

A letter to Rain Gods: Drahui (Mixteco), Cociyo (Zapoteco) and Tlaloc (Aztec):

Hi, guys. I writing all three of you because about 500 years ago, before thousands of powerful men with guns, horses and diseases managed conquer you and your believers you three were mighty, indeed. Mixtecs, Zapotecs and Aztecs worshipped you as gods because they believed that they'd die without your help.

Centuries passed and another god took your places. Powerful religious and political people tried to (and mostly succeeded in) erasing you completely. Is that's still bugging you? I got it that you'd be peeved, but just in case you even now have connections in Oaxaca I wanted to drop you this note.

For some reason, you guys left us high and dry for almost four years. I know gods don't have to give us mere mortals explanations, so we don't know why you left our rivers, plants and animals suffering. Could it have been your way to tell us we were abusing our environment? You were right. We were. Well, we are. But then this summer and early fall I thought you had forgiven us. You sent us blessed rain! Rivers rose, plants flourished, animals cavorted. Thank you for that, but maybe you hadn't really forgiven us because you've been sending us too much rain! Maybe drought and excessive rain are just two sides of the coin.

I know what I'm going to write now will make me seem whiny, an ingrate even, but, um, could you lay off a bit now? Please? You see, we had some terrible earthquakes in our state and the ground is unstable. Every day that you send more rain, the harder it is for the people who survived the quakes. They're the most important reason to give it a rest for a while. And, at the risk of sounding petty, even those of us who didn't have to deal with the earthquake are frustrated that our clothes, sheets and towels and papers are damp. Our roads, never in good shape, are even worse. Fungi is growing on walls. Well, you get the picture.

That's it for now, guys. Give us a break, please, and we'll try to be more responsible.

Sheila