



MARCEL'S FOUNTAIN

Edite Galote Carranza

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During an out loud reading of *In Search of Lost Time* by Marcel Proust, we came across a description of a fountain and considered interesting to reproduce it here, for the union of literature, painting and architecture under the inspired eye of Marcel, the author's alter ego. The passage is in page 79/80 of volume IV titled *Sodom and Gomorrah*. Translation by Mário Quintana. The description is a synthesis of Proust's aesthetics, which adopts the arts in general as mediators of his literature.

"...I've recovered some capacity of attention before the thought of seeing the famous fountain of Hubert Robert.

In a forest glade opened by beautiful trees, some of them being as old as it, far away, we saw it in the distance, slim, still, hard, not allowing the breeze to shake anything but the slightest relapse of its pale and trembling crest. The 18th century purified the elegance of its lines, but, fixing the fountain's style, it seemed to have paralyzed its life; from that distance, the impression of art was stronger than the sensation of water. Even the humid cloud that perpetually heaped up in its shaft preserved the touch of its time, just like the ones in the sky which gather around the palaces of Versailles. But closely, it was possible to verify that, even though it respected the drawing previously drawn, just like the rocks of an old palace, the waters there were always new, and those, launching themselves and wishing to obey the old orders of the architect, only truly fulfilled them as they appeared to violate them, because only its thousand sparse gushes could give from the distance the impression of a single gush. In reality, it was interrupted as many times as the fall dispersion, whereas from the distance it seemed to me inflexible, dense, of an uncertain continuity. From a little closer, it was possible to see that this continuity, entirely linear in appearance, was assured, in all the gush's ascending spots, by wherever it was supposed to break out, by the lineal entrance, by the side resumed of a parallel gush that rose higher than the first, and itself, higher but already exhausted, was yielded by a third one. Closely, weak drops were forming again from the small waterfall, crossing by its ascending sisters and, sometimes sprinkled, snatched in a whirlwind of troubled air by that non-stopping gush, floated before falling into the pond. They contradicted with their hesitations, with their inverse path and blurred with their thin steam the straightness and tension of that stem, that



carried in the top an oblong cloud made of a thousand drops, but in appearance was painted in unchangeable and golden amber which rose infrangible, still, thrown and fast, to get together with the clouds in the sky. Unfortunately, a single puff of wind was enough to throw it obliquely to the earth. ~~÷~~ Sometimes even a simple disobeying gush diverged and, if you did ~~not~~ keep the respectful distance, it would wet to the bones the reckless and contemplative crowd".

About the authors **Small Resumé:**



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