

## Addendum 1

## WHEN WRITER WAS REBORN

*At year's end of what one of my two 'little jc's' called "The Big D" (divorce), The I took three weeks without pay from its' government job and headed for a little fishing village at Mexico's southern coast....*

***Dec. 19, 1978***

Arrived in Mex City in the early afternoon and found the El Salvador Hotel unchanged.

***Dec. 20, 1978***

Toured the pyramids outside of Mex City — climbed that of the sun, but found the locale uninspiring — a combination of the crowd and the arid terrain, so different from the lush surroundings in the Yucatan; also toured the Basilica and the new shrine. Dinner at Esla's, where I made acquaintance w/ Alexandro and Emilia. Had a beer before retiring; back at the El Salvador restaurant, with Helen Lowe from NY.

***Dec. 21 (Thurs.)***

Prune yogurt and sweet rolls downtown after a good long sleep. Soup, salad, and coffee at the Super Leche — dinner at the hotel after an unsuccessful attempt at the Basilica to find the padre I met at Monte Alban in '73 — but an interesting shared taxi ride with young Alexandro and Rafael as they delivered Christmas gifts.

Alexandro Dozal called me at the hotel later. I joined him and Emelia for coffee at Esla's for more Spanish lessons and cross word puzzling. (They have provided my greatest encouragement thus far.)

***Dec. 22 (Fri.)***

7:15 AM flight from Mexico City to Oaxaca and the circle rainbow below in the clouds (another Child's Book of Light observation!). Oaxaca was crowded — fortune smiled again with a room at the Plaza for the night, with a bus ticket for Salina Cruz next evening. Met Sherrie Hawley; visited Santo Domingo and had long chat with a Canadian history student at the Zocalo's El Jardin. Dinner at El Tule. Shirtsleeve air and Christmas lights in the park— vendors around the Zocalo scarce; saw Pedro (from whom I'd bought the large bark painting in '73, which ultimately I gave to La Luz Hispanic Center in Sonoma; but Pedro seemed subdued. Heard later the government is “organizing” the area to cater to “tourista” tastes.

***Dec. 23 (Saturday)***

Sherrie & I did the Rufino Tamayo collection after French toast and omelet at El Portal; packed and arrived at bus depot early; boarded at 7 PM after writing letters; smooth bus trip to Salina Cruz (slept most of the way); coffee at a mountain rest stop with Salvatorre, Santiago & Cristobal; candlelit procession on the road — it is almost Christmas Eve!

***Dec. 24 (Sunday)***

Gave up on bus, taking taxi around 7 AM for La Ventosa after two hours' sleep outdoors on top of a fry truck in Salina Cruz — glad to leave! Fond memories, tho' of Matilde and Maria....

La Ventosa and El Paraiso the same; met (“Maestro”) Jerry Morris and Robin at the Castillejo's beach front open-air restaurant. Robin and I had long walk up beach and some of the groceries I bought before leaving Oaxaca (tuna & dates)

provided ample supper. The leftover nuts I gave to Robin on this Christmas Eve — (her stocking stuffers!).

***Dec. 25 (Monday)***

A most unusual Christmas Day--breakfast after a marvelous walk down the beach at sunrise--a red ball rising o'er the Pacific--and a visit to the church with Señora Castillejo and Robin. Then with Jerry & Robin along the new road towards Pachiten; visits to San Diego d'Astata and Huamelula, where their Spanish cathedrals, bells, and crucifixes--especially the black one at Huamelula—were well worth the jostlings over rocky roads, along with the ride--Jerry's gift--to the Mexican woman going to "Santa Cruz de la [?] Barre?" and gentle declination of invitation to join their festival. (We were almost to Puerto Angel

Back with voracious appetite to Salina Cruz, with recollections of pastel ocean vistas and the wrecked freighter at Conception ('point?'); dinner at the Hotel (Candileg?)--Glenn Miller and Christmas music on the organ by the big smiling black. Jerry called his Dad in New York; I was tempted to call home but didn't....

Home late--Merry Christmas! And thank you: a perfect day before a good night's sleep before the rooster's crow.

***Dec. 26 (Tuesday)***

Settled my room, and arranged meals at the Castillejo's for the coming three weeks; goodbye to Jerry and Robin for now; sun and the beach--as alone as possible but for Agosto (he deserved the 'slepo') and Clemente, Victor and Fidal -- I think they understand; perhaps the picture will keep.

Some writing, finally!--the beginning! My room is swept & the sheets are clean.

Now, God willing, I shall have only my notes to worry about.

Eggs for breakfast and dinner; but tomorrow, fish and probably an orange. But I did have two pieces of that luscious cornbread on the beach; long chat with the visiting German-Canadian before retiring--another beautiful day.

### ***Dec. 27 (Wednesday)***

Despite the rooster's crow didn't make it out to the beach 'til about 8. Saw Oscar first and met his new wife, then I returned for breakfast about 10. Worked until I got stymied ("*Lord, will I be able to really do it?*"); then, after coffee at the southernmost beach restaurant, headed over the rocks and up the hill at the point--a marvelous hike that took me to a stone structure visible from the beach, reportedly built by Cortez as a lighthouse. However, George--a former La Ventosan, now a Chicapoan with friend Mary Moroney who came to me later to invite me for a beer--claimed it was a lookout and that the lighthouse itself was at Salina Cruz.

Coming back I stopped for an ocean bath at the rocky beach below the hill. Glorious water running over the rocks and me soothed my mind--and heart. Fish for dinner--after two days of eggs I look forward heartily to it; but first a shower to wash off the sand. Later I will come back to this room I can so easily call home and perhaps I can capture the answer to today's puzzle; "God's" grace seems endless.

### ***Dec.28 (Thursday)***

Awakened a bit depressed; wanted to go out to the sunrise but something held me back. Did get up after much rooster crowing only to find it still black; but I saw the Big Dipper and North Star, which latter of course is much lower on the horizon

here. Felt good to get my true bearings again. (And have corrected my journal accordingly!)

After breakfast headed straight to my rocky beach with Mr. Betteridge of “The Moonstone;” read and watched the fishermen, and then bathed away my woes. A small dam broke for me and I spent the longest time yet on my notes (at least four hours) and although I am loath to say it for fear of breaking the spell, I feel that I have made some tangible progress!

Walked out to the popular beach at about 4:30 looking for the cornbread lady but had to settle for Marias and an orange, which I am saving for tomorrow. Really treated myself, having coffee and an apple (my first since leaving home) at my “afternoon” restaurant at the south end of the beach leading to the hill. Fish again for supper (I feel really stuffed tonight!--saw Oscar several times working very hard around his parents’ place and his new home. He seems somehow different; but five years have seen a change in us all, and perhaps his new married state has something to do with it.

