

Shinto By Jorge Luis Borges

When sorrow lays us low
for a second we are saved
by humble windfalls
of the mindfulness or memory:
the taste of a fruit, the taste of water,
that face given back to us by a dream,
the first jasmine of November,
the endless yearning of the compass,
a book we thought was lost,
the throb of a hexameter,
the slight key that opens a house to us,
the smell of a library, or of sandalwood,
the former name of a street,
the colors of a map,
an unforeseen etymology,
the smoothness of a filed fingernail,
the date we were looking for,
the twelve dark bell-strokes, tolling as we count,
a sudden physical pain.

Eight million Shinto deities
travel secretly throughout the earth.
Those modest gods touch us—
touch us and move on.