

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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