Tomorrow morning the German and I are going up to the hill--this time I’ll bring a camera. For now, I am weary and shall go to bed (8:30!), with thanks to God for today’s progress--may it continue.

### ***Dec. 29 (Friday)***

Early in the morning the German and I climbed the hills at the point, this time taking a different route which brought us to an outcrop of rocks which on the north side drop straight down to the sea. Northward we could see the ships of Salina Cruz, rock cliffs and blue, blue water. Regardless of the intensity of a desire to return to the scene in memory in all its vividness, I know I will carry only the sense

of its infinite beauty and other small recollections: the sun hard against the stone edifice on the forward hill; a grey ship on the horizon; pelicans winging across the sky. We walked back along the rocky beach bathing our pebble-bruised feet; I left him at the Castillejo's where I had my usual breakfast of two eggs and strong black coffee.

I worked 'til mid afternoon--on problems around which it seems my mind will never rest--and then in hopes of inspiration took the Betteridge for some afternoon sun at my favorite place on the south side of the beach. Then I was accosted by another young Mexican man! I'm beginning to feel aggravated at the constant intrusions and wish I could render myself invisible. On the way back I treated myself to a shrimp cocktail at Mendoza's which, along with some crackers and an orange, would be my supper for the day.

I was a bit desolate 'round my room that evening. The German and his family have gone and I appear to be the only regular "guest" at the moment. I have several new insect bites. And all in all, today was not the best of days, but I would mind none of it if the dam in my mind would break.

### ***Dec. 30 (Saturday)***

Almost dinnertime--I wonder what Signora Castillejo will have tonight? (Poor joke, that!) I have a headache but it was a marvelous day for me insofar as my work goes--not exactly a dam breaking, but a steady trickle which will send me to bed thankful. Why is it so difficult in times of woe to remember these good days that do repeat themselves? *Thank you, Lord!*

There was no walk up the hill today; to the popular beach instead just after sunrise, but clouds low along the horizon hid our flaming ball; only small glowing bits

pierced through. Mosquitoes drove me in sooner than I'd expected, but I should thank them, too, I think, for sending me to my day's (rather morning's) work--worked 'til about 1:30 or 2. Mr. Betteridge and I found our favorite rocks occupied by others, so we trekked up in front of the Castillejo's and I had my first real swim. Was accosted *again*, earlier, while sunning on the stone staircase (which at the time was being met at its foot by the in-coming tide), by another very young boy. *This* time I was "almost" nasty: "*Dejime tranquila, por favor!*" I said, with unrestrainable anger audible, I think, in my voice. (I'm unaccustomed to being unfriendly, as you know! But one must learn self-preservation, I guess...).

Oh! I have a ride to Salina Cruz come Tuesday and will be spared the stares, etc. on the bus--another thing I am grateful for.

I was going to close this entry before going to supper (eggs, again? But I don't care!). I felt the day was almost ended; but fate saw me wrong, again, in that I met a young man named Jesús, with whom I was able to carry on much conversation despite my poor Spanish. And whether it is his name or his demeanor, or a combination of both, I feel I can trust him as a friend. We are going out fishing in the morning--for oysters, or shrimp, or turtles (!)--whatever he can find! He promised (*wait! The lights--all of them!--have gone out...there, my candle is lit; but why did I bring only one?*) I'll return to work afterwards, I promise. Perhaps I will have the answer, then, to the question today's earlier work led me to (if it please "God").....

### ***Dec. 31 (Sunday)***

Today has been distinctly unusual given the pattern I have been following thus far and I am at a loss to explain it, unless it is all due to this morning's adventure.

I was at the beach at eight and, after drawing pictures in the sand for an hour or so, decided that Jesús was not coming. Perhaps I had misunderstood. So I took myself to the Castillejo's for breakfast. (The eggs were tastier than ever for some reason.)

Just as I finished, Jesús appeared from below and off I went, not without some trepidation. We hiked about a mile, over rocks small and large (some the size of monoliths), around the southern point where the cliffs drop off to the sea. He was very thoughtful and kept admonishing me to go slowly; even so, the path being part of his everyday life and thus knowing it well, it took some concentration on my part to stay abreast, especially since my bare feet are far less hardened than his!

We came finally to the place where he dives for oysters: a large outcropping of stone dashed by waves where the sea meets the ocean. At the back low rocks formed a natural "bathtub" filled with clear seawater where he invited me to bathe if so inclined, while he went off on his search. (His equipment: one rubber tube, face mask, flippers and net bag, which he patiently lashed to the inner portion of the tube to receive his catch.)

I enjoyed the sun and water for a short while, occasionally waving to him until he surfaced with 31 large oysters, several of which he opened, encouraging me to eat. I had three (he said he expected me to have at least a dozen and wished we had lime to go with them). They were not delicious (I have never exactly loved oysters!)--very salty but I confess I felt like a true child of nature. I then left him, with a promise to meet this evening for more conversation, and began my hike back alone. (One toenail almost gone and another on its way.) It was hot, and the ocean in front of the Castillejo's both a welcome sight and a refreshing swim.

It was noon by the time I got back to my room, and a shower and a nap were all I could muster after washing out my shorts and shirt--the shirt I had used to carry

back Jesús' gift of another ten oysters which I left with Signora Castillejo to cook for my dinner.

Since arising again at 2 I have done some reading; gone to Mendoza's for coffee and an apple; visited the church in hopes of restoring my inspiration to write, but all in aimless fashion. And so, at 5, I find myself again at a standstill in that regard but not without hope and eternally grateful for the beauties of the day--the last in a year fraught with difficult changes, yet ending exactly as I had imagined it might...

But there is another nagging tug within me, and I know it is because I am aware that this friendship with Jesús threatens to distract me further in the days to come and I cannot permit that to happen. I have purposely placed myself in a situation totally divested of any loved ones, and I must be wary of finding substitutes. He wants me to go fishing with him again, tomorrow...

### ***7:30 PM***

Whether it was this morning's overexertion or today's food (or the worm in the last oyster this morning!) I do not feel so well as I am accustomed; decided to skip dinner but did go to keep my appointment with Jesús, first preparing a note in Spanish for him--a poor expression of what I fully would say could either I express myself succinctly in Spanish or he understood English. But I think the note, together with haltingly exchanges of words, have conveyed my dearest desire that we be friends but my firm conviction that in order to do what I have come to finish I cannot be open to appointments or obligations of any kind. Bless him; I know he understood; and I feel much better now than two hours ago--completely free again.

