

NAHUATL PROVERBS, CONUNDRUMS, AND METAPHORS, COLLECTED BY SAHAGUN

Translated by THELMA D. SULLIVAN.

To give prudence to the simple,
to the young knowledge and discretion;
That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning,
and the man of understanding may attain unto wise
counsels;

To understand a proverb and a figure,
the words of the wise and their dark sayings.

(Old Testament, Book of Proverbs I:4-7.)

When I started studying Nahuatl with Dr. Garibay, a little over two and a half years ago, I began not merely the study of a fascinating language, but also what has proved to be an intellectual adventure. The translation I offer here of the Nahuatl proverbs, conundrums, and metaphors, collected by Sahagún, is part of the fruit of this adventure, and it is with the profoundest joy and profoundest humility that I dedicate it to Angel María Garibay K. in commemoration of his fifty years of distinguished scholarship.

Dr. Garibay has done many things in the field of the Humanities, not only in Nahuatl Literature, but also in Greek and Latin, Hebrew and Aramaic. However, there is one thing that he has not done, and it is this one thing that has made his work outstanding. He has never taken the "human" out of the Humanities. Dr. Garibay is not a "scholar's scholar," he is all the world's scholar, and the knowledge that he has garnered in his lifetime he freely shares with all who are interested. He abhors "deluxe editions" and fights against them, preferring to see his own work published in less expensive editions or paper-back so that they may be economically accessible to people. His books—alas, much of his work is still unpublished—are a delight for any reader, as well as a mine of information for

investigators, no little achievement in a field considered reserved for "egg-heads."

His accomplishments as a scholar, however, are only the manifestation of what he is as a man. Dr. Caribay has never travelled far from Mexico City, but through his reading and meditation he has ranged over all the world and into the hearts and minds of people everywhere. Because he comprehends the universal paradox of man being the same everywhere and at all times, and different everywhere and at all times, he has been able to give us translations from the Náhuatl (not to mention his recent translations of the Greek plays) that make us feel the impact of a living culture. A true *tlamatiní*—wise man—he is in the words of the Nahuas "a light, a torch, a great torch that does not smoke; . . . he shines his light on the world." To work with such a man is truly an adventure, and it has enriched my life forever.

Book VI of Sahagún's monumental *Historia de las Cosas de Nueva España* is the most beautiful of the twelve books that comprise the work. It is a Book of *Huehuetlatolli*, or Orations of the Elders, containing forty prayers, exhortations, and orations, and ends with a collection of proverbs, conundrums, and metaphors. Being *Huehuetlatolli* of the nobles, it is the finest example we have of Náhuatl rhetoric and literary style which, in complexity of thought as well as beauty of expression, rivals any of the great literature that man has produced. Did Sahagún pattern this book after the Book of Proverbs of the Bible, a series of exhortations with a collection of proverbs at the end? We shall never know.

One of Sahagún's aims in preparing his great work was to facilitate the learning of the Náhuatl language by his fellow missionaries, and doubtless it was to this end that he appended to Book VI the proverbs, conundrums, and metaphors he had gathered in the course of his investigation into the pre-conquest life of the Mexicans. From their somewhat crude style and the conversational tone of the texts, it is apparent that they were jotted down verbatim, possibly for his own use at first. They are like an album of photographs, each proverb, conundrum, or metaphor a picture of some aspect of the life of the Nahuas, and since these are word pictures, we not only see something of their life but also something of their thoughts and feelings.

Like all proverbs, the proverbs of the Nahuas are the wisdom and truths they distilled from their experiences and observations into simple, crystallized, and witty statements. As strange and curious as their world may seem to us, for nearly every Náhuatl proverb we have a similar one of our own. And the Náhuatl conundrums which belong to the world of children, are like conundrums everywhere—charming, simple, and concerned with everyday things.

The metaphors, however, are what bring us into direct and intimate contact with the mentality of the Nahuas, for what are metaphors but images in words of the concepts, beliefs, traditions, and experiences of a people. Since, in Náhuatl Philosophy and Religion, the all-pervading concept was that of duality—a supreme dual god and duality in all things—it is not surprising that Náhuatl metaphors generally consist of two words or two phrases that combine to form a single idea. Sometimes they are redundancies, sometimes parallelisms, and sometimes disassociated words which in combination have a meaning totally unrelated to the individual meanings of the words. These vivid and imaginative embellishments of the Náhuatl language together with the proverbs which, themselves, are metaphorical expressions, are morey swatches clipped from the rich brocade of the Náhuatl language and literature. They are just a sample of the treasure over which Angel María Caribay has for so long held his torch.

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IC OMPOLLI OCE CAPITULO ONCAN MITOA: IN CEQUI
TLATLATOLLI, ITOCA ADAGIOS, IN QUITOAYA, IHUAN IN
QUITOA.

1. *Moxoxolotitlani.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aquin motitlani: in amo quioalcuepa in inetitlaniz, in anozo amo yauh in ompa titlano. In uel ic mitoa: quilmach Quetzalcoatl, Tullan tlatoani cataca: quil omentin cihua mahaltiaya in ineahtayan: in oquinoalittac: ic niman quinoalioa cequntin quimitazque, in aquique maaltia: auh yehuantin titlanti: zan ic quimitzicate: in maaltia cihua: amo maquinonotzato. In Quetzalcoatl oceppe zatepan conioa in ixolouh, quitoznequi, ititlan: in quimitaz aquique in maaltia: zan no iuhqui chiuu: ayocmo quicuepato in inetitlaniz: ic oncan tzintic, nelhoaioc in mitoa: moxoxolotitlani.

2. *Tomachizoa.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aquin moch commomachiztia in tlein mitoa, in tlein muchioa.

3. *Nonouian.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aquin uel oncalaqui, in amo ic calaquian, mazoa, in amo imazouayan: in tlein chioalo teoan quichiuh-tiuetzi.

4. *Oc nochicomatl, oc mochicomatl, oc ichicomatl.*

Iquac mitoa: in tla aca tlaanqui otemicti, in tle uel omic: auh inic tlaanqui otemicti, oc ichicomatl: yehica ca ayocmo quima in temicti, in ma iuhqui matlac ouetz, inic otemicti: ic

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SOME PROVERBS WHICH THEY SAID AND STILL SAY.

1. *A page is sent.*

This is said about someone who is sent with a message and fails to return with an answer, or else does not go where he was sent. It is said for this reason. They say that when Quetzalcoatl was King of Tullan, two women were bathing in his pool. When he saw them he sent some messengers to see who they were. And the messengers just stayed there watching the women bathing and did not take him the information. Then Quetzalcoatl sent another of his pages to see who the bathers were and the same thing happened; he did not return with an answer either. From that time on they began, they started saying: *A page is sent.*

2. *Our know-it-all.*

This is said of someone who claims to know everything about whatever is said and done.

3. *Here, there, and everywhere.*

This is said about a person who enters where he should not enter, sticks his hand where he should not stick his hand, and quickly takes part in whatever others are doing.

4. *Still half a net for me, still half a net for you, still half a net for him.*

This is said when a drunkard assaulted someone who then died. At the time the drunkard killed the other person he was still only in half a net because he did not know that he had

motemachia, azo zan oc ic ma quizaz: in maca zan iuhqui matlac ocalac, azoquic matlacpa quizaz, ic mitoa: oc nochicomatl.

5. *Ixpetz.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aquin uel quinemia, in quenin uel quitemuz, in quenin uel monextiliz in itech monequi: anoce uel quitta in tlein ohui in zazanilli.

6. *Tatacapitz ueli in tlalticpac.*

Iquac mitoa: in quenmanian uel itlatzin tictopialia: auh in quenmanian uel totech oyauh in icnoyotl: quenmanian ueli, quenmanian aueli.

7. *Xoxocotioa (i)n tlalticpac.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aca teyacanqui, tlazalo, totoco itla ipampa itlatlacul: in ma iuhqui xocotl uel oicucic: niman oaluetzi.

8. *Ayac xictli in tlalticpac.*

Ayac tictoxicitzique, quitoznequi: ticteluchioazque: maciui in telchioaloni neci, ace mimatini, ace yolizmatini, ace mozcaliani.

