

JORGE LUIS BORGES'S "CAMDEN, 1892": A NEW TRANSLATION

The smell of coffee and the daily news.
Another Sunday and the Sunday blues.
Morning. Printed on a hazy page,
some happy other poet's vain displays
of allegoric verse. And in this place,
poor but still well kept, the old man lies
white and flat in bed. His idle eyes
look in the tired mirror at his face.
He thinks (it doesn't shock him now) that face
is him. His absent-minded fingertips
pluck at his muddy beard and plundered lips.
The end is not far off. And his voice says:
I almost am not. But my lines keep the rhythm
of life and its splendor. I was Walt Whitman.

(1966; translated 1998)

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