

THE BOOK OF SAND
El libro de arena



A SHORT STORY BY
Jorge Luis Borges

ETCHINGS BY
Thomas Wood

PROSPECTUS



NAWAKUM PRESS is pleased to announce
a limited first edition, *The Book of Sand*,
by Jorge Luis Borges.

JORGE LUIS BORGES was an Argentine writer, poet and essayist born in Buenos Aires in 1899. He was schooled abroad in Switzerland and Spain, and in 1921 returned to Argentina where he began publishing his essays and poems in surrealist literary journals of the time. He also worked as a public lecturer and as a librarian. One of the most acclaimed writers of the twentieth century, Borges rose to international renown by popularizing the literary form known as “magic realism.” His writings have been referred to as “ontological enigmas” incorporating fantastic and dreamlike elements often woven into everyday realities. Among numerous awards that he received was the first *Priz International* in 1961 which he shared with Samuel Beckett.

Borges, who was almost totally blind at the time, was named director of the National Library of Argentina in 1955, where he served until 1973. The short story “The Book of Sand”, from his last major collection of the same name, was first published in Spanish in 1975. It introduces the reader to a fictional version of Borges himself, a retired librarian. One evening he answers an unexpected knock at the door of his apartment in Buenos Aires. Shortly thereafter he takes possession of an infinite and diabolical book from a used Bible salesman. He must eventually abandon this book for the sake of his sanity, as well as for the sake of humanity itself. Written by an aging author, at the end of his grand literary career, the story offers a unique glimpse into a man who possessed by books his entire life.

THOMAS WOOD | ABOUT THE ARTIST

Northwest artist Thomas Wood was commissioned to create the etchings for the edition. Since the 1970s Thomas Wood has been an artist and printmaker. He studied under master printmaker Luigi Arcuri of the *Accademia delle Belle Arti* in Florence, Italy. His art brings easily recognizable elements of nature and civilization into strange concrete fusion, often combining moral and metaphysical ideas in a delicate dance that at once both challenges and delights. It has been written that “Thomas Wood has created narrative and mythical metaphors about the world... And not just the visible world, but also that of the make-believe-world, imaginary places filled with unknown surprises.” The artist lives in Bellingham, Washington within sight of his garden below, and Lummi Island beyond.

FOOLSCAP PRESS | DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

The Book of Sand was designed in collaboration with Peggy Gotthold and Lawrence G. Van Velzer of Foolscap Press. All print and bindery production was executed at their Press in Santa Cruz, California. Peggy Gotthold worked as a bookbinder at Shubert Bookbinding in San Francisco and at the Arion Press. She trained in letterpress printing and typesetting at Cowell Press (UCSC), Yolla Bolly Press and Artichoke Press. Lawrence G. Van Velzer operated his own press and worked as a printer and typesetter at Arion Press. The work of Foolscap Press was recently featured in “The Art of the Book in California: Five Contemporary Presses” exhibit presented by the Stanford University Libraries.

ABOUT THE EDITION

The Nawakum Press edition *The Book of Sand* is published in Spanish and an English translation by Andrew Hurley. It is published in an artists' book format in an edition of thirty copies, twenty-four of which are for sale.

The text is letterpress printed on Curtis Holcomb Text in dual, parallel accordion fold signatures. The Garamond types were cast by Michael and Winifred Bixler of Skanaeteles, New York. Copper relief etchings, mirroring the style of illustrations in the story, were designed into the text and printed directly from copper plates mounted type high. The text signatures are bound onto boards covered in Japanese book cloth. Two large etchings are mounted into the covers of the book. A printed fold-out overleaf of handmade Cave Paper separates the primary etching from the signatures.

The edition is in one state, with the peaked roof book, measuring 11" by 13 ½", housed in a covered box crafted from handmade Cave Paper over board, with a Japanese book cloth matting and letterpress printed label. Of the thirty copies produced, twenty-four copies are numbered, with six lettered copies A-F reserved for the Press. Each book is signed by the artist on the colophon page.

PRICE: \$1200.00

Inquiries can be directed to david@nawakumpress.com

"There are writers who attempt to put the world in a book. There are others, rarer, for whom the world is a book, a book that they attempt to read for themselves and for others. Borges was one of these writers." – ALBERTO MANGUEL

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