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The Tiger Bones Of Borges

By: Allan Scherlen

Abstract

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The Tiger Bones of Borges

Allan Scherlen

I remember him from the seventies.
We liked seeing the great blind writer
of the Other Tiger, and The Circular Ruins,
that evening in a Texas auditorium.
I can still hear the sounds of Jorge Luis Borges's
Spanish poems, just before he moved off stage slowly,
followed by the young fans with his poetry,
longing for the great South American's autograph.
But he was eighty and could not stand long,
and he was blind with a cane.
I was behind him and whispered, 'thank you,'
in his ear, touching the fabric that stretched
over his bony shoulder.
As in his poem, The Other Tiger, his bones
held their 'splendor beneath the quivering';
and Borges nodded to me once in reply.
His body and mine then flowed apart,
leaving me with a memory of my hand
lightly brushing across the tiger bones
of the shoulder under his dress jacket.

Flash Issue 9

Allan Scherlen's early life was spent in San Antonio, Texas where he was a caretaker of birds and follower of tales. As life progressed, Scherlen travelled in Mexico and China and became a faculty librarian at Appalachian State University in western North Carolina. He has been open to new poetic vision and subtleties in life. This poem, "The Tiger Bones of Borges," draws on the nuance of clothes worn by a great poet late in life, contrasting his frail age.