

baguas were inspired by a wonderful weekend trip through The Valley Land Fund to Rancho del Cielo high in the Sierra Madre. El Cielo is above 3,000 ft. in the Relic, Cloud Forest high above Gomez-Farias, a friendly Mexican town below the Eastern escarpment of Mexico. Baguas are an ancient, Chinese poetry form written in the Tai Chi tradition requiring 8 lines with 5 words per line.

### **Valley Land Fund Adventure To Cloud Forrest, Rancho Del Cielo**

Sharing a sense of adventure  
we load bus for departure.  
Bumpy six-hour ride ahead.  
We arrive in Gomez-Farias  
and meet host, Larry Lof.  
We transfer to huge 4X4's.  
Ascent six miles to top.  
Three hours before our arrival.

### **On the Trail to Rancho del Cielo**

Truck bounces up logging road  
leaving Gomez-Farias in memory.  
Rancho del Cielo draws us.  
Bird voices announce our arrival.  
Cloud forest canopy breaks light.  
Bromeliads cling to high branches  
sharing blessing of tropical showers.  
Black night will arrive soon.

### **Final Destination, El Cielo**

Light fades as dusk arrives.  
Bird voices turn to silence.  
Insect sounds take their place.  
Three-hour journey up mountain  
marked by precipitous, rocky trail.  
Butterflies burst forth quite unexpectedly,  
sky color dancing through trees.  
Friends share El Cielo discovery.

### **Shallow Roots**

Shallow roots stretch through soil.  
Rocks and boulders block penetration.  
Treetops reach toward sky.  
Tropical birds dance in canopy.  
Forest floor covered by history  
supplying ferns with tropical mulch.  
Tree debris brings flora renewal.  
Breathtaking scenery comforts our souls.

### **Silver Sky**

Silver sky silhouettes tree leaves.  
Dusk turns to black night.  
Cricket's drone punctuated by frogs,  
croaking robustly, exchanging evening calls.  
Margaritas are prepared for celebration.  
Rancho Cielo, cloud-blanketed paradise.  
Larry Lof regales with history.  
Pioneer spirit sinks Mexican roots.

### **Speaking Softly**

Lush cloud forest speaks softly.  
Thick canopy offers up abundance.  
Bird languages speak in tongues.  
Diversity of trees and plants  
provide home for magnificent critters.  
Cielo's spirit speaks historic volumes  
of magic place experienced by  
ancients and moderns in clouds.

### **Ancients Have Walked Here**

Pre-Columbians walked on this ground.  
Trees and plants found here  
create diversity distinct to Cielo.  
Convergence of tropical and temperate,  
unique to this Relic forest.  
Rancho del Cielo, only two  
miles wide, six miles long,  
bathed by moisture filled clouds.

### **Do You Sense The Presence?**

Ghosts of ancient cultures past.  
Coo of white tipped dove  
punctuated by raucous green jays.  
Birds dart through forest canopy  
while insects race for cover.  
Moist clouds caress Relic forest.  
A blue millipede proceeds slowly.

### **Porous Limestone Mountain**

Karst, limestone guides torrential rainfall  
down through mountain to rivers  
three thousand feet below biosphere.  
Sinkholes permeate the forest floor.  
A watchful eye prevents disaster.  
Fallen branches and leaves decay.  
Alchemy brewed by fallen rain  
continues limestone erosion over time.

### **Mayans Discover A Magic Place**

Rancho del Cielo, relic forest,  
two miles wide by six.  
Discovered by Ancient Mayan explorers.  
You sense their historic presence  
in the trees and rocks.  
Forest shaped by ancient's needs,  
now shared by adoring naturalists.  
Web of life on display.

### **Floristic Crossroads**

El Cielo, mist-blanketed forest  
hidden on high Eastern slope  
of the magic Sierra Madres,  
a treasure trove of biodiversity.  
Flora and fauna gather here  
from North and South mysteriously.  
Crossing the Tropic of Cancer,  
we ascend into the mist.

### **Tin Roof Speaks**

Nails lose their tenuous grip  
as sun bears down on  
tin roof, expanding in heat.  
Mist first had to part,  
allowing sunbeams to burst forth.  
Roof speaks as if living.  
Swift clouds blow over forest  
quieting racuous roof in shade.

### **Reach For Heaven**

Competition in cloud forest amazes.  
Trees and bushes reach skyward  
fighting for place in sun.  
Vines take the easy route  
following tree trunks to canopy.  
Huge South American oaks reach  
toward heaven from damp forest  
floor, leaf covered and decaying.

### **The Convergence**

We ascend to primeval forest  
passing though four ecological zones,  
traversing through many different microclimates  
on our journey to paradise.  
Cloud forest of El Cielo,  
only twelve square miles total,

composed of nature's mysterious union  
of life 3,000 feet high.

### **Old Growth Forest**

Old growth forests feel mysterious,  
holding wisdom from the past.  
Northern trees and Southern trees  
meet in this special biosphere.  
Sugar maples and huge oaks,  
sweet gum and hickory  
spread roots over forest floor.  
Cloud forest's diversity, God's blessing.

### **The Tayra, A Giant Weasel**

The tayra, an efficient hunter  
moves swiftly through dark forest.  
It investigates every scent discovered  
in search of ultimate prey.  
Tayra, the giant weasel, killer  
seems to have insatiable appetite,  
as it moves through forest  
prepared to devour all prey.

### **The Eastern Overlook**

View from Eastern overlook, gorgeous.  
Cloud forest canopy frames view  
of fertile valley far below.  
From checker board of land,  
man carves out an existence.  
Cloud forest's torrential rain falls,  
seeping through porous, fractured limestone,  
feeding valley at mountain's base.

### **View From The Escarpment**

Thousands of dragonflies soar by  
in search of cloud forest  
prey, instinctively dodging for cover.  
Tropical butterflies dart through canopy.  
Drone of tarantula wasp heard  
as orange wings buzz overhead.  
Bumble bees search out nectar  
amongst iridescent, pungent flower clusters.

### **Journey Into Paradise**

Light breaks through forest canopy.  
Fern leaves glisten in mist.  
Beams touch emerald, green moss  
which clings to decomposing stump.  
Bird shadows mark rocky trail.  
Careful steps taken over rocks.  
Path climbs through old forest.  
Giant oaks speak in silence.

### **Mala Mujer**

Mala mujer takes no prisoners.  
Avoid plant at all costs.  
Needles sharp as glass shards.  
Nettle tongue only thing worse.  
Critical comments mark black heart.  
Stinging words pierce one's soul.  
Unkind pronouncements best be ignored.  
Mala Mujer best left alone.

### **Hiking Down From El Cielo**

Hike down from El Cielo  
much more than we expected.  
First time walking through clouds.  
We start up a steep hill.  
I didn't remember this part.  
Logging road drops sharply away.  
Rock filled trail hard walking.  
Gratefully, I hear truck coming.

### **Time To Say Goodbye To El Cielo**

It's time to go home.  
We walked down through clouds.  
Steps taken over rocky terrain.  
Sharp rocks penetrate slippery mud  
making each step important decision.  
Dare not lift our heads  
for fear of taking fall.  
Tropical birds serenade our departure.

### **Hawks Soar Over Rancho Del Cielo**

Hawks soar over Cielo escarpment.  
No movement goes without detection.  
Curved wings slice through sky.  
Predator's flight made in unison,  
dancing the dance of death.  
We sit motionless observing nature

as birds disappear into clouds.  
Today, Cielo shares it's blessing.