

La continuidad de los parques por Julio Cortázar (Continuity of Parks English translation)

This story was where the namesake of this blog originated, so I thought it would be nice to share. It is not a word to word translation, nor am I a professional translator. I love this story which was why I translated it, a much better version than mine can be found [here](#).

Continuity of parks [\(original in Spanish\)](#)

He had begun to read the novel a couple days ago. Having abandoned it due to urgent business, he revisited it when he was returning by train to his country house, allowing himself to be slowly absorbed back into the plot through the depiction of the characters. That afternoon, after writing a letter to his attorney and discussing with his butler about an issue of sharecropping, he returned to the book in the tranquility of his study that overlooks a park of oaks. Comfortably seated in his favourite armchair, his back to the door so as to lessen the irksome possibility of intrusions, he let his left hand caress again and again the green velvet of the chair and began to read the last chapters.

His memory retained without effort the names and images of the protagonists; the novelistic illusion won him over right away. He enjoyed the almost perverse pleasure of separating himself line by line from his surroundings, but to feel at the same time his head resting comfortably on the velvet of the high-backed chair, his cigarettes continuing to be within easy reach [al alcance de] of his hand. Beyond the grand windows, the air danced in the evening air under the oaks. Word by word, he was absorbed into the sordid dilemma of the heroes, letting himself drift towards the images which concerted and acquired colour and movement, he was a witness to their last meeting in the mountain cabin. First, the woman entered, furtively; now the lover arrived, his face scratched by the lash of a tree branch. Remarkably, she was able to stop his blood with her kisses, but he rejected her caresses, he had not come to repeat the ceremony of their secret passion, protected by a world of dry leaves and furtive paths. The dagger warmed against his chest and underneath it, liberty lay throbbing. A dialogue ran eagerly through the pages like a stream of serpents, and one felt as if all had been decided from the start. Even the embraces that tangled the body of the lover seemed to draw inexplicably the figure of another it was necessary to destroy. Nothing had been forgotten: alibis, risks, possible mistakes. From that hour [a partir de esa hora] onwards, every second had its own carefully attributed use. The ruthless double-checking was hardly interrupted by a hand caressing a cheek. Night was falling.

Without looking at each other, they were both attached rigidly to the task that awaits them as they separated from each other at the door of the cabin. She must follow the path that goes to the north. From the opposite path, he turned for an instant to see her running with her hair down. He ran in turn, sheltering himself among the trees and hedges until he was able to distinguish in the mauve-coloured mist of the twilight the tree-lined path that led to the house. The dogs should not bark, and did not. The butler should not be there at that hour, and he wasn't. He climbed the three steps of the porch and entered. From the blood galloping in his ears arrived the words of his lover: first, the blue room, then the gallery, then a carpeted stair. At the top, two doors. Nobody in the first bedroom, nobody in the second. The door of the reading room, and then the danger in the hand, the light of the grand windows, the high back of the green-velvet armchair, the head of the man in the chair, reading a novel.