

been looking out for you. And all I ask you now is to be hospitable tomorrow night when I'll bring over a friend or two that's ready to help you out of this jam." He rose. "Now, Mr. Bailey, I can see that you're taking me wrong, misreading my meaning. Tomorrow night's talk will be quiet and proper

as Methodist prayer meeting."

He was gone. Like that. Leaving a gaping door that framed the shining blue world of after-storm.

\* \* \*

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## The Unending Gift

by Jorge Luis Borges

Un pintor nos prometio un cuadro.

Ahora, en New England, se que ha muerto. Senti como otras veces, la tristeza y la sorpresa de comprender que somos como un sueno. Pense en el hombre y en el cuadro perdidos.

(Solo los dioses pueden prometer, porque son inmortales.)

Pense en un lugar prefijado que la tela no ocupara.

Pense despues: si estuviera ahi, seria con el tiempo esa cosa mas, una cosa, una de las vanidades o habitos de mi casa; ahora es ilimitada, incesante, capaz de cualquier forma y cualquier color y no atada a ninguno.

Existe de algun modo. Vivira y crecera como una musica, y estara conmigo hasta el fin. Gracias, Jorge Larco.

(Tambien los hombres pueden prometer, porque en la promesa hay algo inmortal.)

\*Jorge Luis Borges

"Nueva Antologia Personal"

Emece Editores, Buenos Aires, 1968, p. 83

## The Unending Gift

A painter promised us a painting.

Now, in New England, I learn that he has died: I felt as other times, the sadness and surprise of comprehending that we are as a dream. I thought on the man and on the lost painting.

(Only the gods can promise, because they are immortal.)

I thought on a predetermined place where the canvas will never reside.

I thought afterwards: if it would be there, there would be with time that thing more, a thing, one of the vanities or customs of my house; now it is unbounded, unceasing, capable of any form and any color, not tied to any thing.

It exists in some mode. It will live and will grow as a musical piece, and will remain with me to the end. Thanks, Jorge Larco.

(Yes, men can promise, because in the promise there is something immortal.)

*Translated by Robert Newcomb*

# D.C. Magazines: A Literary Retrospective

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