9. *Cuicuitlauilli in tlalticpac.*

Iquac mitoa: inla itla zan itech titopiloa, tictocuitlauia: zan uel ticmati, maciui in oui: in iuhqui quauhximaliztli, tetzotzoncayotl, anoc'itla occen tlamantli tulteayotl: auh anoce itla tlamatiliztli, cuicatl, grammatica, etc.: inla uel omoma(n): mitoa: cuicuitlauilli in tlalticpac.

killed someone.¹ He had not fallen into the net for having killed someone and therefore was confident that he might get out; he was not all the way into the net and consequently might yet get out. For this reason they say: *Still half a net for me.*

5. *Polished eye.*

This is said about a person who is very astute in the manner of finding, of discovering, what is necessary, or who quickly sees what is difficult in an enigma.

6. *One can dig a little in this world.*

This is said when one time we are able to put away a little something, and another time we are in need. Sometimes one can, sometimes one cannot.

7. *To bear fruit in this world.*

This is said of a high functionary who is dismissed, discharged, due to something that is his fault. It is precisely like fruit that has ripened and then falls to the ground.

8. *No one on earth is an umbilical cord.²*

We should not sneer at anyone; meaning, we should not disdain anyone even though he appears to warrant disdain, as he might be a wise man, or learned, or able.

9. *By nibbling away in this world.*

This is said when we persist in something, when we take great pains with it and know it well even though it may be difficult, such as carpentry, sculpting stone, and other arts; or perhaps some kind of knowledge, such as singing, grammar, etc. If one is very persistent, it is said: *By nibbling away in this world.*

¹ "...others kill others while drunk, and all these consequences are attributed to the god of wine and to the wine, not to the drunkard, as they say that he did not do it but that the god did; ...they did not regard as a sin anything they did while drunk." Sahagún, *Hist. Gen.*, Ed. Porrúa, 1956, Vol. I, p. 75.

² I. e., something that is thrown away. There is a play on words here: *xictli*, umbilical cord, and *xictia*, to look down upon someone.

10. *Tlatolli itlaqual.*

Iquac mitoa: in aquin itlaton ic moyolilacoa, zan niman teahoz: anozo zan achi ic onayo, ye uey inic quitecuepillia tlatolli, inic teaoa: anoce iquac in itla mitoa, zan niman no tehoan tlatoa.

11. *Tlani xiquipihuilax.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aquin pani neci iuhquin anahuatl ixicno-tzin, tlatlacatzintli, qualtzin: auh tlacazo ye cenca tlauelilloc, cenca teaoani, techicoitani, yollocuicuitla: qualli in quitoa pani, auh in itic amo qualli in quitoa teuicpa.

12. *Ye onquiza naoalli: anoce onquiz in naoalli.*

Iquac mitoa: in cequintin cenca motlacuilauia, inic motla-yecolta uellaixnextia: auh in cequintin, zan tlatziui, maauiltia, atle quixnextia: auh in cequintin uelloitlaixnextique, iquac mitoa: onquiz in naoalli. No uel itechpa mitoa: in itla momach-tia, in cequintin zan tlatziuhimemi: auh in cequintin intla quilli: quimati in momachtia, icuhca uel quimati, in tlein quimomachtia, ic mitoa: onquiz in naoalli: inic uel mitoa, quail in naoalli, quitoznequi: tlatateculotl.

13. *Ixquauitl, uel ixquauh.*

Itechpa mitoa: in amo pinaoani, in amo temamatini: in uel yatiuetzi imixpan in mauiztililoni.

14. *Tenquauitl.*

Itechpa mitoa: intlatol chicaoac, in auel tenpanauillo, in amo tlatolpanauiloni.

10. *A word is his meal.*

This is said about the person who is wounded by any little thing and immediately starts quarreling with people. When lightly reprimanded he replies angrily and squabbles with the other, or whenever anything is said he starts arguing and shouting.

11. *Underneath he drags a bag.*

This is said about someone who outwardly seems like placid water, who has a kind face and appears to be compassionate and good. But he may really be despicable — belligerent, a scaldmonger, and evil-hearted. Outwardly he speaks nicely to people but inwardly he speaks nastily.

12. *The sorcerer is now passing there; or, the sorcerer passed there.*

This is said when some people by toiling hard, earn their livelihood and lay by something. Some people, however, are just shiftless; they dedicate themselves to diversion and accumulate nothing, and when others acquire things by working hard, they say: *The sorcerer passed there.*

This can also be said about studying something. Some just fritter away their time, but if others learn well what they are studying, if they learn quickly, then they say: *The sorcerer passed there.* They say that when one says this, *sorcerer*³ means the devil.

13. *Brazenfaced, truly a face of wood.*

This is said about the person who is not bashful or timid with others. He just rushes ahead of illustrious people.

14. *Wooden lips.*

This is said about someone whose words are firm. He cannot be refuted, no one can over-ride him in words.

³ *Nahualli*, means magician, sorcerer, conjuror, etc. The above, however, probably refers to *Tescatlipoca* one of whose names was *Nahuapilli*, Lord Sorcerer or Magician.

15. *Pipilpan timalti.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca ye uey tlacatl, noma pipillotl quinemitia, in ye telpuchtli noma motetecomolhuia, anozo mitzpetzinalhuia: auh in ye ichpuchtli, noma icoconeuh yetinemi, noma mozoquitlaxcalhuia: in yehoatl in, ca pipilpan timalli.

16. *Ninotocuiuitla, timotocuiuitla.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca nictlazotla, azo itla ic onechylitlaco, cenca nicaoa, nicpinauhitia: intla itla iichtacatlachioal nicmachilia, teixpan ic nicpinauhitia, ic niqixmotla: in iquac iuh muchioa in, mitoa: ninotocuiuitla.

17. *Oppa icuuitl quiqua.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aquin tla itla oquitemacac, azo itla qualoni, anozo tilmatl: ye no ceppa quitlani, quitecuilla.

18. *Aonmati iixco, icpac.*

Itechpa mitoa: in amo in imati itechpa inacayo, quapopolitic, itzocucuitlatic, amo mamouia, amo mixamia.

19. *Aommomatoca.*

Zan ye no yehoatl, in aommomati iixco, icpac.

20. *Aoompa.*

Itechpa mitoa: in amo mozcalia: in ompa titlano, zan amo ompa itztiah: in tlein quicuiz zan amo ye in quicui.

21. *Niquauhthalmelaoa, tiquauhthalmelaoa.*

Iquac mitoa: intla itla ninomachtia, zan auel onicma: in ma ca zan nixochiquiquauitl, amo ninoxochiqualloti, ic mitoa: niquauhthalmelaoa, anozo oniquauhthalmelauh, anozo zan oniquauhthalmelauh, quitoznequi: atle onicma, atle onicnexti.

15. *A reveler in childishness.*

This is said of a grown person who still clings to childish things; someone who is already a young man and takes delight in digging holes with pieces of stone or painting himself up, or a young woman who still carries around her dolls and makes mud tortillas. That is, they glory in childishness.

16. *I pull up my shoots, you pull up your shoots.*

This is said when I love someone who perhaps hurts me in some way. I quarrel with him and humiliate him. If there is something that he had done secretly, I reveal it in public, thus shaming him and throwing it in his face. When this occurs, they say: *I pull up my shoots.*

17. *He eats his excrement over again.*

This is said if someone gives something to another, such as food or a cape. Then he asks for it back, ha takes it away from him.

18. *He has no idea what is on his face and on top of his head.*

This is said about someone who is not careful of his person. He is unkempt and his face is filthy. He never uses any soap on himself nor does he wash his face.

19. *He does not put a hand to himself.*

This is the same as, *he has no idea what is on his face and on top of his head.*

20. *Scatterbrain.*

This is said of a person who does not have his wits about him. He is sent somewhere but goes elsewhere, and what he is supposed to get he does not get.

21. *I am a fruitless tree, you are a fruitless tree.*

This is said when I study something but cannot learn it. It is exactly as if I were a fruit tree that bears no fruit. For this reason it is said: *I am a fruitless tree, or, I was a fruitless tree,* meaning, I have learned nothing, I have nothing to show for my efforts.

22. *Mazol.*

Itecha mitoa: in tlatlacuituetzi, azo temacuex, azo teamauh, anozo itla occen tlamantli cana mopia, ompa concuituetzi, in-tlanel tanaco, inlanelnozo canin: in ompa mopia in itla pialoni.

23. *Notzotzon, motzotzon, anozo cuix no cuele notzotzon in nouauhtzon.*

Iquac mitoa: in tla aca itla oniquicneli, anozo itla onicmach-ti: in ipampa in, notepaleuiliz, ic nechtlazotlazquia: auh ca ye in toliniliztica, in tefelchioaliztica nechtlacuepcayotilia, ic mitoa: notzotzon, anozo yene notzotzon, yene motzotzon.

