

LIVING WITH WATER

Robin Sparkes, May 2026

The ground beneath you may appear fixed, but the most constant quality of existence is change itself. What presents as solid earth are tectonic plates in slow drift, driven by convective force. The same energy that once held Pangea together as a single landmass, fractured it into the continents we inhabit now. The ground moves just as the tides do, shifts with the current, responds to weather and season, only it unfolds across timescales beyond what we can see.

It is bodies of water on our planet that make change visible with our perception of time, currents legible in immediate movement.

Water is the elemental bond of hydrogen and oxygen, a convergence so precise it created the conditions in which life on Earth became possible. Our own bodies are made of water. When we live in close company with external bodies of water, we relate to space differently than we do over solid ground and landlocked horizons. With water, we witness change as it is occurring, see time as it is made visible in the pull of a current, the rise of a tide, the return of rain to the same ground it once left. When we observe water, we reorient the body toward its own molecular biology. To live with water is to hold a different quality of attention, one drawn toward rhythm rather than permanence.



PUNCTUATION MARKS

Theodor Adorno, May 2026

Among the losses that are punctuation's share in the decay of language is the slash mark as used, for instance, to separate lines of a stanza of verse quoted in a piece of prose. Set as a stanza, the lines would rip the fabric of the language apart; printed simply as prose, the effect of verse is ridiculous, because the meter and the rhyme seem like unintended wordplay. The modern dash, however, is too crude to accomplish what it should in such cases. But the capacity to perceive such differences physiognomically is a prerequisite for the proper use of punctuation marks.

The ellipsis, a favorite way of leaving sentences meaningfully open during the period when Impressionism became a commercialized mood, suggests an infinitude of thoughts and associations, something the hack journalist does not have; he must depend on typography to simulate them.

A True Gift Is Never Yours

*Molly Hankins, May 2026*

The moment the gift is expressed, it extends beyond its point of origin — a poem or song becomes someone else's memory, a piece of art becomes someone else's inspiration, a gift of food is ingested and gives sustenance. After a gift leaves its source, it starts weaving connections, creating threads between people linked through its passage. Here, the function of the gift begins to reveal itself — in a system of commodity exchange, all that matters are the materials exchanged. In a gift economy, the gift itself is secondary to the network it creates and the unspoken invitation to keep

giving. Throughout the book, Hyde makes the case for considering the impact on the artist of having to survive in a world of commerce, and the artist's impact on the world.

TETRA on KLEE

"First of all," said Paul Klee when asked what was most important for a good life, "the art of living; then as my ideal profession, poetry and philosophy, and as my real profession, plastic arts; in the last resort, for lack of income, illustrations." Of course, illustrations were more than mere income for Klee, they instead became some of the most important works of the 20th Century, but his tongue-in-cheek response has more truth than he lets on. Klee was a wildly individual artist, refusing the modes of the day and merging influence into a unique style. A soldier, a thinker, a writer, and a teacher at the Bauhaus School alongside his closest friend Wassily Kandinsky—Klee's genius moved across mediums.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AUDIENCE MEMBER

Derek Simpson, May 2026

As an audience member receiving an art experience, the first feeling we get is an instinctive hit. Within a fraction of a second after the lights dim and the curtain opens, old bonds break and new ones form. Our earliest memories, the food we ate for breakfast this morning, and all other input we've received throughout our lives serve as the countless data points that connect us to the artwork in front of us. It's a *reaction* happening at a cellular level, faster than we can consciously perceive, and it is our task as an audience member to notice each reaction as it takes place.

While noticing, we may recognize that a reaction tends to pull on our attention. This pull can severely undermine our relationship with the artwork. We choose not to finish a book based on the headline of a negative review, we cast aside a series in protest of an unsavory cast member, we voice a slight judgement about a song that a colleague put on at work. If a reaction makes itself present in the form of an opinion, it is within our best interest to note it and continue on. A reaction is a gift of nature, but it is not a final judgement of the artwork, just a signal revealing to us our biases and prejudices. As we come into this awareness, we gradually eliminate the possibility of our reaction becoming a detriment to our art experience. In time, it may no longer impair our ability to receive the artwork's many exquisite subtleties but keeping the relationship honest is up to us.

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