

# Two Aspects of Jorge Luis Borges

Translated from the Spanish by  
[Evelyn Hooven](#) (July 2019)



*Jorge Luis Borges and Kitty* (photographer unknown)

*The poet, so frequently, of quest and affirming praise becomes  
in "Remorse" the voice of assertive, extravagant self-  
dismissal*

*and accusation, meriting grandiose punishment. The  
perspective*

*goes far beyond any more traditional art-life dichotomy or regret*

*for paths untrodden. Such vehemence of culpability remains disquieting even if one truthfully receives it as an aspect of Borges'*

*willingness to entertain all possibilities, even rejection of his own*

*(mighty) poetic faculties for not serving, as intended by his forbears,*

*worldly daring and valor.*

*Trying, in "End," to define his physical locale quickly becomes*

*a total quest to contain the burden of memories and to locate his*

*own voice. We inevitably recognize familiar Borges terrain in the*

*entreaty against oblivion.*

Remorse

I have committed the worst of sins

that a man can commit. I have not been

happy. Let glaciers of oblivion

encircle and drop me, merciless.

My parents begot me for the game—  
daring and lovely—of life itself,  
for earth and water, for the air and fire.  
I cheated them. I wasn't happy.  
I didn't carry out their youthful will.  
My mind applied itself to the obstinate  
symmetries of art, that can interweave nothingness.  
Valor was my legacy. I wasn't valiant.  
Always it's at my side. It never leaves me,  
the shade of having been a desolate man.

## El Remordimiento

He cometido el peor de los pecados  
que un hombre puede cometer. No he sido  
feliz. Que los glaciares del olvido  
me arrastren y me pierdan, despiadados.  
Mis padres engendraron para el juego  
arriesgado y hermoso de la vida,  
para la tierra, el agua, el aire, el fuego.  
Los defraudé. No fui feliz. Cumplida  
no fue su joven voluntad. Mi mente

se aplicó a las simétricas porfías  
del arte, que entreteje naderías.  
Me legaron valor. No fui valiente  
No me abandona. Siempre está a mi lado  
la sombra de haber sido un desdichado.

End

The ancient boy, a man without history,  
an orphan who might have been someone dead  
makes use in vain of the deserted homestead.  
(It was for two, today it's for memory.  
It *is* for two.) Under the harsh fate,  
nearly lost, the man in pain looks for  
the voice that was *his* voice. The miraculous  
would be no more irregular than death.  
They weigh him down interminably  
the trivial and the sacred he recalls,  
and they're our destiny, these mortal  
memories vast as a continent.  
Make me, I ask of God, No One or Maybe,

boundaryless, not some oblivion.

El Fin

El hijo viejo, el hombre sin historia,  
el huérfano que pudo ser el muerto,  
agota en vano el caserón desierto.  
(Fue de los dos y es hoy de la memoria.  
*Es de los dos.*) Bajo la dura suerte  
busca perdido el hombre doloroso  
la voz que fue su voz. Lo milagroso  
no sería más raro que la muerte.  
Lo acosarán interminablemente  
los recuerdos sagrados y triviales  
que son nuestro destino, esas mortales  
memorias vastas como un continente.  
Dios o Tal Vez o Nadie, yo le pido  
su inagotable imagen, no el olvido.

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