24. *Nitlacocoloa, tiitlacocoloa.*

Iquac mitoa: in amo uel melaoac niqutoa notlatol, in anozo itla ic nitlatlanilo, in melaoac ic nitlananquilizquia: auh ye zan niqixneloa in notlatol, zan campa nocontlatlamia: cequi nictlatia, auh cequi melaoac in niqutoa: anoce zan aca itech nocontlamia.

25. *Campa mixco.*

Iquac mitoa: in tla aca nechcocolia, nechteixpauia in ma nitolinilo, in ma cana altepetl ipan nitotoco: zan amo uel mu-chioa, amo tle uel ic nitolinilo, amo no nitotoco: ic noconilhaia in notecocolicauh: campa mixco.

26. *Can noyacaauh, can moyacaauh.*

Iquac mitoa: in tla aca onechtolini, ono nictolinizquia: zan nixpampa oyeoac: in manel campa oya, ca nictoliniz in iquac neciz: ic mitoa: can noyacaauh.

22. *Hand-dipper.*

This is said about a person who swiftly snatches things belonging to others, such as bracelets or paper adornments, or some other object that is safeguarded somewhere. He swiftly takes it from the basket or place where the valuables are kept.

23. *My hair, your hair; or, Is my hair my amaranth?*

This is said when I do someone a favor, or else, I teach him something. In consideration of my help he should love me, but instead he repays me with abuse and disdain. Therefore it is said: *My hair; or, my hair also, your hair also.*⁴

24. *I twist something, you twist something.*

This is said when I do not speak plainly. For instance, I am asked a question which I should answer clearly, but instead I muddle my words; in some instances I am ambiguous, concealing one thing and stating another with clarity. Or else I speak falsely about someone.

25. *With what face do you look at me?*

This is said when someone hates me and makes an accusation against me, for which I might be harmed or persecuted in some city. However, absolutely nothing can be done; I cannot be harmed or persecuted for this. For this reason I say to the person who hates me: *With what face do you look at me?*

26. *My very nose, your very nose.*

This is said when someone has done me harm and I would do him harm, also, but he runs from me. No matter where he has gone, when he turns up I shall torment him. Therefore, one says: *My very nose.*⁵

⁴ The Amaranth has spikes that are covered with seeds which, if they are not picked at a certain time, simply blow away. *Tzonili*, heit, head, and *huauh-zonili*, Amaranth, form a play on words and roughly mean, "my head droops like an amaranth whose seeds have dried and fallen."

⁵ Like my nose, I shall never lose him.

27. *Totlanitz.*

Itechpa mitoa: in mohochichitōa aca, in quitoa: ca nitiacauh, ca nilamani, ca yaoc nimatini: auh acacemo tiacauh, acazo can onmati: auh azo ca cana tiquiltic in inacayo: quiteittitia, qui-toa: inin ca yaoc ic nechuitecque: ic oncan mitoa: totlanitz: no ioan tiquitoa: ninotlanitzia, timotlanitzia.

28. *Centzon, uel acic.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aca miec tlamantli quimati, amatl, tlacu-
loli, anozo itla nellayecoltlitzli: in iuhqui tepuzpitzcayotl,
quauhxicayotl, teocuitlapitzcayotl, much uel quimati: ic mi-
toa itechpa: centzon, uel acic.

29. *Uel nomih, uel momih.*

Itechpa mitoa: in tlein nicnopialia, in uel naxca, in uel no-
yocauh in nociauliztica, nolatequipanoliztica onicnonextili, in
amo zan cana oniccuic, anozo oniquitech: no uel itech moca-
quia in yeuecauh: in aquin tlamaya yaoc: niman oallauh in
concaiyotia, cana ce ima, anozo icxi: niman oc ce tlayecayotia,
ce no cana ima, anozo iicxi: niman tlanauhcaiyotia, no ce cana
ima, anozo iicxi: in yeoatl in, tlamani, ioan in tepallama: qui-
toa: uel nomih: auh intla aca zan tepan oallaz, intla canaz ce
mailt, anozo icxtil in ye oaxioac: mitoa: amo uel iomih.

30. *Icnopillotl ommomelauh.*

Iquac mitoa: intla itla uecauhica onicnixnextili: auh no aca,
zan quioalichtequi: anozo cana temac niclaza otlica.

27. *Our shin.*

This is said about the person who speaks of his prowess. "I am a captain," he says to someone. "I have captured prisoners and am experienced in war." And perhaps he is not a captain. Or perhaps he is and has a scar somewhere on his body which he shows to people, saying, "These are the wounds I received in combat." This is when one says: *Our shin*. And we also say: *I boast falsely, you boast falsely*.⁶

28. *He succeeded in achieving four hundred.*⁷

This is said about someone who knows a great many things, such as painting on paper, or such crafts as forging metal, carpentry, and goldsmithery. He knows all these things well. For this reason it is said: *He succeeded in achieving four hundred*.

29. *Strictly my bone, strictly your bone.*

This is said when I hold fast to something that belongs to me, my own possession which I acquired by hard work and toil and which I did not take or steal. It meant the same in the past when someone took a captive in battle, and then came a second that he seized by the hand or foot, and then a third and a fourth, that he also seized by the hand or foot. With this the captor said to the novice assisting him: *Strictly my bone*. And if someone else came along and seized one of the captives by the hand or foot, they said: *It is not his bone!*⁸

30. *He marched straight to poverty.*

This is said when I manage to accumulate something after a long time and someone comes along and steals it, or else I throw it away on the road and it falls into someone else's hands.

⁶ *Motlanitzia*, to boast, and *tlantiztli*, shin, are from the same root. Less protected than the rest of their bodies, the warriors probably received more wounds on the legs.

⁷ In Nahuatl, the number 400 figuratively means an incalculable number of anything and is used the way we use a thousand or a million.

⁸ After a captive had been sacrificed, the flesh was distributed. The captor did not eat the flesh of his own captive, since the captive was considered his alter ego and the sacrifice of himself. However, some of the bones were returned to him and he kept them as trophies.

31. *Tetitech noneoa.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca tlatoani, anozo aca mauizitliloni nic-notlatlauhtilia, itla ipampa, inic nechpaleuiz: auh zan ye ic qualani, zan itlaelpán nonuetzi: azo ye ompa no nechaoa, iuhquin ma tetitech noneoa, nonnouitequi.

32. *No tlepapalochiuhuiuh.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca teaoaz, cenca'c motlaueltituih, cenca qualantuih inic tetoliniz, inic teaoaz: auh zan ye oncan tolinilo, pinauhtilo: iuhquin tleco onuetzi. Itech oalquiza in tlepapalotl: in momatia acazomo temicti in tletl: in iquac ouetzito tleco: niman oncan ommiqui, zan no iuhqui in aquin teaoaz: azo ye ompa temac, uetzituih, azo mictiloz ompa.

33. *Ixnex.*

Itechpa mitoa: in azo itla oax, azo itla oquichiuh, azo auil-nemiliztli, ichtequiliztli: in momati ayac quimachilia: auh ca ye omachililoc, otepan cenman in tlein ipinauiz: ic mitoa itechpa ixnex.

34. *Icniuhmoyactli.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aquin zan tlatlaueliloc, in auel teitta, in zan teaoa: intla cana necentlatilo in oncan teoan motlalia, zan ipan tlacacaaolli, quicauhtiquiza, quimacaci in ma teaoa: ic mitoa icniuhmoyactli.

35. *Onen oncatca.*

Iquac mitoa: intla itla oquinequia noyollo, zan amo uel omuchiuh: intla oninomachtiaya, zan auel onicma: ic mitoa: onen oncatca, anozo a onen oncatca.

31. *I dash myself against a rock.*

This is said when I ask a ruler or some illustrious person to do me some favor, and as a result he becomes angry. I provoke his wrath, and perhaps he berates me. It is as if I beat myself, I dash myself against a rock.

32. *Like a moth into the flames.*

This is said about someone who is always quarreling with others. When he bullies people and squabbles with them, he fumes and rages, but then he, in turn, is bullied and put to shame. It is as if he has fallen into the fire; flames are shooting from him and he thinks the fire has consumed the other, while it is he who has fallen into the fire, and he soon dies there. So it is with people who are always quarreling with others; they may fall into the hands of the other and perhaps be killed.

