

JOSHUA EDWARDS

from *Oaxaca Notebook*

From this height, everything seems impossible:
the unbuilt green finding a way,
human history without any details,
one edifice after another, street and
path, all plans competing but together,
ferns and spruce around me.
When I was young, I thought
prior civilizations must have been
different. But really it was not so long
ago. Because they were, weren't they?
How did we come to respond against nature
certain ways and for it in others? I listen
when there is no light left, and I think
of Kenneth Patchen, his back terrible
with pain, saying, "This is my life, Caesar.
I think it is good to live."

We traveled in the winter.
The entire time we felt
surrounded by mystery,
as if part of one, a movie
or book from the late sixties.
But afterward the whole
thing seemed clear: it was
love and love is even more
complicated. We found
bodies and then they were
gone, watching one another
with suspicion and longing.
Even when apart the other
seemed to be lurking near,
as we longed for ourselves.
It was our country, but not
the one we knew. Sprinklers
came on and covered
the capitol lawn in frost.
One of us had to be guilty.