### ***January 1, 1979 (Monday)***

Towards morning I thought today not to be a very auspicious way to begin the new

year--the vacationing Mexicans had been partying all night *loudly*. Things finally quieted down around 4 AM and by the time I arose around seven I was beginning to feel a bit more charitable again. Swept my room and made my bed; had an early breakfast (the same); returned and, after doing a bit of laundry, read and wrote 'til noon or so, followed by a lovely sojourn at the rocky beach (sans book, this time) thinking profitable thoughts.

Feet still restless after getting back (and knowing I had already worked myself out for the day), took a shower, read for a while & then wandered down to the popular beach. Pete's (a Louisianan I met earlier) daughter Laura hailed me to their cabaña and I spent two fine hours with them and their new friend Ken from Mendocino, drinking tequila (I mean Mescal) and talking. Tomorrow we are all going into Salina Cruz for various purposes.

Much relaxed by both the Mescal and conversation, walked back to the Castillejo's where a crowd from Salina Cruz who had been down for the day were readying to depart. Bounced a baby, talked with a number of the young people and swung in a hammock 'til dinner showed up about 8. (Don't ask.) (Whatever happened to my oysters, I wonder?) The last hour or so I spent talking with Adon, a high school teacher from Vera Cruz.

It was all go--*en fin*, a superior beginning for a new year. And now, I think, bed!!

### ***Jan. 2 1979 (Tuesday)***

3 p.m.--Just arrived back at my room after our trip into Salina Cruz and Tehuantepec (with Pete et al.). During the night the wind came up, and it has been blowing violently all day, finally [demonstrating] the name, La Ventosa. (*Wonder how long it will last?*)

The place is deserted; it appears all have holed up for the duration. Despite the closed planked door and window, dust and sand from upper ceiling vents cover everything; found my notes scattered. Portions of the thatched overlay outside are gone. It's certain we shall be without electricity tonight. I sit here dubiously eyeing my four-inch candle, considering going to the small tienda down the road where I have learned candles are sold; but there is no walking against this wind. It's stronger by far here than it was in the town, but even there we had some problem maneuvering. Nonetheless, I have some tuna, a banana, and peanuts, so I certainly shouldn't starve; called home and found all to be well, and have my bus ticket for the return trip. All in all it was a fun trip; the children were enjoyable and distracting; and despite their constant chatter (a result, I think, of being able with me to speak English and of things familiar). Pete, Ken and I managed some interesting conversation of our own.

There is no point in trying to get cleaned up; we are at the mercy of the "elements" for the time being, and now I understand why there are iron slide bolts on the shutters and doors! Still, I shall try to work, and hope that soon my treasured tranquility returns.

Wind still tearing, and it's night, but I still have electricity—unexplainably--but how glad I am! Have worked steadily 'til now, stopping only for supper of raw fresh pears, peanuts and a banana. (Don't think I'm complaining; they are favorites of mine)....

I am going to prepare my room and myself for returning, especially as the lights do flicker now and then and it's best I be prepared--a very standard motto with me these past weeks. The doors blow so hard against the latch at times it seems certain they will come in altogether, but the window shutters over the bed seem more

secure. I shall “batten down the hatches” and sleep in my clothes (the wind has turned things a bit chilly), and read (with the light on for company as long as it lasts). I should eventually fall asleep?).

Things must be much worse for Pete & his family, down at the beach cabaña; God, I wonder how they are faring? Would like to dwell on the thought that all will be fine again on the morrow; but the boy who lives here (the only soul I’ve seen since this started and Pete and company departed) tells me these blows last one to two days. I mustn’t use up all my self-consolation yet; but, *oh, I do hope!!!* Yes, despite it all, my enforced imprisonment in turn forced (proper word, that!) my attention to two problems I have been wrestling with for some time. Mild weather might — probably would! — have been such an easy escape, again; and, regardless of how others might value the results, I think I made great progress.

***Jan. 3, 1979 (Wednesday) 1:45 PM***

Am beginning to gain a little more appreciation of what it must be like to be in a jail, but things are still all right (I didn’t say ‘fine’). My “cell” is covered with dust and sand--the bed, table, my clothing--everything, as the wind continues to howl. A good deal of the debris comes in under the door and through the slits in it and the shutters; but most of it comes through the two openings at the ceiling on the north and south walls.

Saw (the dueña) Josefina earlier surveying the yard. We are in the midst of a “norte,” she told me; and I was reminded, then, of having read a brief passage about them in one of the books at home. According to Josefina, by tomorrow it will be gone. If not, I should be more than halfway through my work with another day like today, for that is all I have to do. Finished the “Moonstone” last night, and much as I shall miss the company of Mr. Betteridge, Ezra Jennings and the others,

gave the book to Ken. He, Pete and the children were by about nine; and, as I suspected during the night that they might, had decided to move on. Sandy and weary of eye, they were okay but Laura was very pale, had cried during the night, and I know was very glad to be leaving. Daniel was quiet but still his indomitable little self--what a darling boy! They loaded up the car with their equipment and themselves and after last waves and calls of "good luck" I closed the iron gate after them.

Breakfasted on raw peas and tuna (the other half saved for supper) and lunched on peanuts, and in between I write, and wait for the morrow.

### ***8 PM***

I couldn't stand the confinement one moment longer so braved my way down to Mendoza's, deserted except for a few relatives of his down from Yucatan. He fixed me scrambled eggs and coffee and I sat for a long while watching the heavy, unceasing waves roll past. It was grand getting out and I won't hesitate so long before doing it tomorrow if this thing is still with us and, a from the sound of it, I think it shall be. I worked almost 12 straight hours today and am weary of it for the moment; so I'm going to try bed, instead, for a while.

### ***January 4, 1979 (Thursday)***

Just returned from breakfast--Juanita and I ate together inside their storeroom. She tells me this "norte" could last five days! I must be getting better accustomed to it as I passed the night rather well except for one gigantic thrust that I really thought would bring the door in. There are very few people about; it's almost impossible to keep one's eyes open against the hurling sand. I have been in the same clothes since Tuesday; but there is absolutely no point in trying to clean up and change, as

Juanita Castillejo's pointed out. Josefina seems to have taken to bed for the duration. Nothing for it but to work!

### ***5 PM***

Worked until 3:30, lunching on what was left of the tuna and some more raw peas, and then took my afternoon break to Mendoza's. I won't go out to supper this evening, either, having brought back two apples and some cookies which will more than keep me 'til morning.

