

Jim Dicus
Oaxaca

Oaxaca was a wonderful escape from the ordinary which really allowed me to think about my writing and my process. What I concluded resembled a Wordsworth approach to my problem with writing poetry and overcoming writer's block. Oaxaca led me to discover (or more accurately to accept) that much of my work is reflective, and the experiences that lead to my inspiration are incredibly important. Within my body of work is an attraction to that which is strange or distant, and Mexico reveals its importance both to me and my body of work. This trip to Oaxaca gave me a new connection to the environment of my inspiration as I not only visited important archeological sites, but discovered new cultural phenomenons that I was previously unaware.

While in this amazing city, I spent much time exploring and renewing a sense of peace within. Although I remained in the house for extended periods, there was a certain tranquility about the house at 211 Quintana Roo that gave me peace of mind. It was an amazing house with a beautiful courtyard full of colorful and inspirational flowers. I also greatly enjoyed being with friends and making new ones within the MFA program as we spent time talking, or playing cards, or even exploring the city. One day Wind and I hiked to a hill overlooking the city just to do it. Another Fernando, Aaron, and I hired a taxi driver to take us sightseeing across the state. I can now understand what my wife was talking about when she tells me the story of her father falling off the pyramid at Monte Alban because I had the opportunity to climb it. It was an amazing experience both seeing new things, and meeting and talking to new people. The memories and pictures I have will influence me for a long time.

Since both my reading and writing are important to me, I was able to spend time working on both while in Oaxaca that I'd previously been neglecting. In addition to the time I spent with my personal studies, I became involved again with the Spanish language in a way that I haven't been in some time. Being in Oaxaca allowed me to use my language skills, but it also afforded me the time necessary to read Crónica de una muerte anunciada, by García Márquez which I'd been putting off. This is important to my work again because of the connection to Mexico and the influence it holds over me. This holds true in the current long poem that I'm working on which I started in Oaxaca. Those who've already read the rough versions of it tell me that there is an underlying influence which I believe is a direct result of the influence of my experiences abroad.