

Love Songs of Jorge Luis Borges

Translated from the Spanish
by [Evelyn Hooven](#) (December 2018)



Melencolia, Albrecht Dürer, 1514

Here the detailed largesse with which Borges tends to address the world applies solely to the beloved. Yet with so defined a given, an all-in-all, vitality is sustained and tension still prevails. Remarkable!

The Enamored One

Moons, ivory, instruments, roses,
lanterns, delineations by Dürer,
nine real numbers and the changeable zero,
I must imagine that such things exist.

I must imagine that in the past were
Persepolis and Rome and that a subtle
sand mediated the fate of those parapets
that the iron centuries dismantled.

I should imagine the pyres and armour
of the epics and the mighty seas
that bite the pillars of earth itself.

I could fabricate others. They're a lie.
Only you are. You, my twist of fate

and my destined one, boundary-less and pure.

El Enamorado

Lunas, marfiles, instrumentos, rosas,
Lámparas y la línea de Durero,
las nueve cifras y el cambiante cero,
debo fingir que existen esas cosas.

Debo fingir que en el pasado fueron
Persépolis y Roma y que una arena
sutil midió la suerte de la almena
que los siglos de hierro deshicieron.

Debo fingir las armas y la pira
de la epopeya y los pesados mares
que roen de la tierra los pilares.

Debo fingir que hay otros. Es mentira.
Sólo tú eres. Tú, mi desventura
y mi ventura, inagotable y pura.

1964 (I)

Now the world is not magical. It has taken you.

Now you will not share candid moonlight
or languid gardens. Now there isn't one
moon that may not be a mirror of the past,

crystal of solitude, solar agonies.

Farewell to mutual hands and bodies
that love surrounds. Today I have only
faithful memory and deserts of days.

Nothing may be lost (one vainly repeats)
but what one doesn't have and has not had
ever; but to learn the art of forgetting

it is not enough to be valiant.

A symbol, a rose, tears you apart
and they can kill you, the strings of one guitar.

1964 (I)

Ya no es mágico el mundo. Te han dejado.

Ya no compartirás la clara luna
ni los lentos jardines. Ya no hay una

luna que no sea espejo del pasado,
cristal de soledad, sol de agonías.
Adiós las mutuas manos y las seines
que acercaba el amor. Hoy sólo tienes
la fiel memoria y los desiertos días.

Nadie pierde (repites vanamente)
sino lo que no tiene y no ha tenido
nunca, pero no basta ser valiente
para aprender el arte del olvido.
Un símbolo, una rosa, te desgarrar
Y te puede matar una guitarra.

Evelyn Hooven graduated from Mount Holyoke College and received her M.A. from Yale University, where she also studied at The Yale School of Drama. A member of the Dramatists' Guild, she has had presentations of her verse dramas at several theatrical venues, including *The Maxwell Anderson Playwrights Series* in Greenwich, CT (after a state-wide competition) and *The Poet's Theatre* in Cambridge, MA (result of a national competition). Her poems and translations from the French have appeared in *ART TIMES*, *Chelsea*, *The Literary Review*, *THE SHOp: A*

Magazine of Poetry (in Ireland), *The Tribeca Poetry Review*, *Vallum* (in Montreal), and other journals, and her literary criticism in Oxford University's *Essays in Criticism*.

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