Even tho' the wind's still with us decided to sweep some of the debris from the room when I got back from Mendoza's (no one else was there; I spent a long while watching the surging seascape again, I also have been given some clean sheets (!) and now that things are set somewhat aright feel somewhat more human — but I do desperately want a bath & shampoo. Thus far, of the few useful things I might have brought but didn't, the only one I miss is another novel....

### ***January 5, Friday, 10:30 AM***

During the night the worst of the "norte" passed over; this morning we are almost back to normal with only intermittent stiff breezes to remind us of the past few days. I have just finished breakfast and at the moment am swinging gently in a hammock at the Castillejo's overlooking the sea, silver where the sun is striking and extending from there into infinity, varying shades of turquoise blues and greens. Though the sand still occasionally bites the face, it feels so good to be "out"!--I am reluctant yet to return to my room and work. The sun is beautifully warm; a fishing boat is working its way slowly back and fro beyond the southern point, and a gathering of albatross is circling slowly over the hill.

Señora (managed to use the sp. spelling that time!) Castillejo is beginning to sweep

out from under — but it appears the large drift of sand in the restaurant’s open area under the thatched roof will want shoveling. (No sooner did I write the sentence than out comes a helper with a wheelbarrow of sand, taking it out to where the hill of sand in front slopes off to the beach--a steep slope it was before, now steeper still, due to the effects of the “norte.” Later, if I can, I’ll walk the beach to see what other effects it has had, but now it’s time to go to work.

Before breakfast I swept, shook out and cleaned my possessions and room; and it will be somewhat of a pleasure to return to it again. I found a strange little creature in the corner, scorpion-like with a curled tail, that looked like it belonged in the sea (and probably did). Yesterday on the way back from Juanita’s I saw another “displaced” creature, wearing a conch-like shell and struggling through the wind back towards the sea.

Although I had definitely decided not to spend long hours (which I can’t afford) studying Spanish, I am often wishful that I understood it well. Yesterday Juanita told me a very long story about an experience of hers, which it would have been interesting to totally comprehend: about a pilgrimage, by foot!--so far as I could capture, to Guatemala when she was 30, and the various hardships endured. All this being vis-à-vis the norte we were enduring. She went on to say (more or less), “We humans are never content: when it is warm we say ‘Oh, it’s too hot’; when the wind blows we say ‘Oh, it’s too cold’; when it rains we say ‘Oh, this rain is so discomforting’--someday the good lord will put us in our grave and say: There! Now you will neither be too hot, nor too cold, nor in any way discomforted!”

Her thick grey hair plaited with strips of fabric; her long skirts, and colored overblouses; her bare feet--dipping tortillas in hot coffee, and rolling one piece with her fingers around some beans and thrusting it at me--“Would you like

some?;" her quick chatter and ever, ever-ready smile and laugh; the funny "hand language" she uses (with me, because of my ignorance; with her friends, to emphasize her stories)--a total person, of her own time and history. How I would love to hear (and understand!) every story she could tell.

#### ***4:10 PM***

Am having a hard time getting back to my writing although I have done some connected readings and a good deal of mental work, most of it down at my "afternoon" beach where I finally went about one o'clock, when it was obvious staying in my room was to no avail. The wind was still blowing but I spent a very pleasant two hours or so except for another unwanted interruption (this one offered me dope and a walk). I was further annoyed to find him sitting outside the hotel when I got back; hopefully he was waiting for the bus and is long gone.

Washed my hair and took a shower in the sun-warmed water from the rooftop collector and am feeling really fine except for the lack of progress on my writing. One or two good hard days and I could lay the "technical" paper aside and turn to more amusing things; but it is my prime purpose here and I have promised myself not to do anything else until I am done with it, once and for all.

#### ***7:15 PM***

Juanita fixed sauteed oysters for dinner,,,scrumptious!!

It's so tranquil tonight. Would have loved walking the beach but I just don't feel safely comfortable enough to do it. Rats. I do want a good look at the stars here again; perhaps I'll stay at the Castillejo's a night or two before I leave--full moon on the way!

Juanita tells me Jesús is married--*hrmpphh*, as the Col. would say; and I worried about “hurting his feelings!” It will be another century before the “machoness” works its way out of Mexico I guess. Anyhow look where *we* are. I do know why women like co-employee like one Marsha react the way they do; pitifully few men who can be a real friend to a woman. *May they all have daughters and develop consciences one day*, is all I can wish. Anyway, Juanita tells me it’s safe enough around here so I will continue to ply my usual routine and reflect her advice, to stay away from the “rio” area way out the northern point. Too bad--I’m sure there are beautiful sights to see there, also; but seems some travelers have met up with really low types in that area. At this point wish I were six feet tall and looked like a gorilla.

***Saturday, January 6, 3 PM***

Just returned from a wonderful swim down in front of the Castillejo’s, the waves gentle and the water clear. Had been out since noon, first at the northern side where I did some final thinking on today’s problem; and feeling so good at the results I hiked all the way round, up the popular beach to where Pete and family had stayed. Had a beer and then hiked back as far as the Castillejo’s, where I swam.

This time it was Hermano and Morro, two more Mexico City students, who insisted on being my company. (I told them I was here with my husband and that we were leaving in the morning. If nothing else, this trip is teaching me how to fib with ease!)

Everyone else in the world seems to be seeking someone to fill their void; how can I explain adequately to anyone that I have crossed over to that point where the void is filled from within (or not at all?).

At any rate, they (and an engineer from Vera Cruz I met while having the beer) have reminded me it is the weekend so we shall have our share of “visitors” tomorrow, also, in which case I shall plan my day accordingly.

No one could do justice to a description of the beauty of the bay today. I wonder if this, my final week, will be blessed with good weather throughout? (It seems too much to ask.)

### ***6:30 PM***

One more week! Then, Oaxaca and then, home... My mind refuses to dwell on the days that will follow, not on seeing those I love but on returning to my “civilized” schedules (*hrmpph* to that, too).

Dear journal, you are undoubtedly weary of hearing about the beauty of the bay, but tonight it is truly extraordinary. There is only the softest of breezes and away from the gentle ripples near the shore the water looks like delicately silver-blue-tinted opaque glass. The sky from the horizon to about 20 degrees above it is a lighter shade of the same soft pastel tinged with just a reminder of pink. The sun going down behind “Cortez’s” hill is throwing some colorless brightness above them, and I am envious of the three gentlemen out in their little yellow rowboat. I shouldn’t omit the crowning charm--overhead, a crisply clear half-moon (which as we know, is in reality one-quarter)....

Señora Castillejo, after spending a short while chatting with me, is preparing fish for my dinner. A day or two after my arrival, I gave her 1,000 pesos (at the time of writing equivalent roughly to \$50). In that way, I can come for meals when I am inclined without worrying about carrying money. It has proven to be very convenient though I had some doubt at the outset; probably because I wasn’t

certain my stay would be as I'd planned but fortunately it has.

