

## Rio Nexpa

Overnight on the beach  
hitchhiking down the coast  
after smoke with the surfers by their fire  
where they were camped out on the higher ground

hammock between two palms  
fronds rustling in a light breeze  
the moon near full the waves  
a gentle lapping as I drifted off

then shaken out of sleep and hammock  
by a man with a machete in the moonlight  
telling me in no uncertain terms  
he didn't want me there

in words I only knew a few of  
but angry voice, gestures and machete  
very clear while on my knees  
getting stuff back into my backpack

I talked to him in my pigeon Spanish  
in what I hoped were calming tones  
*Sí sí Señor no problema*  
*es ok* talking keep talking

while I untied the hammock  
*Sí Señor un momento por favor*  
remembering then how to ask his name  
*Simón* he said and I repeated

*Bueno Simón yo Miguel*  
*no problema yo entendo*  
nodding my head *es ok*  
*me voy* keep talking walking

back up to the campground where they explained  
it was the season when sea turtles  
came in to lay and bury their eggs  
the locals then dug up

took into Acapulco and sold  
to the fancier tourist restaurants  
for a dollar apiece or more

damned good money back then.