
lace

few things are solid anymore  
our anger burns like dust  
on the comal  
and nothing is forged;

my friend, dear  
friend, friend of casual encounters—  
only the lure of  
better selves  
tempts me to proffer  
this offering up, perishable  
as our rising smoke  
in the sun of certain death

So here: I render up to  
you  
these flowers  
these handwring  
petals

FYI

the Information is what worms inside our head when we're  
asleep and the ear  
drums in place-  
meant, as capacious as the metallurgy ringing in replacement  
of speech, a tuning  
beneath the wood or  
fire, in the air, somewhere, an absentia that earths the missing  
letter in the supreme ab-  
straction, formulations  
of leviathan or parasite  
(the invisible sequestrations) that regard our mode of dream-  
life anamorphic to the  
corpse of attention  
that flowers in the shoulders at a remove from  
supernal figures  
of anthill or  
hindu kush  
silhouettes of the body in wild grass and dustmotes, a merger  
of pores  
incorporeal  
like a zoo of erotic paralysis, tongue and all, walls of sweat  
breathing in mush-  
room and languages  
unknown to the  
accountants  
night tremors but also the fear of drowning in a sea of 5G  
the intonations  
below human instinct,  
dog whistles for  
retired torch singers, in blue hues barely imaginable in the  
darkest flood of

methane seeping  
thru soporific  
pipework, behind the walls, the snoring, the phantom instructions:

and i am among them, being eaten out by the Information, alive  
to the Scales, as the postal  
service is alert  
to its final delivery  
alert to the vulnerability of paper machinery to the news  
machine faking  
its own suicide

because it went thru

facial reconstruction  
and lip enhancement  
future daze as much of the past as icarus melted into song,  
the privations  
that hide in plain sight  
when the medium achieved  
the acrobatics of a mudskipper, to breathe a flamekissed air,  
a brain that  
skips from server to  
server, breathes in water  
thru its breasts and bathes  
in networks that write poems to each other in the shape of  
algorithms untrans-  
lateable as an arm  
under demonic  
pressure de-  
prived of blood,  
the repetitions drive us to remark on our collective saturation:  
in footnotes  
to the commentaries

of the addenda  
to the think pieces  
on the question  
of prolegomena to the cultural ramifications of a 69 million NFT  
what we call  
an elongation  
of the truth  
we provoke in our reweaving, when the pop beacon hits, and we lie  
there, awake  
dwelling in  
the inscape  
between love's reduction and the amplitudes of non-fungible feeling