**7:45 PM**

As luck would have it, and let it teach me a lesson: my newfound skill of fibbing has already caught up with me. Remember the engineer from earlier today? Not sure but I think I told him I was here with my husband who was at the hotel. Well lo and behold, when I return from dinner, there he sits outside my door passing pleasant conversation with the owner; and the owner then invites me to join them "a platecar" (to converse). So I tender my apologies to the engineer with proper explanation for my behavior, and he understands. Actually, he is a very pleasant gentleman; the owner, however, is rapidly becoming drunk and you, dear journal, know how far my tolerance goes in that direction.

It is not 9 p.m. and I have tendered my thanks and "retired;" hopefully I can get my mind back on the track. Regardless of his constant avowals of respect, the owner is still too familiar with me for my liking and having them outside my own door, discussing me in my absence, curls my naturally straight hair!

***Sunday, Jan. 7 — 11:30 AM***

The engineer is leaving, finally, after spending two solid hours in conversation with me. Very kind, very complimenting; wanted me to go to breakfast; wanted me to go swimming; wanted me to go to dinner. *Ay yi yi*...I had awakened feeling marvelous and ready to work, but it will take me a while to get back into it.

**6:30 PM**

It "took" until 4 p.m. but now I feel it all must have been necessary--the interruptions, the frustrations, the many beginnings and crumpled pieces of paper;

because it really was not ready, the “pictures” just not there until finally at four I began and continued ’til almost six fifteen. And finally, I have laid most of it to rest for better or for worse, right or wrong; a few more drawings and then maybe for the first time in over five years I will be able to look at the world without the intervening puzzles leading to “A Child’s Book of Light.”

After taking a shower and packing up only my most valued items I am back in my hammock at the Castillejo’s where I have been invited to stay the night. Good to get away from the room, good to get away from the little table and portable typewriter!

I tried once when things were at their most exasperating about 2 p.m. to go to the beach; but seeing some approaching young men who looked too much like Hernando and Morro, I fled back to my room. But I did meet Oscar on the way, and upon my request if he had an English book to lend me, he produced *Steppenwolf!* So even my aborted swim served a useful purpose.

For now I am going to put all other thoughts to rest other than dinner, reading, and swinging in a hammock, falling asleep under different stars.

### ***Monday, January 8***

My first night’s sleep in a hammock passed very well--watched the stars for a long while. One especially in the south caught our attention blinking now blue, then reddish, then yellow--a UFO we wondered? But it remained in its place with the others, while we on Earth rolled gently ’round beneath to meet the sun again.

The sunrise was far more than worth the slight discomfort of the deep night hours when the breezes turned quite cool. (I did not have proper covering until the Señora brought me a heavier blanket toward morning). Actually, saw dark spots on

the sun just after its rays turned from red to blazing yellow as the mist on the horizon dipped beneath it.

There is an Israeli staying at the Castillejo's, a young traveler named Aaron who's been on the road seven months and has hopes of continuing through South America. We talked 'til bedtime and again upon awakening, I from hammock and he from a cot, touching on many subjects. I especially enjoyed the encounter and his resolute cheerfulness despite the rigors of his journey so far. Covered with insect bites, a bad cold from traveling down the mountains from San Cristobal in the open back of a truck, and having just spent four nights in a shack where mice ran across him--all begins my speculation again as to what drives us, and why.

The wind is "up"; another norte on the way, and so soon! Back to my work for now; but if this one lasts as long as the first, you shall see a great deal more of me in the next three days.

### ***8:45 PM***

Spent another hour and more at the Castillejo's after supper, studying Spanish with Aaron and Oscar, who has consented to be Aaron's teacher for the duration.

Conjugation of the verb "to be" was quite enough for one evening! J3sus was lurking about when I left to come back to my room; he wanted to accompany me inside but I declined. He seemed surprised, but I didn't bother to explain.

Spent the greatest portion of the day finishing my "ms" and have laid it to rest for the time being, albeit with a few loopholes and after-doubts on my part; but all in all I feel very content with its temporary demise and plan to do some lighter writing for my last few days here.

The wind is angry and distracting but the lights are working and I have

*Steppenwolf* for company (although a jollier companion I can easily imagine!). Actually I think it's the best thing I could be reading at this point; or at least more useful for one seeking to bury the Ego--what better, than that most blatant example of the melancholy depths to which it can attain?

### ***January 9, Morning***

Wind still blowing; despite it, took a short walk along beach and to Mendoza's for coffee and an apple about 10 a.m, and read for a while on my return. I have dragged out the notes for the play and shall pass the afternoon over them....

After supper at the Castillejo's the moon was three-quarters bright overhead. My Israeli said this is a significant year, and the romantic in me believes him.

### ***January 10, 7:35 AM***

Just felt a small earthquake while lying abed. I'm sure of it. The bed and the floor when I turned my feet down shook gently for about 10 seconds--shall have to check it when I get "back to civilization."

5:30 PM

No wind today. It was wonderful. Wrote until about 12:30 and then spent the afternoon lying on the beach taking as much sun as possible. I hiked out to the far cabaña and had a "coco" (fresh coconut in which a hole is poked so one can sip out the milk through the straw). A peaceful, uneventful day; however, a few soda crackers, half a lemon and the "coco" having been my only sustenance, am feeling low in energy and look forward to dinner--whatever it is!

The owner is destroying this little paradise of a "motel," tearing down the thatched roof outside which (if I understand him properly) he is going to replace with a tin

roof so he can have “dances.” The metal “poles” (scarcely that, however) that they are erecting are very wobbly, being held in place in their holes only by sand. I cannot imagine what it will be like; but aesthetically speaking, nothing could adequately replace the tree trunk supports we had and the lovely, natural palm frond cover. But who could tell him that?? (*Ah, progress...*)

### **9 PM**

The Señora had visitors, so I swung in a hammock and read for about an hour before supper. The moon is almost full, now, and shone a wide silver swath on the water. The moon, the stars, the sand and sound of surf--the night was heart-wrenching in its beauty. Some of the local fishermen were about, and the Israeli played his recorder; then one of the Mexicans took it over--we had Israeli songs, and Arab, and Mexican, and Brazilian and even some George Harrison. Jésus was there, sitting forlorn-like in the dark; he would not come forward--just as well; but even at a distance he had me feeling sorry for him! (I must be getting homesick...) The quiet after the wind is so welcome . I can hear the surf from here.