33. *Ash-face.⁹*

This is said about someone who has done or committed something, such as an iniquity or thievery. He thinks no one knows about it, but his disgrace is already widely known, it has been bruited about. Therefore they say about this person: *Ash-face*.

34. *Friend-dispeller.*

This is said of a person who is belligerent, who cannot look at anyone without fighting with him. If there is a gathering and he sits down among the people there, they just draw away from him, they leave him quickly, as they are afraid that he might fight with someone. For this reason they say: *Friend-dispeller*.

35. *It was in vain.*

This is said when I desire something with all my heart that cannot be done. For example, if I am studying, I cannot learn anything. Therefore one says: *It was in vain*. Or conversely, *it was not in vain*.

⁹ A play on words. *Ix-*, from *ixtli*, face. *Nexitli*, means ashes. The verb *nexia* means to show, to reveal.

36. *Ompa onquiza'n tlalticpac.*

Iquac mitoa in cenca ye titotolinia, in ayaxcan, neci totech monequi, in tilmazintli, in tlaqaltzintli: inic uel caquitzin in motolinia, in cenca tlaihiyouia, in itoztomatzin cenca oizoliuh, cenca ye tzatzayani, in quimoquentia zan achi inic tlatlanitica ye oalcocotoniz, ye ompa onquizaznequi in inacayo: inic uencan peuh in mitoa. Ye ompa onquiza in tlalticpac, anozo onquizitnemi in tlalticpac.

37. *Mocicinoa.*

Itechpa mitoa: in mochachamaoa itla itechpa, azo necuiltollinli, anozo tlamatliztli: quitotnemi. Ca ninocuiltonoani, ca oncan naxca, notlatqui: anoce quitoa. Nitlamatini, etc.

38. *Cuix ixquich quitta in huitziltzin.*

Iquac mitoa: intla ce tlaxcalli, anozo itla qualoni tictomama-ca tepitzin: auh intla aca quitoa: zan tepiton in oannechma-caque: niman ic onmonanquilia. Cuix ixquich quitta in huitziltzin. Ca in huitziltzin cenca zan pitzaton in iten: in iquac quichichina tepiton xochitl, cenca zan no achiton, in conchichina necutli.

39. *Tlatoluitax.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aquin aiiellatoa, in amo cenca uellananquilia, in iquac notzalo.

40. *Tencuicuitzca.*

Itechpa mitoa: in cenca tlatlatoani, in cenca tlatole.

41. *Cuix tleuh yetinami in coyotl.*

Iquac mitoa: intla itla ayamo cenca uel icucic, tiquicuihca-quatiuetzi, in iquac cenca ye fouteucui: in iuh quichioa coyotl in zan xoxouhqui quitetexoa elotl: zan no iuh muchioa in iquac aca cenca ye onapizmiqui: intlanel ayamo cenca uel icuci tlaxcalli, anozo nacatl, iuhqui quiquatiuetzi: auh intla aca ic tla-

36. *The world spills out.*¹⁰

This is said when we are very poor, when hardly anything comes our way, such as mantles or food, by which it is evident that someone is poor and in great want. One's rags are very old and torn, barely covering one. They are worn thin, falling apart, and one's body is spilling out. As a result, it began to be said: *Now the world spills out*; or, *now the world is spilling out*.

37. *He brags about himself.*

This is said about the person who brags about himself, such as about his riches or knowledge, saying: "I have become wealthy; there are my goods and possessions!" Or else he says, "I am learned," etc.

38. *Can a humming-bird see that much?*

This is said when we share a tortilla or some food divided into tiny pieces. If someone says, "What you have given me is so small," he then adds, "*Can a humming-bird see that much?*" For a humming-bird has a very thin beak and when he sips nectar even from a tiny flower, he sips very little of it.

39. *Word-dragger.*

This is said about a person who is slow in speaking and who does not reply volubly when spoken to.

40. *Swallow's beak.*

This is said about a person who talks a great deal, who is full of words.

41. *Does a coyote carry his fire around with him?*

This is said when we are ravenous and bolt down something that is not fully cooked. Like a coyote biting into a green ear of corn, a person who is starving bolts down tortillas or meat even though they may not be cooked through. And if someone is going to cook the food, or would like to humiliate the other,

¹⁰ *Tlalticpac*, which means the earth, the world, also means the penis.

tlatzouiz, anozo ic tepinauhtiznequiz: ic mitoa iquac. Cuix itleuh yetinemi in coyotl.

42. *Cuix no nen nipatzactzintli.*

Iquac mitoa: in amo qualli inemiliz intla no teachcauh te-coanotza, anozo itla quitemaca: auh no iuh nichioaznequi nitecoanotzaz, anozo itla nictemacaz: ic mitoa. Cuix no nipatzactzintli, anozo, cuix no nen nipatzactzintli.

43. *Ipal nonixpatlaoa.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca ipiltzin itelpuch, anozo ichpuch, anozo zan itlaoapaal, uel quioapauh, uel oquizcalti: auh ye ic yeteneoalo, in ipampa in inezcalliz: auh ye no ic yeteneoalo in pillioa, manozo in teapaoani: ic itechpa mitoa. Ipal nonixpatlaoa. Niteixpatlaoa. Titeixpatlaoa.

44. *Tequilt nitotlpxiqui: cuix niquinchopini, mochopinque.*

Intechpa mitoa: in totolti in iquac moxima mochohopinia: ca in totlpxiqui, amo quichioa, inic mochohopinia totolme: ca zan monetechua in mochohopinia. Ic no uel intechpa mitoa: in maceoalti in mochalanía in momictia, anoce intlal, in-cal, azo itla ipampa: amo yehoantin techalanía, in teyaconque, ca zan yehoantin monomauiá in mochalanía in maceoalti, in momictia.

45. *Quennel, tla nel toconilhuiti in quennel: amo zan no quioalitoz: quennel.*

Iquac mitoa: intla itla onicuililoc, anozo onicnopolhui, acan tle neci: ic nioalnelaquaoa in niquitoa. Quennel, tla nel toconilhuiti in quennel: amo zan no quioalitoz: quennel.

46. *Ma quimichpil oconatlí.*

Iquac mitoa: intla itla otiecoaltica, auh zan no onitlacauh. In iuhqui iquac acame moquaquahtelomomotla: auh zan

then the hungry one says: *Does a coyote carry his fire around with him?*

42. *Am I good-for-nothing, am I a withered ear of corn?*

This is said if a captain, who is not very well off, gives a banquet or serves a meal to another. I want to do the same. I want to give a banquet or serve a meal to someone. For this reason, one says: *Am I a withered ear of corn? Or, Am I good for nothing, am I a withered ear of corn?*

43. *Because of him my face becomes wide.*

This is said when someone's child—a boy or girl—or else someone's pupil, was well-taught, well-brought-up, and is commended for his good up-bringing. Consequently, the child's parent or teacher is also being commended. Therefore, they say with regard to the child: *Because of him my face becomes wide. Or, I make someone's face wide, you make someone's face wide.*

44. *My job is watching over the turkey hens. Did I peck at them? They pecked at each other!*

This refers to the turkey hens when they peck at each other and pluck out each other's feathers. The keeper of the turkey hens does not provoke this; they start fighting by themselves and peck at each other. Accordingly, this is also said about the common people when they brawl with each other, when they come to blows over their lands or houses or for some other reason. It is not the authorities who fight with them, but they, of their own accord, join issue and fight with each other.

45. *What can be done? If we just say, "What can be done?" the other person will only say, "What can be done?"*

This is said when I have been divested of something, or I lose something that does not turn up anywhere. I become excited and say, *"What can be done?" But if we just say, "What can be done?" the other person will only say, "What can be done?"*

46. *Possibly a mouse drank it.*

This is said when we are fighting for something and give up, such as, when players, competing in a game of throwing wooden

onitlaauh, amo uel omotlanque: ic iquac quitoa: ma quimichpil oconatlíc.

47. *Cuix nixilotl nechitzayanaz.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca iinui onican oictec, otetlaxin, anoce omomecati, anoce itla oc centlamantli tlatlaculli oquichiuh: auh niman ye ic aca nechilhuia. Inin otiquittac: ma aca tiquilhui: auh niman ye ic noconnanquilia. Cuix nixilotl, nechitzayanaz.

48. *Incocotzin.*

Itechpa mitoa: in zan motolinia, in amo cenca mocuiltonoa, in zan quexquichtzin quimopialia iaxca.

