

## Warm nights in Oaxaca

Jaime, my friend, you should have come  
and seen the veil of vapor blown in  
by the midnight heat around Ponce.  
Perhaps right now you feel a bit  
forlorn, but your generous swift smile  
will break and lighten the surrounding darkness.  
I wish we could sit together  
and eat hot chiles at midnight again,  
and drink Black Label shots,  
while discussing the glomerulus.  
We'll miss your clean line elegance  
in a world that can no longer spell the word.  
Strength is required to recollect  
the memory of time dispersed,  
once shared in song and laughter.  
Remember how we sang till dawn?  
Stars were dimmed and, in their throes,  
volcanoes watched, topped with distant  
snow.  
Jaime, why can't we go back to Oaxaca  
and that square that opened itself to  
feast  
and joy while fireworks lit up  
the church's squat steeple and hoarse bell?  
Hot and humid nights, like here in Ponce—  
but we were able to perceive  
the beauty of it all replayed  
the following evening and the next.  
Soon we'll sit in the penumbra of another bar or square,  
and eat hot chiles and drink Scotch, my friend.

*Manuel Martínez-Maldonado, MD*

In memoriam, Jaime Herrera-Acosta, MD, 1938–2005.  
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