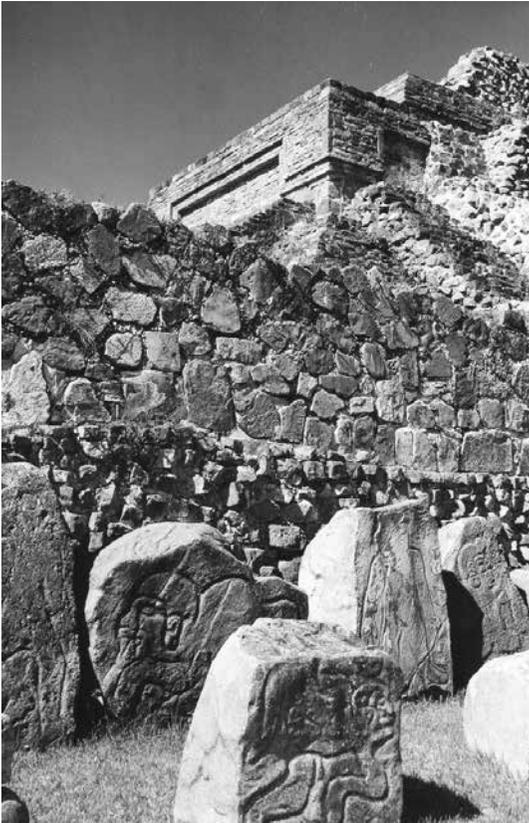


My wife and I visited Oaxaca, Mexico, about ten years ago, where we spent most of our time sitting and eating and staring out at the zocalo (the central square) in a kind of disbelieving rapture. On one of our side trips, though, we went to the ruins of the ancient city of Monte Albán, where I took this picture. The smaller stone carvings here are called *danzantes* (dancers), I think because, to early discoverers, the figures seemed to be moving and grooving. However, experts now believe that they were more likely writhing in pain, and that the carvings probably represent sacrificial victims. Monte Albán is a beautiful, striking place, as is Oaxaca, but they're not uncomplicated places, either—not historically, and not personally. A couple of years ago a close family member moved to Oaxaca in order to find herself,



but in fact those turned out to be the first steps toward her becoming permanently lost. Some of the emotion around that loss is in “If She Doesn’t Answer.”

—*David Ebenbach*