49. *Oc nocetonal, oc nocetonal.*

Iquac mitoa: intla tequani onechquazquia, anozo tequani coatl ipan onicholo, zan achi in onechoalquazquia, oninotlatotuetz, anozo toro onechquauizquia; auh oixpampa neoac, ic oninomaquixti: yehica, intlaca'mo onicchioani in izquitlamantli: ca onimiquizquia, az'oc quezquilitzintli nonnemiz: ic mitoa. Oc nocetonal.

50. *Quen uel ximimatia in titeocuitlamichin.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca quin yeoa uel monemítia, zan tepan itla ipan uetzi: azo omomecati, anozo aca oquitopeuh: ic ocolizeuc, anozo uel omic: auh ic teipiloyan otlatilloc: ic iquac mitoa. Quen uel ximimatia titeocuitlamichin.

51. *Tla alauí, tlapetzcaui in tlalcicpac.*

Zan ye no iuhqui in omíto: azo quinizquinpa qualli inemilíto: zatepan itla ipan uetzi tlatlaculli, in ma iuhqui omalauh zoquitlan.

52. *Ayemo quatlatlatzta.*

Itechpa mitoa: in amo zan centlamantli quimotequitia, zan amo tle nelti: azo quimomachia cuicatl, zan auel quichioa: ye-

balls, simply give up and lose the game. This is when they say: *Possibly a mouse drank it.*

47. *Am I an ear of corn that they can scrape the kernels off my belly?*

This was said when someone was in trouble. He had committed a robbery or adultery, or he seduced someone, or did something that was wrong, and then said to me, "Don't say anything to anyone about what you have seen." I then reply to him: *Am I an ear of corn that they can scrape the kernels off my belly?*

48. *Poor little dove.*

This is said about someone who is poor. He has scarcely anything, only a few things to call his own.

49. *One more day for me, one more day for you.*

This is said when a wild beast was about to devour me, or a poisonous snake was going to bite me and I leaped over him and fled, or a bull was going to eat me, but I ran away and escaped danger. If I had not done all these things, I would have died, or I might have lived only a few days. For this reason one says: *One more day for me, one more day for you.*

50. *What happened to you, fish of gold? Be careful!*

This is said when someone had lived a life of propriety until a certain time and then something came over him. Perhaps he took a lover, or he struck someone who took sick or died and he was put in jail. Then one says: *What happened to you, fish of gold? Be careful!*

51. *Things slip, things slide, in this world.*

This is the same as the above. Perhaps until now, someone's way of life was good and then he goes astray. It is exactly as if he had slipped in the mud.

52. *He has not yet set his head.*

This is said about someone who does not devote himself to one thing exclusively, who does not stick to anything. Perhaps

ne quimomachtia Latin, a no uel quichioa: yene Castillanlatolli quimomachtia, amo no uel quimati. In aquin iuh quichioa y, uel itechpa mitoa. Ayemo quatlatlatzta.

53. *Ayac mallacpa teca.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca itla itequiuh, itla ic tlapaleuia mo-cuicuilia, monenequei: quitoa. Ma niccaoa in notequiuh: in iquac iuh quichioa in, in momati azo cenca ic tlazotlalo, mauiztililoz: auh zan ic tlayolltla: niman ic caoaltilo. Auh in oquicauh: niman occe quimixiplayotia: auh oc ye cenca uel quichioa in itequiuh, occenca ye uel motlacuila in quin omix-quetz: ic mitoa iquac: ayac ica.¹

54. *Tepal nitzopiloti.*

Iquac mitoa: inlacatle in nicquaz: auh azo aca nocniuh achitzin ipal oniequa itlaqual: azo aca nechtlatlania, in cuix onitlaqua: auh ye ic noconnanquilia. Tepaltzinco onitzopiloc.

55. *In oalquiza tonatiuh amo totonqui: quin iquac iye(l)iz yetiuh ye totonqui.*

Itechpa mitoa: in quin ommonamicia: ca oc cenca motolinia, inic conpealtia in innemiliz: quin iquac in ye achi quitoca ye moyollalia: azo ye itlatzin ye quimopialia.

56. *Can machpa tuitze.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca cenca techtolinia, anozo techmictiznequi, amo ma tiyaouan, zan tocnih: ic ommonanquilia. Can machpa tuitze.

57. *Quen tehitto.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca cenca tlazotlalo, mauiztililo, tlacamacho: aca quitoa: tleica in cenca quimauiztilia, in: niman ic monanquilia. Quen tehitto.

¹ Should read: *ayac mallacpa teca.*

he studies singing; he does not master it. Then he wants to learn Latin and he does not master this either. Then he studies Spanish and he does not learn this either. About a person who does this, they say: *He has not yet set his head.*

53. *No one beseeches another ten times.*

This is said when someone, who holds a post and serves in some capacity, likes to be coaxed and cajoled. "Oh, if I could only relinquish my post!" he says, thinking that by so doing he will be loved and esteemed. But when he is removed, he becomes downcast. He leaves his post and someone else is put in his place. The person who now offers to do the work, does it better, does it with greater care. This is when it is said: *No one beseeches another ten times.*

54. *With someone's help I became a vulture.*

This is said when I have nothing to eat and through the offices of a friend I eat a little of his food. Should someone ask me if I have eaten, I reply: *With someone's help I was "vultur-ing."*

55. *The sun is not hot when it has just risen; after it has been travelling its course a while, then it becomes hot.*

This is said about a person who has just married, as he is still very poor when he starts out in life. However after a little time has gone by he is consoled as he may now have laid by something.

56. *Where have we come from?*

This is said when someone hurts us deeply or wants to do us harm and he is not our enemy but our friend. Hence, one retorts: *Where have we come from?*¹¹

57. *It's the way people are regarded.*

This is said when someone is greatly admired, honored and esteemed. When someone says, "Why do they make so much of him?" The other then replies: *It's the way people are regarded.*

¹¹ That is, "Weren't we friends?"

58. *Ye iuhqui itoch.*

Intechpa mitoa: in iquac acame tlaohana, in aca cenca choca: auh in aca teaoa, tetzatzilia: in aquin tetzatzilia, in anozo mochoquila, mitoaya: ye iuhqui itoch. Ipampa ca in yeuecauh, in octli intech quitlamiliaya in totochtin, in quinmoteotiaya ueuetque.

No itechpa mitoa in aquin cenca tetolimiani: in anozo tlatlaczintli, in muchi tlatatl quitlazotla: macui in amo tlaoanqui, no mitoaya: ye iuhqui itoch, quitoznequi: ye iuhqui iyeliz.

59. *Ixtimal.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aquin cenca qualli ic neci inacayo, in ca itla (a) uel quichioa, in ca auel itla ay: auh ye atle uel quichioa. Occenca intechpa mitoa in cioa, in ca neci uellamachioa, uel tzaoa, auh zan ye amo atle uel ai, zan teixcuepa: ic itechpa mitoa. Ixtimal.

60. *Cuix tecoco in ixcuelli: auh ye no mitoa. Azo noxayac in pinaoa: in nocuitalxcol cuix no pinaoa.*

Iquac mitoa: intla cenca ye noteucui, ye nonapizmiqui: cequintin tlaquaticate: niquintlailamilia, in ma tepiton nechmacacan in quiqua, atle nechmaca: zan qualani, nechixcuellita: auh yehica ca cenca ye nonapizmiqui: niman intlan nonnotlali-tiuetzi, ioan nitlaqua, anozo zan noconcuitiuetzi in tlaxcalli: iquac mitoa: cuix tecoco in ixcuelli: ca in teixcuellitaliztli, aquen techiuh: zan in apizmiqiliztli temicti, ic micao.

61. *Campa xonpati.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca onechaoac onechococo tlatoltica: ye nictoca ce nocnuh niquitiaz, inic ompa ninoyollaliz: auh zan ye no ompa nechaoa, nechtolinia: zan no iuh nechioa, icamac nonuuetzi: ic oncan mitoa. Campa xonpati.

58. *Such is his rabbit.*

This is said about people when they get drunk. One weeps copiously, another fights with people and shouts at them. And so, when a drunkard shouts at people or starts weeping, they say: *Such is his rabbit*, because in the past, *pulque* was consecrated to the rabbits whom the ancients worshipped as gods.¹²

This is also said of someone who is extremely belligerent, or of someone who is very kind and loves everyone. Though he is not a drinker, they say: *Such is his rabbit*, which means, such is his nature.

