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## The Riddle of Shakespeare

Ian C Smith  
Australia.

At their second world convention  
those Shakespearean scholars  
fight for seats in Washington's Hilton  
just for the privilege of hearing  
Jose Luis Borges speak.

After several minutes of standing applause  
they quieten, sit  
as Borges' lips begin to move  
then lean towards the old blind master  
hoping to hear the riddle revealed.

Although they strain, all they hear  
is a susurrus, with *Shakespeare*  
the only word audible, but distant.  
The microphone is too high.  
Nobody steps forward to adjust it.

Borges speaks for an hour.  
*Shakespeare, Shakespeare, Shakespeare.*

No-one leaves that vast room – *Shakespeare.*  
When Borges finally finishes  
the scholars give him a stirring ovation  
their hands hot, eyes glistening  
on their feet again, for several minutes.