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Palenque

Laura Hamblin

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PALENQUE^o

Oxygen gives no breath
In the air
Of overripe bananas
And a temple concealed
With sprawling vines.
It makes the message
Of a descendantless culture
Difficult to interpret.
You will not learn it
From the one-time valley child
Now suckling tequila,
Nor from those
With proper degrees
Picking endlessly
At the records.
One must be still.
The answer
Is in the cry of the Macaw—
And the sound of lichen
Pulverizing rock.

Laura Hamblin

^o Palenque: archaeological site of an ancient
Mayan metropolis located near Chiapas, Mexico.