59. *A glorious face.*

This is said about a person who, outwardly, makes a good appearance but does nothing well, executes nothing well. He can do absolutely nothing. This is especially said of women who appear to embroider and spin well but in reality can do nothing well; they just deceive people. For this reason they say: *A glorious face*.

60. *Does a black look hurt? One also says: Is my face mortified, are my innards also mortified?*

This is said when I am very hungry, when I am ravenous, and others are eating. I ask them to give me a little something to eat but they will not give me anything. They become angry and look at me askance. However, because I am starving, I quickly sit down with them and eat, or I snatch some tortillas. This is when one says: *Does a black look hurt?* For looking askance at someone does him no harm; only starvation kills a person and causes death.

61. *Where can one be healed?*

This is said when someone quarrels with me and stings me with his words. I then seek out one of my friends, I go to see him so that he can console me, but he upbraids me and also hurts my feelings. He does the same thing to me; I fall right into his mouth. This is when one says: *Where can one be healed?*

¹² Pulque is the fermented juice of the maize or agave. The *Centzonitochtin*, the 400 (or innumerable) rabbits, were the gods of wine. They also represented the innumerable types of drunkenness. For a lively description of many types of drunkenness, see Sahagún, *Hist. Gen.*, Ed. Porrúa, 1956, Vol. I, p. 324.

62. *Noyollo yiztaya, moyollo yiztaya, etc.*

Iquac mitoa: in tlein cenca tiqueleuia, cenca itech uetzi in toyollo: in iuhqui iquac cenca ye no namiqui, anozo ye napizmiqui, anozo itla ocentlamantli eleuiloni: in iquac quitta noyollo, cenca papaqui: iquac mitoa. Noyollo yiztaya.

63. *Patlachilpitica.*

Iquac mitoa: intla itla aca ic nechteixpauia, miiec tlamantli in quitoa inic uel nitolimiloz: auh cenca nechmoxictia, inic amo uel nitlananquilia: auh yece uel nicnemilia, inic ninopaleuiz: intla aca quitoz. Tleica in amo timopaleuia. Nicnanquilia, ni-quilua. Patlachilpitica: macui mochicaoa zan quipiqui: amo quimati in quenin uel ipan niccupaz itecanecayaualiz.

64. *Ayatle iueliyaca.*

Iquac mitoa: in itla tlatolli amo mellaoc, in zan iliuiz moteneoa, acan uel ixneci: in iuhqui tla aca quitoa. Quil omic in emperador: inin ca zan mitoa ca'mo nelli: ic mitoa. Ayatle iueliyaca. Auh intla ye melaoac mitoa: mitoz. Ic iueliyaca.

65. *Tlacoqualli in monequi.*

Amo cenca tzoztomatli in totech tictlalizque: amo no cenca titoyecquetzazque: zanipan qualli inic titochichioazque: in itechpa in tlaquemtl.

66. *Tlacailleoa.²*

Iquac mitoa: in iquac pipixco, in muchi tlaacatl yauh mopixquiliz: no uel mitoa, in iquac muchi tlaacatl yauh, in imilpan, in iquac elimico.

67. *Quin in nicoyotl: ma ica niquitta.*

Iquac mitoa: intla itla aca quimomachitoca: azo quitoa. Oniua in Caxtillan, anozo Quauhitemallan, anozo quitoa: Nalcalde onicatca: zan ye amo nelli, zan quiztlacati: ic ommitoa. Quin in nicoyotl: ma ica niquitta in Castillan ouia, anozo Quauhitemallan, anozo ica alcalde ocatca.

² Should read: *tlacayotl eoa*

62. *My heart turns white, your heart turns white, etc.*

This is said when we long for something that we like very much. For example, when I am either very hungry or thirsty, or when I desire something agreeable. When I see it my heart rejoices. Then one says: *My heart turns white*.

63. *It is loosely tied.*

This is said when someone makes an accusation against me, saying many things to bring me harm, and treats me with disdain. I am unable to reply but, nevertheless, I deliberate about it so that I might defend myself. If anyone should say, "Why don't you defend yourself?" I reply, saying: "*It is loosely tied*. And even if it were tightly tied, he has trumped it up; he does not know how I shall take revenge for his deceit."

64. *His nose has lost its power.*

This is said when certain tidings are untrue, when they are imparted wildly and cannot be proven anywhere. For instance, if someone says, "They say ythe Emperor is dead," this is not true. So, one says: *His nose has lost its power*. But if it were true, then one would say: *His nose is certainly powerful!*

65. *Moderation is proper.*

We should not dress in rags, nor should we overdress. In the matter of clothing, we should dress with moderation.

66. *Everyone goes off.*

This is said at harvesttime when everyone goes off to gather the harvest. It can also be said when everyone goes to the fields at the time of tilling.

67. *When I am a coyote, I shall see it!*

This is said when someone claims to have done something. For example, he says: "I went to Castile," or, "I went to Guatemala." Or, he says: "I was mayor." But this is not true, he is just lying. For this reason, they say: *When I am a coyote, I shall see that he went to Castile, or Guatemala, or that at sometime he was mayor!*

68. *Ma Chapultepec ninaalti.*

Iquac mitoa: intla nopan muchioa uey cocoliztli, notech omotlali, anozo itla notequiuh tetolini cenca niqueleuia in ma nipati: in ma iciuhca tzonquiza in notequiuh. Auh intla oquentel nipatic: anozo otzonquiz in notequiuh: niman ic niquittoa. Ma Chapultepec ninaalti.

69. *Aicnopilpan nemitliztli.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aca tlatoani, ipan calaqui aca maceoaltzintli: niman mitoa. Inin tlatoani: amo icnopilpan nemitliztli, quitoznequi: amo icnotlacatl ichan calaquiz, zan no tlatoani in monequi ichan calaquiz. No itechpa mitoa: in aca amo tlamaui-zoani, azo itlatzin maco, azo tlaqualtzintli: zan atle ipan quitta, zan quitelechtoa, azo patiyó in quinequi, azo totolin quinequi: niman ic mitoa. Aicnopilpan nemitliztli.

70. *Telchitl, anozo, atelchitl.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca tictitlani, ayaxcan oticellilique azo itla oquicuzquia: zan atle oquicuito, quioalitiuh: ca tlei in onicucuzquia, anozo cana onmotlauitequito: Ic onmoluia. Atelchitl.

71. *Omotlatziuiiz eoac.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca tictitlani, aca quinoztaz: auh amo quinequi in yaz: auh zatepan uel ticecilitia: auh in mache quinoztaz, azo zan caltenpan in connamiqui, azo ye ocel oalla, ic onilhuilo. Omotlatziuiiz eoac.

72. *Muchi oquiac in nacel.*

Iquac mitoa: in aca itla quiteneoa, mitecpa quicuicuitlacuepa in atztzan quitoa in tlatolli.

68. *Oh, that I may bathe in Chapultepec!*

This is said when I fall ill, when I am stricken by a grave illness, or when I have a burdensome duty to perform, and I long to be well, or for the task to be soon completed. If I am a little better or my work is done, then I say: *Oh, that I might bathe in Chapultepec!*¹³

69. *It is no life among the poor.*

This is said of a king who enters the house of a commoner. They say: *Among the poor is no life for this king.* This means that he should not enter a poor man's house, that it is only proper for him to enter the house of a king.

This is also said of an ungrateful person who is given some object or some food and he thinks little of it, he disdains it. He wants something expensive, or turkey. Hence, they say: *It is no life among the poor.*

70. *So much the better, or, So much the worse.*

This is said when no sooner do we send someone for something than we receive it. Or when someone is supposed to go for something but does not get it, and comes back saying, "What was it I was supposed to get?" Or else, somewhere he stumbles and falls. Hence, they say: *So much the worse.*

71. *Your laziness turned out well.*

This is said when we send someone to call another, but he does not want to go, and a short while later we receive the very person he was to have called, or he meets him just outside the door, or else the person is just coming along. Therefore, he is told: *Your laziness turned out well.*

72. *Everyone of my nits have heard it!*

This is said when one person tells another something and he repeats it many times, he says the same thing over and over again.

¹³ There was a spring in Chapultepec where Motecuzoma bathed, and therefore, it was considered non plus ultra.

73. *Muchin quimomolchioa in tapayaxin nicaci.*

Iquac mitoa: in aca itla tequitilo, in amo oui: cenea couica itta: anozo quicaqui itla tepiton tlatolli, couicamati, ic mote-quipachoa: ic monanquilia. Muchin quimomolchioa, etc.

