



The place is entered via a gate, above the threshold of which is inscribed 'MOMENT'. The stones have lain here a brief eternity, but the lettering looks freshly cut. A key bearing Janus' face sits in the lock, a mane of bronze escutcheon, a verdigris-powdered wig. That old two-faced fop. I am emboldened by this spirit of opening. His is a grammar familiar to me, that ancient human need, repressed by a moral earnestness, and the growing pains of an ugly gang. They stripped the world of ornament, and rendered dumb the glyphs that bound generations of men. They did this in our name, of course, so that we might be free. And freed we were. Cut loose, set adrift upon an ocean, to contemplate our meaning in the face of that pallid expanse. ♪ I can hear music from within, as if the dulled fretwork before me was softly vibrating, its curlicued lines beckoning. I place my hand upon the latch, and the gate swings freely open. Time has not changed this place, for I remember now that I have been here before. There were others here then, but I may be wrong. I was another man, and details are lost in the course of re-telling. Only the badge remains unmoved. ♪ I follow the sound down the long antechamber, and onto the terrace, in place of a hall. Here vase vine tumbles over worn amorini, and beneath the balustrade fronds unfurl like viola scroll. Hanging baskets rank in either direction, festooned with gold braid like ceremonial corps. The music is clearer now, yet further away, and I must navigate down from this parapet, into the labyrinth below. At its centre rises a tower of trellis, like a lighthouse. Perhaps from that vantage I can locate the sound. If the rest of my days are spent in this search, it shall not be in vain, for once again I am home.

Sami Jalili