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## Androguè

Jorge Luis Borges

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Jorge Luis Borges

## Adrogué

In that bewildering night no one need fear  
That I may lose my way among the dark  
Flowerbeds that weave their system in the park  
Propitious to nostalgic love affairs,

Or idle evenings when a bird entunes  
In deep leaves its invariable song,  
The summer arbor and the curving pond,  
The hazy statuary and dubious ruins.

The coach house, hollow in the hollow shade,  
Marks (I well know) the wavering boundary lines  
Of this dim world of dust and jasmine vines,  
So pleasing to Herrera and Verlaine.

The shade is redolent of eucalyptus—  
Ancient and medicinal, its fragrance,  
Piercing through time and vagaries of language,  
Denotes for me the era of the *quintas*.

My step feels forward for and finds the expected  
Threshold. The level roof defines its shadow,  
And I can hear from the chessboard patio  
The periodic dripping of a spigot.

On the other side of the closed doors lie sleeping  
Those who by virtue of their dreaming work  
Are masters in the visionary dark  
Of boundless yesterday and all dead things.

In this old building each thing is familiar:  
I recognize even the mica flakes  
In the grey granite that reduplicates  
Itself incessantly in the smudgy mirror;

Biting an iron ring, the lion's head;  
And by the door, the colored lozenges  
That offer treasures to a child's gaze,—  
A world of green, another world of red.

Even beyond the range of death and chance  
These things endure, each has its history,  
But it all happens in a kind of trance,  
A fourth dimension, which is memory.

The patios and gardens still live on,  
But there alone, preserved there by time past  
In that forbidden circle that has embraced  
At the same moment the evening and the dawn.

How could I ever lose the plain, precise  
Order of these beloved things of ours,  
Today as irretrievable as the flowers  
That the first Adam knew in Paradise?

The ancient wonder of the elegy  
Overwhelms me when I think about that place  
And I do not understand how time can pass,  
I, who am time and blood and agony.

*translated from the Spanish  
by Robert Mezey and Richard Barnes*