

JOURNAL OF FLORIDA STUDIES

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF THE IDEA AND PLACE THAT IS FLORIDA

Volume 1, Issue 4, 2015

Most Distant Antiquity

After William Bartram

When he reached the end of his travels
this was his conclusion, that the people
he encountered in unmarked territory
had descended from a glorious ancient
world they had no knowledge ever existed.

Bartram slept on the ground, under fallen
oak trunks, one blanket wrapped over him,
another pitched across a tree for a tent,
foraging some days, and taking fine meals
from the tables of strangers on others.

He drew the world into order with a pencil
and sketch paper, the light of his vision cast
upon each leaf, petal, stem, and seedpod,
naming as he went, describing how each
ridge crests along the edge of all nature.

---Jesse Graves