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Visiting Borges

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I am backing away
from the old woman,
who keeps talking
about waves, about echoes.
Or rather we're sitting
side by side,
that is I think
she's still there,
watching the waves, in the steady
sunlight.

VISITING BORGES

The whole time the young man reads to him
he is thinking Borges is like his house—
sad, empty—oh not the attic
of course, but the parlor.

The floor has large black and white tiles—
the kind you'd imagine even a blind man
could see, so maybe Borges is lost
in the pattern. The young man is a stranger,
he might be thinking. Big. Probably handsome.
Why should he sit and read to an old man?

He has wondered which house
he will die in—in Austin, Nara, Buenos Aires—
oh so many—as if he had not long ago shrunk
the world
till it fit like a small chamber around him.

Or maybe the young man is right: the old man is
the house, which is also the world . . .
But the, where is . . . the world?
Have we lost it?
Are we to depend simply
on our sense?
Surely that is coffee we smell
as we walk
in our bare feet up the gravel driveway?
Surely they are in the same room
the young man, and the poet . . . ?