

# I WAS DRUNK ON THE BEACH IN OAXACA.

*ELIZABETH HUGHEY*

Oaxaca?

Oaxaca. It was dawn. The darkness was still glued to the horizon by a squeeze of light. Cruise ships lifted anchors and curved out of sight. My eyes would not close. They were like the all night liquor store on the corner of Steiner and Hyde.

Steiner? In Oaxaca?

Yes. Oaxaca. I was open all night. My heart slid open and closed like a freezer full of popsicles.

I'm sorry. Are we talking about the same town? Oaxaca for lovers?

Oaxaca for Julie and Jason.

And you were able to get drunk there? Impossible. The sea is a day's drive.

But I was looking east. Sun was coming at me like a church bus. I was standing by the ocean.

So, you were drunk on the beach in Oaxaca.

Yes, I was standing on the beach in Oaxaca, hammered, when I realized I'd gone and done it again.

Yes, but did you see the water?

It was too dark to say, but I sensed its presence. I smelled the plankton. I heard the echoing snap of a pelican beak.

## AT WHATEVER TIME

I was sitting cross-legged,  
meditating in a dream.  
I heard a man  
uncross his legs  
in a passing train.  
I was reading  
in my daydream.  
Has this happened  
to you? It was a novel  
about sleep. I heard a man  
put his ear to the ground.  
He was listening  
for us to cross his front yard.  
We were in the backyard  
setting up our tent.  
This is where I dreamed  
I was sleeping in a hotel.  
A man had a voice  
like a stone corridor.  
I listened for sock feet.  
In a dream I stood  
at a hotel window. The ocean  
shining through the glass  
colored the whole room –  
the drapes, loveseat,  
bedspread, lampshades –  
blue. I said, It is just  
as though I were awake.