Oh — my earthquake was confirmed by the fishermen. One said it did some damage 'though not here. Wonder where?

The Israeli (a vegetarian, by the way) sent me back with a piece of leftover coconut from his dinner. I dug it out with my teaspoon (*note: next time bring a knife!*). It was the nearest thing to a dessert that I've had in a while, and really good. Will read and write a bit more before bed. Feel just a trifle melancholy--three days left; sorry, yet not? I have two more books lent to me by Oscar, an Agatha Christie (I get to renew my old acquaintance w. M. Poirot) and “The Life and Times of Einstein” (a veritable tome but really appropriate wouldn't you say?)--so I want for nothing.

If something dire should happen to me, it seems right that I make record now of the fact that this month has been everything I had hoped it to be. Others might wonder at the austerity and lack of excitement, but the former is what I sought and the latter is what I needed least. What I-the-re-emerging writer did need--most desperately did need--was received in abundance and I feel very lucky.

It just occurred to me that during this night 24 years ago, my daughter Stephanie was born! I hope she has a happy birthday, while I'm reminded of how grand it will be to see both my daughters again. Not that I have been gone all that long; but after all it is the first time!!!

***January 11, 1979 3:30***

Just arrived back at the room from a long walk up the beach and a rest in the sun -- haze, and a breeze, but *nice*. Wrote until 12:30 or so (can't believe how fast the time passes once I get absorbed), and then took my ravenous stomach to Mendoza's and ordered *three* eggs and "pan." He brought me a beautiful omelet and a large roll split in two and toasted. I ate like a shipwrecked mariner; and then, just as I finished and already quite thankful, along came his small friend and coworker (who speaks a bit of English) and whips before me a gift of--of all things!--berry ice cream! I really was stupefied and grinning the whole time I savored it. This place is growing on me more and more; I am going to hate leaving, mostly because I fear I will never find the same, again...

Ran into Jesús mending a larger net down on the beach--standing in the middle of it through a larger hole and whipping the skein over and under, over and under; a large "problema," as he said. He wants to come later to Juanita's to talk; it's fine with me....

**8 PM**

Have come back from the Castillejo's earlier than I may have but for Jesús who did his usual thing. Instead of coming over to Aaron and me, he insisted on sitting off to the side in the dark until I finally felt obliged to go over to talk with him which I did for about a half hour. It's very difficult, when one has only one's own background and special type of freedom, to understand the constraints he seems to feel about his association with me. I tried to bring him over to Aaron so the three of us could talk but he refused...

Again Jesús told me some long story about how they, the fishermen, are treated by the local merchants. I confess I don't understand but I assume there is some class difference that is of major proportion, and certainly holds a significance I can't grasp. I understand from what he says that I am not his first "foreign" female "friend;" and if his looks are any clue (and he is handsome, I admit) I'm sure he's had ample.

It seems he *is* placing the classical interpretation on our "friendship" even though he claims otherwise, for he entreated me several times to go to more isolated spots. *Alas...* full moon on the water, a soft sea breeze, beckoning romance; but then, as another of my would-be sons once said, the apparent age of the body is no indication of the age of the soul!

The Israeli thinks Jesús is jealous of him, and it's all very silly, as you and I know; but walking softly is still best, I guess. Yet how I would have loved the three of us together, with Aaron piping and Jesús and me humming along. Instead I am back here with my books. I shall probably find (undoubtedly, again, find) that that, in the end, will bring the greatest satisfaction--but still, the moon was so *pretty!*

Two more days ... 

***January 12, 1979***

Finished the skeleton of the play--not great, but am finally rid of all those little notes scattered here and yon; whatever it's worth, it's all in one place; but certainly could stand enlarging in various areas. Spent another glorious afternoon on the beach. The weather has been perfect since the last norte and it appears I have been presented my final wish for these days...

We have a new visitor in the area, an Italian from Rome who I found talking with Aaron. I spoke with him only briefly; Aaron tells me the man is on his way to the Amazon to film a documentary; hope I have more opportunity to talk with him before I leave, altho' he is staying at the faraway cabaña.

Jésus came to Juanita's again last night; this time he joined Aaron and me and the three of talked for some while; it was good, I think. Aaron and I talked late, after Jesús had gone; the full moon and its silvery reflection on the bay were hard to leave...

***January 13, 1979 almost 7 PM***

Sitting at Juanita Castillejo's at a small wooden table facing the sea, waiting for the full moon which any moment will show its silver circle at the horizon. Aaron is having his lesson and has commissioned me to watch and summon him. He has been waiting all week for the event—*ah*--here it comes! (Aaron!)--*red* not silver; like the sun, but smaller. First we see the reddish fillness entirely before it is covered by low lying clouds. The light hitting off the clouds' backs silhouettes their dark changing shapes, until they separate and the golden, so yellow globe is

revealed; the water catches its reflection and a path lights up across it to us.

Everyone is watching; it's the weekend again and there are other visitors—besides Oscar and his wife, another large family. It's one "Chita's" 65<sup>th</sup> birthday and he is deeply "in his cups," so to speak. He brings me a beer; wants to talk; says he misses love and wishes he and I could share some!

### *Jan 14, 1 AM*

What delight today has been--or I should say, what a delight yesterday was. Just finished packing up but not sleepy yet, counting on the roosters to make sure I don't miss my bus the morning bus....

Stayed out the entire day...all play, no work. About 10 a.m. went to Mendoza's; had breakfast and said my farewells there. Then I worked my way southerly around the rocks through the incoming tide, to the "popular beach" and went along it until I got to a spot about directly opposite the center of the bay. After about a half an hour or so along came Armando Sabaini, the Roman--another wish granted); and we hiked together almost all the way to the southern point, something I had been wanting very much to do but reluctant alone, as it's quite deserted.

Finding a grove of trees and a large laguna, we talked of a thousand things-- the movie he is on his way to make ("Anamanos"-- name of the tribe he has been studying, which has given permission to him and friends (a journalist and a painter from Mexico City) to do the filming.

Armando's been traveling since his teens: Thailand, India, all of Europe. He is extremely dramatic and enchanting to be with; the world is his oyster and he thinks it could be anyone's. I don't think he fully appreciates how much his charm helps

him win his ways (he once went all the way once Morocco to Rome on handouts alone). I told him I didn't think it would have been such a lark, if he'd been an ugly hunchback; but he's not convinced, yet....