74. *Nitlatlilpatlaoa.*

Iquac mitoa: in tlein aihqui ticchioa, anozo tiquittoa atoniz-caliliztica ic titlaqualania, ic titlayolilacoo. In tlapallacuiloque intechpa oalquiza: in quenmanian tlatlaooa, in iquac tlatlilania: in quenmanian quitlilpatlaooa.

75. *Iuh quito atecocolpil, aye nel toxaxamacayan.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca itla oquichiuh tlatlaculli: auh ye otlatzacuiltloc, anozo aca canapa oya, ompa omomiquili: ic mitoa: iuh quito atecocolpil, aye nel toxaxamacayan.

76. *Canpaxó'n naoalli.*

Iquac mitoa: intla itla nicnamaca tlazotli, azo macuilpeso ipatiuh muchiuh: auh zan ce peso inic quipatiyotia: anozo itla zan tepiton nictelchiuilia,³ in amo uel itla oncan nicnixnetilia, niquicnopiluia: ic mitoa. Canpaxó'n naoalli.

77. *Ompa ce zotl ommopilo.*

Iquac mitoa: intla aca nictelxpauia itlaton ipampa: auh ye uey, inic nopan quicuepa inic nechoutilia: anoce iquac intla itla otzayan, in iuhqui tilmatti, anozo xicalli, zan tepiton ic otzayan: auh zatepan niqitzomaznequi, occenca ye uey inic oal-tzayani: ic oncan mitoa. Ompa ce zotl onmpilo.

³ Should read: *nictelchiuilia*.

73. *He makes a stew of all the chameleons he catches.*¹⁴

This is said when someone is given a task to do that is not difficult, but he regards it as difficult; or he receives an insignificant order which he considers dangerous and is upset. For this reason one replies: *He makes a stew*, etc.

74. *I make a smudge.*

This is said when we do something in a way that it should not be done, or say something rude and thus spoil or make a botch of something. It derives from the painters.¹⁵ When they are painting, sometimes they do it poorly, sometimes they make a smudge.

75. *So said the little water snail: Truly, the hour for our being crushed is never.*

This is said when someone committed a crime and was punished, or went away somewhere and was killed. For this reason, they say: *So said the little water snail: Truly, the hour for our being crushed is never.*

76. *The sorcerer bit into it.*¹⁶

This is said when I sell something that is expensive, that has a price of 5 pesos, for example, and I charge only 1 peso for it. Or perhaps I put a low price on something small; I do not make anything, I make no profit from it. For this reason, one says: *The sorcerer bit into it.*

77. *He hung himself with a piece of rag.*

This is said when I make an accusation against someone because of some trifling thing and he retaliates with something serious that puts me in difficulties; or when something, such as a cape or a cup is slightly ripped or cracked, and when I want to repair it, it rips or cracks more. Then one says: *He hung himself with a piece of rag.*

¹⁴ The text reads *nicaci*, which would make this read, ...*I catch*, but this does not appear to fit the context.

¹⁵ That is, scribes.

¹⁶ A play on words. *Compaxoa* (compaxoa), means to bite, to eat something, and also to evaluate something.

78. *Canin mach coyonacazco.*

Iquac mitoa: in aca tenaualaoa, tetlacaquitia, in amo cenca quinextia tlatolli: tel achi caquiziti: ic monaquilia in tenaualaoani. Canin mach coyonacazco.

No itechpa mitoa: in aquin quititlani, azo itla quicuiz, anozo tenotzaz, oppa, expa in iluilo, zan nel amo quicaqui: ic ilhuilo. Canin mach coyonacazco.

79. *Ye oyauh in itlatolhoaz.*

Itechpa mitoa: in aca cenca mochicaoa, teteixpauia, in cenca motlatolchicaoa: auh in iquac in auel quichioa inic teteixpauia, in zan iuian mocauhtiuh.

Ioan uel itechpa mitoa: in aca aquen tlatta, moquaquatlaza, in aya tle ipan quitta: auh inic miicpa nonotzalo, ye iuiantzin in mocnomatihu, in maca zan potro, zan iuian ye tlacaciuhtiuh: ic mitoa. Ye oyauh, etc.

80. *Zan ixquich motlacatili.*

Iquac mitoa: intla zan tepiton tiquitoa in amo uey, in iciuhca ontzonquiza: in iquac ontzonquiz, tiquitfoa. Zan ixquich motlacatili.

81. *Aca icuitlaxcoltzin quilatlamachica.*

Itechpa mitoa: in tlachichiuhqui, in iuhqui amantecatli, in uel quieechichioa in itlachioal, in uel quilamachiotia: inic iciuhca quiz, coaloz.

82. *Occepa iuhcan yez, occeppa iuh tlamaniz, in iquin, in canin.*

In tlein mochioya cenca ye uecauh, in ayocmo mochioa: auh occeppa mochioaz, occeppa iuh tlamaniz, in iuh tlamanca ye uecauh: in yehoantin, in axcan nemi, occeppa nemizque, yezque.

78. *Where, perhaps, in a coyote's ear?*

This is said when someone derides and openly criticizes another, but what he says does not reveal much, it discloses very little. Hence, one replies to the derider: *Where, perhaps, in a coyote's ear?*

This is also said about a person who is sent to fetch something or to call someone, and is told a second and a third time but simply does not comprehend. So they say to him: *Where, perhaps, in a coyote's ear?*

79. *His talker has run down.*

This is said about a person who is very forceful when he makes accusations against others and argues with great vehemence, but when he finds he can do nothing to the people he accuses, little by little he quiets down.

This is also said about someone who is overweening, who arrogantly tosses his head up and down, and who has no regard for anything. Thus, he is reprimanded many times over and little by little he becomes subdued. He is exactly like a colt that is gradually tamed. Therefore, they say: *His talker has run down.*

80. *This is all that was born.*

This is said when we say something that is brief, not long and drawn out, and it is quickly concluded. When it is over, we say: *This is all that was born.*

81. *Someone who arranges his intestines artistically.*

This is said of an artisan, such as a feather-artist, who does his work beautifully and designs it well, so that it goes, so that it is sold quickly.

82. *Once again it shall be, once again it shall exist, sometime, somewhere.*

What happened long ago and no longer happens, will happen another time. What existed long ago, will exist again. Those who are living now, will live anew, will exist once more.

83. *Ma amo ixiloyocan taci: ma amo imiyaoayocan taci.*

Inin tlatolli: ontlamantli inic mocaqui: centlamantli qualli, auh centlamantli amo qualli. Auh in iquac qualli: iquac intla aca cenca mauztililoni, motlamachtiani, in muchipa quipia in netlamachtilli in neuiltlonlli: manozo in tlatocayotl in nican tlatiepac: mitoaya. Oacic in imiyaoayocan, in ixiloyocan: cenca mauztililo yecteneoalo: mitoaya ca oimaceoal mochiuh, in aquin iuhqui, in.

83. *You never ripen into an ear of corn, you never sprout corn tassels.*

This proverb is understood in two ways; the first is good, the other is not. It is favorable when someone is illustrious, rich, and possessed of wealth and abundance, or rules a kingdom here on earth. They say: *He has ripened into an ear of corn, he has sprouted corn tassels.* He is esteemed and praised. They said that this kind of person achieved this on his own merits.¹⁷

¹⁷ The text ends abruptly here. The second meaning of the proverb, when applied unfavorably, of course is implicit.

IC OMPOALLI OMOME CAPITULO, ONCAN MITOA: CEQUI
ZANILLI, IN MITOA, ZAZAN TLEINO, INIC MA ZAZANILUIA:
IN IUHQUI MA MONAOALTOTOCA.

1. Zazan tleino, xoxouhqui xicaltzintli, mumuchitl ontemi.
Aca quittaz tozazaniltzin, tla ca nenca iluicatl.
2. Zazan tleino, icuitlaxcol quiuilana, tepetozcatl quitoca.
Aca quittaz tozazaniltzin, tla ca nenca uitzmallotl.
3. Zazan tleino, chalchiuhteponaztli, nacatica cuitlalpitoc.
Aca quittaz tozazaniltzin, tla ca nenca nacochtli.
4. Zazan tleino, quatzocoltzin mictlan ommati. Aca quittaz
tozazaniltzin, tla ca nenca apilolli, ic atlacuioa.
5. Zazan tleino, matlactin tepatlactli quimamamatimani.
Aca quittaz tozazaniltzin, tla ca nenca tozti.
6. Zazan tleino, tliquauhila ommana, iztac tepatlacpan oal-
miqui. Aca quittaz tozazaniltzin, tla ca nenca atemil: tocpac to-
conana, toztipan tiquateca: oncan toconnictia.
7. Zazan tleino, cocozacatzin mocuicuatia. Tla ca nenca
sacapuch.

