

## THEORETICAL CHEMISTRY

I would sit just there, in the quiet shade  
of the live oaks. It was a scholar's dream,  
but I, intent to find the way across  
the ravine, wasn't there to write poetry.  
You see, that thick lush growth stopped progress

here, but I could spot a road gathering  
on the other side. That's where we had to go.  
I brought my field glasses, a topographic  
map. From above, the gully looked much like  
a low-growing jungle hugging the land;

the cows had gotten across, I saw tracks  
in and tried to follow them. But it didn't  
work, bushes closed in, there was poison oak,  
vines with rows of sharp red thorns. I came back  
day after day, trying, tracing paths back

from the other side. For I knew a pattern,  
the right way, had to be there. In the end  
I found one, but what's bothered me since  
is that I didn't follow the paths that  
are hidden there, the way I should have, but

I hacked a rough piece of a new one through.  
The other day I met a friend who's run  
into the same wild terrain. Starting out  
from a hill nearby, he found a different  
way. But I told you there was only one.