

You know it is of finite extent, not more than sixteen square blocks. From the outside all that appears are a few stereotypical angels and cupolas stretching above the walls, nothing to particularly excite the imagination or to prepare you for the metamorphosis that occurs once through its gates. Inside, the sounds of the city are quieted, its heavy air lightened, its relentless pace relaxed. The external perimeter which defines it as a finite space disappears in the seemingly infinite complexity of its inner organization. At every corner you expect a dead end or a return to your starting point. Instead, a new avenue of exploration leads you deeper into this city of the dead. It is impossible to wander this infinite within the finite without thinking of Borges.



It is a place of paradox: the self-importance that motivated the famous sons and daughters of Buenos Aires to try to carve a unique immortality out of granite and marble is undone by the seamless repetition of ostentation; the monstrous self-confidence that motivated

someone to entomb himself in such baroque fashion is betrayed by the underlying doubt that must secretly have driven him: if he did not memorialise himself, no one else would.



It is also a place of beauty. But the beauty is not found in the grey utilitarianism of the tombs considered as separate, particular structures. Rather, its beauty emerges from the constructed thickness of the place, of the density of its spatial architecture. Placed amongst the modest headstones of an ordinary cemetery, any of these mausoleums would appear megalomaniacal. But arrayed together along these alleyways the galactic egos from which these monuments sprang contract to nothing and the spontaneous, unintentional collective whole shines forth as the true creation- an impossible geometry of straight and curved greyness producing coherent structure and colour unguided by any overarching principle of organization.



The stone meant to triumph over death does—but not by serving as a permanent and unchanging testimonial to the families entombed within—but as a surprisingly porous basis and support for new life that clings to its surface and digs into its substance. The unkempt dynamics of nature patiently erode the finely contoured edges, but in so doing animate this place born of death. Everywhere the tiny insidiousness of nature inexorably traces its own ideas upon the petrified symbols of status and power.



Meant to remind ever new generations of the power that defined these corpses whilst they breathed and moved, the inanimate rock of which the tombs are built cannot hold out against the more supple and creative force of living nature, human or otherwise. The moss, the saplings, the feral cats, the homeless do not testify to the power of these dead, but to their impotence. Time and necessity cannot be conquered by ego and stone. All mountains eventually wash to sea.