SOME CONUNDRUMS WHICH THEY TELL AND TRY TO GUESS.

1. What is a little blue-green jar filled with popcorn?
Someone is sure to guess our riddle; it is the sky.
2. What is it that drags its intestines as it ambles along the
foot-hills of the mountain? Someone is sure to guess our riddle;
it is a sewing needle.
3. What is a two-tone drum of jade ringed with flesh?
Someone is sure to guess our riddle; it is an ear-plug.
4. What is a warrior's hair-dress¹ that knows the way to
the region of the dead? Someone is sure to guess our riddle;
it is a jug for drawing water from the well.
5. What are ten thin slabs of stone that one is always haul-
ing around? Someone is sure to guess our riddle; they are
our nails.
6. What is it that is seized in a black forest and dies on
a white stone slab? Someone is sure to guess our riddle; it is
a louse that we take from our head, put on our nail and then
kill.
7. What is a hollow straw that makes songs? It is a sack-
but.²

¹ *Tzotzocolli* is a water jug and also the manner in which distinguished warriors dressed their hair —pulled up on the sides into a topknot and resembling a water jug.

² A horn instrument, forerunner of the slide trombone, Post-Columbian.

8. Zazan tleino, cacatzactli temetztica tlacuiloa. Teccizma-
maque.
9. Zazan tleino, iluicac ommapilotoque. Uitztlī.
10. Zazan tleino, icezocuetzin,¹ moteahatemilia. Tziquaooz-
tli.
11. Zazan tleino, cemañoac topapanocoltitzin. Miyaoatl.
12. Zazan tleino, tetzauilama tlallan tlaquaqua. Tozan.
13. Zazan tleino, teocuitlapoltizquitzin yapalichtica meca-
yotica. Ayeli.
14. Zazan tleino, tezcatzintli acxoyacaletica. Tixtelolo.
15. Zazan tleino, tepetlamimilolli yitic ameia. Toyac.
16. Zazan tleino, tecpatica texoa, cuetlaxtli oncan onoc, na-
catica tzacqui. Tocamac.
17. Zazan tleino, ixnacapapatz, cuexcochcacalach. Tomapil.
18. Zazan tleino, ixnaca quechomiyo. Zan ye no yehoatl in
tomapil.
19. Zazan tleino, ixtexolochtitzin quintopeuhituh. Totlan-
qua.
20. Zazan tleino, zacatzonteilama tequiyaoc moquequetza.
Cuezcomatl.
21. Zazan tleino, tlaltepitzactli, ayoui tequa. Azcatl.

¹ Read: *in centzoncuentzin*.

8. Wath is a little darky who writes with a piece of lead?
A snail.
9. What is it that points its finger at the sky? A magney
thorn.
10. What are 400 furrows in search of lice? A comb.
11. What is it that is bending over us all over the world?
Corn tassles.
12. What is a frightful old lady that gnaws into the earth?
A mole.
13. What is a tiny silver speck tied with a black thread? A
nit.
14. What is a little mirror in the middle of fir trees? Our
eyes.
15. What is a mountainside that has a spring of water
in it? Our nose.
16. What is it that grinds with a stone, strips of leather
are over it, and it is surrounded by flesh? The mouth.
17. What is it that has soft flesh in front and a little clay
bell on the back of its neck? The finger.
18. What is it that has a face of flesh and a neck of bone?
It is the same, the finger.
19. What are they that go pushing along wrinkled faces?
The knees.
20. What is an old woman with straw hair standing before
the door of the house? The granary.³
21. What is long, hard, and red, and bites people without
any trouble? An ant.

³ The granaries had straw roofs. They are still constructed this way all
over Mexico.

22. Zazan tleino, xoncholo, noncholo: yehoatl in olmailt.
23. Zazan tleino, nipa niyauh, nipa xiyauh, ompa toncanamiquizque. Maxtlatl.
24. Zazan tleino, iztac tetzintli, quetzalli commantica. Xonacatl.
25. Zazan tleino, quaitalcomoctzin, quetzalli commantica: zan ye no yehoatl in xonacatl.
26. Zazan tleino, excanpa ticalaqui, zan cecni tiquiza. Ca tocamisá.
27. Zazan tleino, comicuiltataca chiquilichtatzitoc. Omi chicacaztli.
28. Zazan tleino, omicuilpapanpul otlica moquetzticac. Cacaxtli.
29. Zazan tleino, itlacoyoc tenpan ticmacuitiuetzi, tlalli ic ticquappitzoa. Ca yehoatl in yacacuitlatl.
30. Zazan tleino, quauhtla calaqui nenepilotiuh. Tepuztli.
31. Zazan tleino, tetlapantenco moquequetza quateconpol. Ecacaztli.
32. Zazan tleino, huipilitich. Tomatl.
33. Zazan tleino, ye oalquiza xicui moteuh. Cuitlatl.
34. Zazan tleino, cuezali teyacana, cacali'n tetocatiuh. Tlachinolli.

22. What is a "you jump and I will jump?" It is a rubber drumstick.
23. What is a "I go this way, you go that, and over there we shall meet?" A breachcloth.
24. What is a little white stone holding up quetzal feathers? An onion.
25. What is a white-haired pulque jar holding up quetzal feathers? It is the same, an onion.
26. What is that we enter in three places and leave by only one? Our shirt.
27. What is a screeching locust lying down and scratching its ribs? A bone scraper.⁴
28. What is it that has ribs outside and is standing upright on the road? A carrying-frame for loads.⁵
29. What is it that you quickly take from its hole and cast on the ground stiff? It is the mucous from the nose.
30. What is it that goes into a tree and its tongue is hanging out? An ax.
31. What is it that knocks its big head against the edge of the roof? A ladder.
32. What is it that has a shirt stuck to it? The green tomato.⁶
33. What is it that comes out and now you have your stone? Excrement.
34. What is a red cardinal going first and a crow following behind? Something burning.

⁴ The musical instrument.⁵ Portable shelves in a frame.⁶ A variety of tomato that is green when ripe and is encased in a thin yellow outer covering.

35. Zazan tleino, itetecac, tecaltenpan moquequetza. Tla-quetzalli.
36. Zazan tleino, zan cemilhuatl otzti. Malacatl.
37. Zazan tleino, texcaltenpa moquetzaticac pancololli. Chichicuitlapilli.
38. Zazan tleino, chimalli iitic tentica. Ca chilli: auh ye in iachyo chimalli.
39. Zazan tleino, tepetozcatl quitoca momamatlaxcalotlauh. Papalotl.
40. Zazan tleino, tliltic tetl itzonc icac, ontlacactoc micltlan. Ca pinacatl.
41. Zazan tleino, tlatlahuqui tetl cholotlauh. Tecpi.
42. Zazan tleino, teticpac totonon cuicaticac. Nexcomitl.
43. Zazan tleino, otlica tequatica. Ca titotecuinia tetl.
44. Zazan tleino, otlica eoatica paltetzocoton. Chichi icuitl.
45. Zazan tleino, aco cuitlayaoalli, mouiuixoa tzatzi. Aya-cachtli.
46. Zazan tleino, i(n) neitotiayan quitititque, cotztiqne. Ca malacatl.

35. What are up-ended stones standing in the doorway? Columns.
36. What is it that in one day only becomes big with child? A spindle.
37. What is it that is standing by the hearth curving upwards? A dog's tail.
38. What is it that is filled with round shields inside? A chile, as its seeds are in the form of round shields.
39. What is it that goes along the foothills of the mountain patting out tortillas with its hands? A butterfly.
40. What is a black stone standing on its head, cocking its ear toward the region of the dead? The darkling beetle.
41. What is a red stone that goes jumping along? A flea.
42. What is on round stones and is singing? The pot for cooking the corn with the lime.
43. What is on the road biting people? The stone we stumble over.
44. What is a little multi-colored jug sitting in the road? A dog's excrement.
45. What is it that has rounded hips above and when it shakes it cries out? A round rattle.⁷
46. What is in the dancing place getting pot-bellied and kicking its legs? The spindle.⁸

⁷ Shaped like a poppy.

⁸ The distaff was sometimes set in a clay vessel and thus danced around when the thread was being spun.