

A Little Borges

Like all of you, I read Borges in my youth. Yesterday I read him again. Judge for yourselves.

"La candente mañana de febrero en que Beatriz Viterbo murió, después de una imperiosa agonía que no rebajó en un solo instante ni al sentimentalismo ni al miedo, noté que las carteleras de fierro de la Plaza Constitución habían renovado no sé que aviso de cigarrillos rubios; el hecho me dolió, pues comprendí que el incesante y vasto universo ya se apartaba de ella y que ese cambio era el primero de una serie infinita."

You recognize, my dear friends, the first lines of "El Aleph", "the masterpiece of the genre". The genre doesn't really matter, but seldom does one sentence summarize so much wisdom in such a poetic way. Please excuse my repetition of the obvious: Death as an urgent agony that does not lower itself to sentimentalism or fear. Glorious! I think my Mother died that way; just wishing to see her loved ones one last time, but without fear or sentimentalism. My sister saw her in her last moments and she can testify.

What follows touches us even stronger: The banality of the world that just continues its course. A cigarette add is changed without observing Beatriz' death, the universe doesn't give a shit and continues its course. My wife used to tell me that God doesn't care, but that things nevertheless matter. You know my opinion.

After that mastery introduction, Borges succumbs to a vague and vain hope: "The Universe may change, but I don't, I thought with melancholic vanity; some time, I know, my futile devotion exasperated her; dead, I could dedicate myself to her memory, without hope, but also without humiliation." No comment.

I'll leave Borges, that master of words and of the fantastic, with the ending of "The Immortal". When the end approaches, there are no images of memory left; only the words remain. Words, displaced and mutilated words, words from others, the poor charity left by the hours and the centuries.