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Snowstorm in Southern Tlön

By Joshua T. Parks

Abstract: This is a wintry poem inspired by the nounless language of Jorge Luis Borges's fictional planet, Tlön. It describes a snowstorm using only verbal forms and function words. It also hints at the timelessness of Tlön's philosophical idealism and the tendency of nature to disregard human boundaries.

*There are no nouns in the conjectural Ursprache of Tlön, from
which its 'present-day' language and dialects derive.*

Jorge Luis Borges⁸⁸

Ensparkled and ensnared with the falling and the whirling,
Glowing with brightened breathing, whitened gleaming,
Dancing with dottings, it shivers, it roars.

Inside the everwarming, it is feared and beloved,
Watched for snowstruck worsening, hoped in and faithed in,
Promising first to amaze, then, embracing, to end.

Beyond, outblocked, it hells.
It tricks and slicks, its blinding blowing banishes,
Its frosty numbing ambushes.

But the blocking crumbles, or always has crumbled.
The beloving and be-icing mingle and refreeze,
The warming scattered, shared, and so lost.

Soon, the finding and refiring—but not reblocking.
Rather the breathing, the falling and the whirling,
Enchanted, encrystalled, ensparkled, ensnared.

⁸⁸ Jorge Luis Borges, "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," in *Collected Fictions*, translated by Andrew Hurley (New York: Penguin, 1999), 73.