It was fun speaking some Italian with him but mostly we spoke a mixture of English and Spanish. He's also made a movie called "Maya" based on a story he's written. Three to four hours walking alternately in sun and surf; I couldn't have wished for more. When we got back to his cabaña I spent a short while speaking with others on their way elsewhere (two Germans, a Frenchman, a French Canadian). Returning briefly to my room, I headed out to the northern beach for what I thought would be my last swim (although I would yet another glorious dip in the ocean under the full moon, about 10 p.m.). Finally back and time for rest, shower, and change before going to supper, which was where I was when I began this entry.

Farewell to the Castillejos; farewell to Aaron. That was more difficult, but I have a feeling I will see him one day again. Upon leaving the Castillejo's, was called to by Jesús, and spent the next three hours with him. No particulars of that, however, dear journal; some things should live only in the heart....

***January 14, 1979, Salina Cruz — 10 AM***

Took the 7:30 a.m. bus out of La Ventosa. Had risen at 6:30 and gone to the beach for one last sunrise there and tried to imprint the scene in memory. The early bus was loading up just as I arrived back from the sunrise and knowing another hour pure waiting would be tortuous assembled my things and boarded. As it developed, I was able to sit with Oscar who was on his way to market and who asked when I would be back. "Two or three years," I responded, but not really believing.

Jostling out over the rocky road, passing madre cacao trees in bloom and recalling my trip in, over the same road in the taxi with the drunk from Salina Cruz, the trepidation at what was ahead, all the short-lived friendships; and wondering where time would take all of us....

Arrived in Salina Cruz about 8 p.m.; bought bananas, tangerines, and peanuts in the market to keep me 'til I reach Oaxaca late this afternoon. Coffee, now, at a small restaurant across from the market; then the bus depot and departure at 11:30 a.m. According to my ticket I'll be sitting on the window side; this time, in daylight. I shall be able to see the hills and mountains, the first between here and home....

### ***2:15 PM***

Two hours out of Salina Cruz in the mountains now. In every direction, range after range of them rising to the horizon Are you tired of my ecstatic ravings? It isn't that I haven't been here before, seen all this before. It's just that it is so beautiful one is impelled to try to capture it forever: here, near, greens of all shades; all variation of trees and scrub brush; almost perpendicular mesal fields marching up in straight rows; a bit further in the distance, brown-green broken by solid rock peaks; at the horizon, mystical shapes of barely distinguishable lavender, clouds billowing white through a blue, blue sky; and the sun ever with us, glinting off of the leaves, the winding road and occasionally, the water of some small "rio."

Headed down now, a small valley upcoming, but I don't know which. The weight of the bus makes the brakes gasp and groan, albeit it is very comfortable inside--no seat mate, so I can spread and relax. (Writing, however, is something else again!)

**3:40 PM**

Just passed a town named San José de Gracia, while an especially pretty rio curves gently following the road for a while. Wish we were as near to Oaxaca as time indicates, but a “30 minute” rest stop turned to 50 minutes; and a little near-miss with another bus from opposite direction put a few people (including me!) on edge.

**6 PM**

Checked in at the Plaza. Ah, *civilization*...the fitted pattern tiled floors; high ceilinged, delicately painted room; shining furniture; clean, clean plaid blankets and crisp starched sheets! A fully working bathroom! Little cane-shaded lamps by the bed--all only 25 pesos more a night than my beach quarters (don't understand that yet?)

By coincidence the taxi I shared with several other from the depot (\$1) was the same that took me here from the airport—Edgar (*damn, wish I'd engaged him for Tuesday a.m.*). We had a lot more conversation this time; guess my Spanish has improved some. Will get cleaned up and go to dinner; my stomach says it's time. Seems only a few hours ago I sat upstairs on the balcony where I met Sherrie....

**9:45 PM**

Good things keep happening. There's a celebration in town this weekend: something political as I understand it; something about 15 years with the current popular party. Throngs at the Zocalo; balloons and children's toys on sale; folk dancers and mariachi band in the park--even a motorcycle jump through a flaming hoop. Was hailed by a group of expatriated Americans living in Oaxaca; hadn't been at their table 15 minutes before ex-patriot Jerry Morris appeared. Wonderful to see him again. Joined by a New York couple, a good bit of lively conversation

followed. Jerry knows so much about the country; everyone's always picking his brain to which he submits graciously, and it's a pleasure just to sit and listen. Had a sandwich and coffee; then wandered about for an hour or so. Not sure what I'll do tomorrow; but right now last night's lack of sleep, the long bus ride, etc. has created an uncaring weariness--so rest is shall be, 'til whenever consciousness returns. I shall miss the roosters' crows....

### *January 15, 1979*

Sitting at Oaxaca's zocalo 10:30 a.m. for coffee only; awakened at 6:30 with fonder thoughts of the place I'd left than where I was; guess all of me wasn't here yet. Did a sketch of where I was the previous morning at the same time; all that's omitted are the three small motorboats which--silently to my ears and the world because they were paddling instead of motoring--were carrying several fishermen. One, on the stern of the second boat, looked like Jesús...

Anyhow, fell back to sleep and was awakened at nine by a knock and the Plaza's morning tray of juice, coffee and two rolls. Sat up in bed with a cozy blanket 'round me and read for a while before really starting the day. My reservation is confirmed for tomorrow; now waiting to see where, if anywhere, today's events take me.

### *Almost Noon*

Met a freelance photographer named Jerry from Canada with whom I had coffee. We were joined by the New York pair but the man was *so* intense, *so* European, *so* opinionated (an anthropologist cum philosopher cum linguist cum cum cum...) that I escaped.

### *3:40 PM*

Stood by the taxi [“sitio”] for about a half-hour thinking perhaps my familiar taxi driver might come by. Finally, having waited until a self-proscribed hour of high noon, I indicated to one of the many taxis who’d passed and was passing again that I was interested--an excellent choice: Nathaniel it was.

For an agree price of \$17 (I gave him \$20), he took first to the road to Guelatao, where I found “El Castillo”--where JC and I had stopped in ’73; now completed and currently rented. The owner, Alfonso Soto, was present and took me on an exterior tour of the place, looking to sell it for \$15,000. How I would love to live there: the lot is three to four times the size of the Bates Dr. house; there are orange trees and bamboo; an adobe wall surrounding it all. There’s a parapet on the roof (*verdad!!*)-- a fantasy, as was said by long-gone George Simms, one of the artists formerly occupying it and possibly now in Hawaii, as Mr. Soto informs me. I know it’s a pipe dream (*is it?*; but I took Mr. Soto’s name and *direccion* (address) anyway; he was “muy amable.”

From there, Nathaniel (“Nat”) seeing my interest and after my inquiries, took me by El Tule, the ancient gnarled tree with drooping leaves. I’d seen the tree before, but Nat pointed out the six figures naturally formed in various places on and within its branches by twisting, curving bark: the lion, the gorilla, the fish, the deer, and the most impressive Christ figure near the top.

From there we went to Dainzu, a ruin site of a settlement to which the Mixtecs retreated after abandoning Monte Alban. The reason for the abandonment is uncertain: epidemic or war, Nat said. From a joining of Mixtecs and Olmecs came the Zapotecs, many of whom live throughout the area and south. He said it is believed there are forty structures still uncovered at Dainzu, pointing out the various “hills” surrounding the excavation. In the one uncovered tomb (the buried

articles being in Mexico City Museum, of course, and another *hrmpph* for that), there is a large stone at the entrance under which one must crouch to enter. On it is a carved elegant jaguar face and head, the legs carved into the stones at the sides.

We then went to Lambityeco, a little further south. This site (which I had seen once when JC the First took a Mexico trip) has been excavated considerably in the past few years. It is still one of the more interesting. There, as I remembered, were these large pestle stones set in the “altar” behind the central tomb, which had contained a man and woman. Shade did not permit photographing the carved figures and frieze depicting the journey from birth through life to death. But I did photograph another edifice higher up containing two very large circular carvings similar to drawings I’ve seen in the codices.

Along the road Nat stopped at the tiled, mosaic shrine to Juarez, which depicts his life and impact on the history of Mexico. Nat told me the story of the mosaic depictions in great detail.

Back to Oaxaca, but not directly to the Zocalo — Nat (who said he was going to “secuestrar”--“kidnap” me) took me by the medical school and the Fountain of the Seven Regions, explaining each of the seven female forms surrounding the fountain and dancers above it all. Again, I had found (apparently by chance?) someone with whom I could travel “contego,” and it was totally satisfying. (Nat is going to pick me up at 11 a.m. in the morning for the airport run)....

Back at the Square Jerry Morris hailed me and I sat with him for a while, gleaning more info, especially on what it takes to make one’s home here. He then sent me here, La Flor da Oaxaca where I now write this entry, having just finished their excellent comida of the day.

I am down to 300 pesos! Time to go back to my room, settle the bill and see

exactly where that leaves me. Don't need dinner, that's for sure (it's 4:40 p.m. now) but will need taxi fare to airport and that tax at the Mex City airport (*and presents not bought yet!*)

### **9 PM**

I am now down to 150 pesos; good that I have a twenty dollar bill to bail me out at the airport! Sitting with coffee out on the street on opposite side from this morning, the celebration is over but still a great deal of the usual activity in the zocalo park and surrounding street-side restaurants. Much *touristas* around.

Spent the three and a half hours between lunch and 9 p.m. shopping (finally dragged out my Visa card) and am very happy with purchases —

### **11 PM**

Joined another group--two Canadians, a Californian, and a Kentuckian named Gary--with whom I've spent the last two hours talking music, all kinds but mainly jazz and rock. Gary plays guitar when he isn't either going to school (English major) or managing his horse farm. Really enjoyed talking with him. He's seen and heard a lot of groups I'm also familiar with; the time passed quickly.

About as few hours left in Mexico as there are of these pages — which are a meager record only, of time, people and necessities of existing like meals, hotels and transportation. Nowhere do these pages contain anything resembling the vivid scenes impressed in memory, the fond encounters impressed in the heart, or the free joy experienced by the soul during the hours and days represented. How I long to keep them with me in four-dimensional form during every minute of the days to come, for which they have meant to me: first and foremost, the freedom to write (not this simple record but those other completed efforts); the night when, as

predicted, the moon was “en su casa”; the first sunrise; the mental exercise with the Roman; the long hours alone with just sun, sand and surf. For everything the time comes just once; this was “the ‘Writer’s’” time: it has come and gone, yielding lifetime memories and gratitude. What better way can one spend waking moments but in totally absorbing, well-loved work, fanciful realities, or realistic fantasies?

***11:15 AM, Jan 16***

Sitting over coffee upstairs at the Oaxaca airport; a clear sunny day with only the smallest puffs of white over the surrounding mountains. Nat was punctual; Mr. Rodriguez at the Plaza Hotel especially cordial in his farewell, expressing hope for my return. During the preceding two tranquil hours between arriving at nine and my ride to the airport, I paid my first visit to the general market to buy a belt to cinch one of my stuffed bags (I found the market and surrounding area vastly improved since last visit); and my last visit to the Zocalo, where I sat a pleasant one-half hour in the sun, part of which was spent in English conversation with a newspaper boy named Felipe who desires to become an architect.

Long day of travel ahead--a lot of it waiting around airports; but I feel organized and “up” for it and am thinking now of the beloved faces in my other homeland, which I shall soon be seeing again.

Oaxaca has a new airport just east of the old small one; what a change--highly polished marble-like tiled floors, wood paneling, restaurant upstairs, windows on all sides letting in much light being everywhere reflected, and views of the mountains. Watching the people...all the small dramas of life...grandparents waiting for children and the first sight of their third generation; young couples on their first flight trip; middle-aged tourists, usually in a pair of couples, wearing their new ponchos and enveloped in a little flurry of uncertainty and nervous

gestures; the glad welcomes--their plane finally safely on the ground; the knowledge of seeing loved ones certain, again.

Yes, there have been great changes in Oaxaca. Tourism has fully arrived. Someone or something special is arriving on the next plane--a group of young people in full costumes present in Spanish colonial dress; a mariachi band; rafts of cameras and people wearing important airs. A young man next to me believes it's some politician. (Turned out to be a short, wispy haired Mexican Jack [Poar]!)

### ***1:15 PM***

We have been hurried on the same plane — Mexicano's running late!

### ***6 PM***

One hour out of Mexico City towards San Francisco; an English newspaper on my lap; the world of imagination slowly giving way over a glass of Kahlua, with light from a formless sun through my window and dense clouds below....

### ***6:30***

600 mph; 130,000 ft alt; leisurely dinner; maybe a nap?

### ***7:30***

Still over a cloud layer; horizon looks like dark mountains; sun has just gone down and a narrow layer of golden pink separates the clouds from the deepening blue above.

### ***8:45 (PST) 10:45 Mexico Time***

Air West put me on their 8:10 flight, having got to San Francisco early enough for

it. Approaching Sacramento now I can see the slightly waning but very bright moon through the window 'cross the aisle; and I am imagining what it must be like on the bay where Juanita is probably resting in a hammock, with the waves sloshing gently below—

*On the ground! Home again! Thank you, "God"!*

It seems our lives go from freedom to slavery to freedom to slavery to freedom to...to...to...

From stars of Love,

Tosca  
(Transcribed 11/17/20, on her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday: