

Photo: Zsolt Székelyhidi



Sándor Halmosi's Hungarian-language poetry collections:

Showing off with the Demons, 2001
You were a Sun Girl, 2002
Laurel Grove, 2003
It belongs to Solomon, 2004
On the Southern Slopes of Annapurna, 2006
Gilead, 2009
Ibrahim, 2011
The Passion of Lao-Tze, 2018
Apocrypha, 2020
Meltdown, 2021
Cathari, 2022
Tatra and heat pump, 2023
Rublev Rinpoche, 2024



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SÁNDOR HALMOSI • Rublev Rinpoche

SÁNDOR HALMOSI (1971) is a Hungarian poet, literary translator, editor and mathematician. Born in Sztatnámémeti (Satu Mare, Romania), he lived in Germany for 16 years before moving to Budapest in 2006. He is dedicated to promoting poetry and cultural dialogue as well as to fostering connections between literature and the fine arts. Halmosi has founded many literary and cultural associations and has organised workshops and literary salons. He is a member of the Hungarian PEN Club (Budapest) and of the European Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters (EASAL, Paris). He is a founding member of the international poetry network, Poets of the Planet (POP), which was established in 2023. In February 2020, he published a literary manifesto with the title *Ora et labora: A Cry For Pure Literature*, in which he attempted to shine a light on the spiritual crisis the world is going through. He has published roughly 40 poetry collections in Hungarian and other languages.

SÁNDOR HALMOSI

Rublev Rinpoche

*The Inner
Icon*



G O N D O L A T K I A D Ó

Sándor Halmosi's most recent volumes of poetry have refined the apocalypse aesthetic with memories of the golden ages. Where could any road lead us from here, what kind of space can open up before words when not only everything but also the universe has already been said. A silent answer has been born to our wordless questions; the poet's workshop has produced a synthesis of materials: *Rublev Rinpoche (The Inner Icon)* – that 'Galvanized light against insanity' ('Abrasions') – concentrates the layeredness of poetry's formal expression, offering even more potent instances of spiritual contemplation at the same time. This collection is a network of aphoristic turns of phrase, neo-avant-garde image-groupings and more colloquial, narrative-ruminatory long poems and poems of medium length. It's as if the chief musician in charge of singing celestial loves was battling with an acoustic lined with mud and bolted-together rusty panels: the regulation of clear-sightedness is working itself out in a language of *exalted humility*, almost in the guise of poetry. A prophetic order of voice emerges from a confession of self-knowledge; syntax aiming for angels also categorises earthly lights; the mytho-poetic gestures of this poetic style reach across cultures and comb the points of the compass into one. For the story of salvation is continuous.

Tamás Halmai

SÁNDOR HALMOSI

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The Inner Icon

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SÁNDOR HALMOSI

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The Inner Icon

Translated from the Hungarian
by ANNA BENTLEY

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*It's not being built that will make it great.
It won't be built till it's worn away.*

SIDDHASANA
(Sziddhászana)

And he went up the tower, and leant out
over the silent world, even before the bell
was hoisted, and the temple was rebuilt.
He moved not a muscle during the exercise.
If it rings, everything will lapse.

ANGEL-TIME

(Angyalkor)

Then I'll go, he said. But he didn't, of course.
What remained of him here is beyond fragrance.
The winter hideout of the bluethroat, the marsh tit.
The bell founders' dilemma remains unsolved.

OUR KINDRED

(Atyafiságaink)

After so many testing times detours and wonders
during our evolution as individuals we've finally
emerged onto this endless plane where there's
enough private sphere there's no need to get
in each other's faces auras and every person can
line up against every person in their own armour.
They've waited thousands of years for this *rude
awakening*. This is what all the hard-won poems
prophecies odes are about. No relieving army
arrives no messenger with a pardon. There's no
need to wait for the alarm to sound. This is the
alarmed angels' final team-building exercise.

REBELLION

(Lázadás)

This is what always happens. The wind's
getting stronger but we no longer speed up,
merely propel a greater bow-wave before us.
We cleave, they cleave. But there are no more
virgin territories out there just waiting to be
discovered, nor rowers entering into harmless
waters. The inner rebellion is the noisiest.
Today, the inner rebels are light-catchers.

THE HOUR OF IMMEDIATE SILENCES

(Azonnali hallgatások órája)

As the official treaders slept, we outgrew the
shoes, trod down the path for all the others.
Instead of arable land we carried boundary
stones. We went too far, we floated a little
above the ground. We went to every
confrontation, we did not hold back evidence.
We formulated grave allegations against
ourselves. They pronounced the *exclusio*.
They saved the screenshots.

ILLUMINATED INITIAL

(*Iniciálé*)

We don't know which school created it
which *scriptor* left this space for the picture
but judging by the layering technique used
in the other initials and the quality of the gilding
it must have been an exacting place we don't
know why this one here was left out and why
right there on the first page the list of saints
and great events is incomplete increases every
day the text summons forth the theme it's about
the scribe's loneliness not the school it becomes
important comes together is created in you
only afterwards the place the theme
the transformation awaits you

GOD'S SEAT

(*Istenszéke*)

You say it's a seat, but it isn't. Not only does
it offer complex protection for the spine
and exercise the core musculature, it quickens
the circulation and also effectively alleviates
back injuries and musculoskeletal problems.
By gently strengthening the deep muscles it
lends the body impetus and fitness; it keeps
the body active, helps to ensure an active
posture while seated, from which you will
stand up feeling energised. Its combination
of comfort and dynamism gives hope to the
encircled cohort. Behind them glow the waters
of the Galonya, the Bisztra's stream bed fills
with refugees. Sometimes Frida sits there,
sometimes the Lord, the *kende*¹ with the most
painful spine. The very last weeping learns silently.
In the actual silence the un-counterpointed fugue
can be heard at last. The subject we know already,
but the development awaits us, the age of the old
cedars. The devil is learning to live with angels,
the bear with man.

La riposta è eterna.

La riposta è niente.

¹ A king and spiritual leader in the early Hungarian system of dual kingship who shared power with the *gyula* or war-chief.

INCORPORATIO
(Inkorporáció)

It's only him you set yourself against.
It's only in you there's emptiness.

WHAT YOU ARE
(Ami vagy)

Five centimetres above the earth, millimetres
from weightlessness which touches you every day.
The same lifts, the same pulls. Where you are
they are not searching for you, what you are
remains undivided. Common property.

THE MIDDLE THREAD

(A középső szál)

You didn't think you could go right along the ridge,
because it's equipped with wire ropes.
Don't think you can go right along the spine.
It's become frayed.

PATMOS

(Patmosz)

We are a split strap and a split landscape.
The split material hangs out of us.

TAKING IT TO APPEAL

(Feljebbitel)

Whatever we reach for catches fire, does not burn.
Whatever we do not touch swells up.
The word could be the final consolation, accusation.
But we don't speak the language, nor do we understand it.
And there's no one who'd want to sue us.

FORCE. SPACE

(Erő. Tér)

Anomalies under the surface, you said,
and angel-tumour.
But it burst before its time.
Rip by rip the field in you is growing.

LIKE THE CEDARS

(Mint a cédrusok)

Since then I haven't planted a tree or bush,
we go our separate ways in the weary world
and separately embrace the old soft-barked cedars.
Like on Sunday in Banská Štiavnica, in the Mining
Museum's botanical garden. Two in front, seven
behind, not one of them lonely, only talk knocks
about inside them too, and love, the eternal view
of the Calvary. They don't go up. They come
down together, with every pilgrim.

QUIET APOCALYPSE

(Csendes apokalipszis)

Hang out the dark inside you, and lift to your
lips the hand that's doing it. Deal the light, too,
that sticks to your hand. A deal of time before
world is hooked. A deal of eternity hanging
in abeyance.

THE INNER ICON
(*A belső ikon*)

I'm looking for the navel of the world.
I've found it in you so many times.
But you yourself, never yet.

SINGLE
(*Egyetlen*)

I put you onto my body, like absolution
onto a wound, and snow-white gauze
which must be protected. Not one photon
escapes that wouldn't be a love-stain.
A single word of yours will lift the curse.

ALBERGO

(*Albergo*)

When I lay the table, when I light a candle,
I talk with you. If I travel alone, I travel with
you. When you don't write for years, your silence
sustains me. When I think of Saint Elizabeth
or King Charles or even Riesling wine, I think
of you. Everything makes me think of you.
Every fragrance, every taste, every touch is you
to me, and to these two remaining angels.
She'd be 18 now, maybe leaving school.
I think about her a lot and about that evening.
It's raining. They say this is love. I don't know.
If they introduced you to me,
I'd fulfil the prophecy.

TO THE SEVENTH GENERATION

(*Hetedíziglen*)

I don't remember exactly where and what
we ate in Stintino, but I do remember
the tastes, how we looked for the restaurant,
the evening walk, the journey there by the sea,
the fresh asphalt, the early start the next day,
the journey back through Argentiera, – the minute
we arrived, we went shopping for food in Alghero –
and the dinner in Cuglieri, heavy, oily foods, cheeses,
olives, we drank purple wine too, that day was your
birthday, I think, I don't know where we had dinner
in Aritzo, but I remember the breakfast well, the table
outdoors and the cold indoors, at night. In Cuglieri,
we ate at an authentic place, some kind of toasted
sandwich and a cheap drink, we set off late again
in the morning to the church, getting there just at
the end of mass, for the strewing of the rose petals,
the sea down below, *il mare*, in Sassari I don't think
we ate anything, we must have eaten our fill of each
other

since then only the checks and balances
the leap days
the hesitant hours

MERCY II
(*Kegyelem II*)

I can't see behind it. Refraction is out of the question.
It arrives with words, with deeds, with omissions,
then waits. You can't love more than one person at once.
Just some. All the animals in the one you omitted to.
I can't see behind it. It surrounds me.

0:36
(*0 óra 36*)

I would love so much to be weak again.
To hear the insults, to see the havoc I cause
when I'm strong and when the angel does
not hug me. To touch the swollen face.
To be there again on the eighth day.
To laugh at it all. To refuse the tribute.

MERCY III
(Kegyelem III)

Who wouldn't see the scales in the shop window?
Who wouldn't place our velvet-wrapped stone bets
in return for the one heartfelt hurtful act.

CASTEL SANT'ANGELO
(Angyalvár)

You and Eszter were waiting for me in Rohr,
we'd agreed I'd take you both home, and I'd take
your camera, the pictures from which I'd saved
elsewhere. When I saw you barefoot, I was left
breathless, I was wearing three sweaters and a coat
at least, like a stern dad I shook my head.
While we were buying shirts in one of the shops
your brand-new camera fell onto the floor,
the back of it broke off – for years you had trouble
with it when you took photos. I don't know which
shop that was in, or in which life, but I suspect we
have not yet paid, and they are still standing guard.

#SUNWAYtoday II
(#NAPÚTma)

Like a ship's hull fallen on its side and like
the waiting for the incoming tide. Until you
cross the road. Until you live through every
collision. It pulls in two directions. Inwards
it's dense, outwards endless. The little cedar
until it's two thousand years old.

MINESTRONE
(Minestrone)

I have eaten the minestrone soup you brought
on Sunday, it was delicious, not only because
of the fresh and healthy ingredients, there was
in it, too, the ceaseless beat of the ever-widening
soul, the sky-high beanstalk, les fleurs du insult,
there was love and the eternity of being unloved
the fragrance and quiet of distant inner landscapes,
the abusive world's last flailing before the appeal court.

SEVEN SENTENCES ON ABUSE
(Hét mondat az abúzusról)

Where there is abuse, there is abuse.
Not only in the visible
But under all the make-up
On all lips
In every quiet hour.
Everyone abuses
Always and everywhere
And always someone else.
You're no different.
We're one in hurtfulness.
And one also in trouble.
The victim gets quieter.
The perpetrator loses silence.

DEFLECTION II
(Hárítás II)

Say it aloud, and a sea of filth opens up before you.
Hush it up, and the sty's rank heat will spread within you.

THE CHIEF MUSICIAN'S PSALM

(Az éneklőmesternek zsoltára)

Whoever hears all the weeping, while feeding his leaven.
Whoever sees the material, the continually split sky.
Knows not the day but knows the hour.
Calls away, is called away.
Listens while others speak.
Gets Judas to talk.

SCRUM

(Scrum)

Standing up every morning in the trench
and reporting on the day before. Agile
and emotionless, we get from A to B,
taking both the quiet and the last bastions
of decency. Removing the very last shirt
off our backs while artificial intelligence
works in our stead. Give us this day our
daily war. 57. Newspapers tell lies,
and writers, public figures, newsreaders,
the weather, international organisations,
you also lie and I do not always tell the
truth myself. We like to live this way.
The best of all possible worlds.
End of business.

WHO LEANS CLOSE

(Ki hajol közel)

Who bends close enough to him,
and who holds up the canvas,
when the covenant has unravelled,
and with unravelled brains we search
madly for the aura in case another just
might have survived? But how will we
notice it in the half-dark, and in the
swirling dust will we recognise its
unmistakeable fragrance, perhaps
this is how the prophecy and the tardy
prophets will come together if they
don't bend close enough to him,
and they don't enter the Zone,
with the remaining seven icons,
it's not being built that will make
it great and it won't be built until
it's worn away because there's only
one icon, and one long stress test
on the final body.

BOSA

(Bosa)

I remember that leftwards glance,
the colour of the air, its taste, your face,
your voice, everything. I was rarely so calm
and content as I was at that time with you.
Germans would call it *Geborgenheit*. If there is
such a thing, I miss it. I miss you. Put that in
parentheses. As to whether the old town
was beautiful, we'll never know.

TONSURE II
(*Tonzúra II*)

We'd like to save that
building, the kindly brothers'
meeting place, but what will become
of the fearless congregation, whom the
lord of the manor threw one by one to his
bosom pals. Two figures look at each other,
two unhugged warlords, one of them is you, the
other pulls you to him.

IL MARE
(*Il mare*)

There's that restaurant in the booming bay
cut into the rocks metres above the lashing
waves I'd only seen it in pictures I sent you
once it's not because of the direct and powerful
image that such storms also rage within us much
rather on account of the sea if even despite
common law we still have to talk continually.

PYRMONT
(*Pyrmont*)

Not the castle up high
Nor the romance.
The hunting-down.
The surrender, after a siege.

ASANA
(*Ászana*)

We concern ourselves with the names, always
the names. Then it flips. The first befitting
gaps appear on the texture. The daffodil
field at Csákyakő has bloomed within you.
In the Mekong Delta, fishermen are eating.

WAVE AND PARTICLE

(Hullám és részecske)

When the untempered material falls apart
into its elements. When the light falls apart too.
When they ring the requisitioned warning bells.
When you are singularity.
A bell tower.

ACTS

(ApCsel)

The failure of pathos and the many-coloured
black and white. Both my grandfathers could
have said this in the Donbas, when doing ‘a little’
forced labour between 1945 and 48. That little
labour became a lot, and several survivors were
finished off by the joy of homecoming and their
wives’ love; after three lean years their stomachs
couldn’t handle good home cooking. But they
survived. The Lord still had plans for them as did
constant new necessities which breed invention.
Thou shalt not work mischief against thy neighbour,
he does that himself as does his household, his ox
and his ass. We reckon the minute to be eternity,
but that’s always reckoning on us right now.
If we fall out of time, He feeds His saints with
His own hands. If you’re present, they will tie
the trendy horsemen of the apocalypse behind
their own.

BINGE
(Druk)

Like an astronaut thrust into space, looking
for a handhold a tether, and like the breathing
under the rubble on the tenth day. We let go
of each other's hands to pull on the bell from
time to time and in order to dig out the battle-axe.
We clashed between werewolves and rescue dogs,
surprised at the landscape's mildness.
We go to the peace talks in our finest rags.

COMPATIBILITY CHECK
(Compatibility check)

God sees the eye, you the face and beneath us
the meadows. I never said aloud what couldn't
also be said in a poem. Between top predators
it's not easy to save and carry over inspiration.
Nor is it possible. All those important words
of ours, and the few we tossed off while we stand
in line. While the sentence is being decided on.

FIRST-LEVEL COURTS

(Elsőfok)

Going in at ten o'clock.
And not scaring away the fire brigade.
Every existing world is in flames.
Every famished soul is a number.

THEY DON'T RECOGNISE.

SECOND-LEVEL COURTS

(Nem ismerik. Másodfok)

They no longer recognise the metaphor
don't want
don't know the key
war and pillage rage in the souls and you poor
thing on your lonesome why bother no one
wants to heal anymore with the dried medicinal
herbs stored up in the attic or strung around
the neck they just want to get better quickly
healing is lengthy healing requires study humility
quiet poems are needed and for those metaphor
the experience of metaphor not the knowing of it
what's hardened worn down to bone and concrete
dried in the sun can't be learned
and while war rages in the souls
the war of unpretentiousness
the rear-guard actions of cheapness
the word, the deed the kiss are now overinflated
what else are we going to sacrifice on the altar
of appearance-aesthetics and if the altar itself
burns up too what then?

– there's rebellion the rebellion of masses against
everything that still bears the sign words statues
beautiful women laps metaphors the language
the most conventional progressive modern
flexible timeless
ancient

they
who

when the dear one crossed the street
could be anyone man woman girl anyone who
is dear or could be someone's sweetheart loveable
vulnerable sweet the language doesn't need to know
doesn't determine it either because only it knows
it knows everything and if we say aloud what in fact
comes to my mind you come to my mind in connection
with this too I of course know who you are and what
you'd bring up in my defence but they no longer get it
they don't recognise it their robes have been eaten
up by moths naphthalin's no use either
and who uses lavender anymore?

██████
██████

I don't know what to make of these whopping
great ████████ sympathies nor those ████████ sympathies
nor being pro- ████████ or being pro- ████████ when will
there be an end to it and the prisoners of war
the hostages when will they release them and
us when will they release us from our own
prison with that handful of personal effects
bundled up in bubble wrap when?

BALÁCA
(*Baláca*)

This here's a counter a bed a guest room every
room's a guest room and all time spent in the
wilderness on the ground in temptation is being
a guest

challenging times

state of grace

then once more the tyranny of convenience
the time of lazy of weak flesh from which
the lice flee as from before a delouser the soul
flees the sinking ship I'm telling you be glad
as long as you have needs because necessity
is the mother of invention the great bender
the greatest among benders and it 'shreds'
the body too oh come on that little treat
I worked for it I'm not going to leave it
there that doesn't count no one'll see it

BRANCH
(*Branch*)

When how are we going to connect when will
we loop around and to where on what we're
happy to put our names which will be the future
branch and which the master the develop
it depends who's operating who's got permission
to commit and when the pipeline explodes it can
also go to production without testing the user will
test it anyway they're the ones who'll bear the brunt
today 8 tomorrow 10 billion souls the key thing is
whether it's numerical or array or maybe list of values
but definitely not character.

JULES ET JIM
(Jules és Jim)

How can a person love two you ask how can
we stay true to ourselves and what's the I where
does it begin and where does it end and where is
the inner mover if there is inner and outer at all
what have we achieved have we got better *trotz*
a two-thousand-year-old Christian 800-year-old
European ethos high arts painting philosophy
poetry music where have we got to and what
does the pattern reveal my friend György
the joiner said after every stage in the process
you need to see where we've got to is it in true
now what does it tell you he asked then we tried
it up and it fitted together so what does it tell you
this thing we've built is it stable will it stand on its
own two feet or will this fall apart as well I don't
know how you can count love there's no good
or bad way to love you can only love said the other
unknown 21st-century poet let's have a look now
meekly with humility after every stage where have
we got to is it in true now what does it tell you

FADO
(Fado)

When it was still us feeding each other and not
them us I put the soldiers in your mouth by hand
and pulling out my hand I touched you with the
outside edge of my index finger but only written
down is this so long and complicated because
in any case it was a merest-touch briefer than
a moment now you've shared a picture I don't
know what nor do I need to know I don't allow
anyone else to feed me except maybe my daughter
if I get to that stage but till then lay off a man's house
is his castle a politics-free zone and cloistered lodging
until yet more craziness trends move in on us put your
arm through mine I'll give you a ride to yourself
there'll be transfiguration the world's your disciple
I won't fall asleep I will keep watch with you

PILGRIMAGE TO THE CEDARS
AT BANSKÁ ŠTIAVNICA
(*Zarándoklás a cédrusokhoz Selmebányán*)

The crowd processing upwards, when it
has left its dreams behind. Those processing
downwards, after leaving their sins up there
on the hill. And the workhouse angels.
That's us. All.
Devilish saints whom the earthly hell does not
release. Who love light better than the lights.
Barefoot saint of mine, you walk on golden rain.

Not the departure, nor the preparations for it.
The call, which at the start is still wordless.
The cacophonic silence and the Carthusian anguish.

*Up the hillside
up the rigging
prodded on by sins aplenty
light-sodden
sun-dazzled
sipping anguish-tea
laying a jinx on faith with faith
dancing up the money owed
walking out under the sky
keeping the secret in three
tongues
that every
visibly-vision
is a state of grace*

It's not easy, with these cultured-type sins
to balance in silkweed mountainward.
Especially, if omission.
From the thirtieth day.

He kept himself to himself he'd had a tracheotomy
there was also that misfired bullet when he was still
a child and it wasn't even that vision at Igló which
wasn't exactly like that because nothing is exactly
like that he himself was the one doing the calling that's
why he knew what it is to be called we're all spiritual
centres everyone's a little Vatican a state within a state
with Swiss guards apparatus treasury Sistine Chapel
habemus papam take his holiness into the sun
the light heals everyone even the healthy

the cedars can be seen from above their pyramidal
treetops show us the way

I saw pictures Soviet soldiers bullet holes bombed
out walls scattered holy objects foulmouthed laughter
TikTok videos text messages

maybe when we paint it write it put it into
musical notation carve it from our soft-walled hard
bodies the great motif

live-birth

maybe they will go quiet

maybe we will go quiet.

LAST JUDGEMENT
(Utolsó ítélet)

One after the other they march by under the windows.
The shabby shutters carefully closed.
What's outside should just stay outside.
Inside flash, mob.

TANTRA XI
(Tantra XI)

Because we will have to
will have to surrender the bridgehead
let it come what must come
the light the filth
let it all flow over us
and it will be justified
and we will be justified
and after the descent
comes the transfiguration
after the leprous generations
the sextant
the transformation

WOUND FEVER

(Sebláz)

Under signs that are difficult to identify
we wander lost in weightless spaces
with impressive
piles of baggage
we drag push pull tug
carry over into tomorrow
what remains of the divine comedy
in the form of props
strips of flesh
though we only believe in the kind of tomorrow
that we messed up ourselves
and anyway if anyone else can
 give a reason
 a decent golden-age mantra
 which would start the wind blowing
 that holy draught within us
 the like of which golden-mouthed John Chrysostom
also eagerly whipped up within himself not bothering
with the tiny details of dogma and theological debates
the a priori fuss involved in the beatification of saints
who wouldn't believe more firmly in the present
than those embedded
than those soft-braided in prosperity

and that warning-bellow.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN, THE PSALM OF THE WHALES

(Az éneklőmesternek, az bálnáknak zoltára)

Whom they also call cetaceans
Queens of the oceans and all the waters
the Earth's breathing apparatus
First hermits
Last prophets

In this way will the last become first
among heralds
it's not like it hasn't
fainted in battle
not like it hasn't
split off from today
not like it hasn't fallen
far from the tree
not like yes
not like from a mother

Like someone swept away
Washed up on the shore
A ton of the past
A corpse-worth of dream

Whatever comes to hand beach towel shawl widow's
veil bucket blood-bowl hat anything in which water
can be carried to the body stretched out on the strand
to stop it drying out
stop it dying of thirst
before the next still-low tide

A quarter of a million tons of water pressure on your neck
you flee from before us
spermaceti
you travel through hell in our stead
in good Christian fashion
we lay your nice tasty flesh
your blubber
in a cross, we throw it in a heap
cut into strips
because it's needed for the machine
needed for the factory
needed as useful and useless tallow
for face packs
so as not to give people anything to talk about

They bow politely before each other
I saw something similar the other day a girl
at the zoo
one bite one bow
pure heart pure charm
pure elegance

Then when no one's looking
they stick their gorgeous oh-so-fine harpoons
their gorgeous tempered steel boathooks
into me
like the steak
in some elegant restaurant
or the sushi with decorative chopsticks
they fire explosive charges into me
which is forbidden even in wartime
after all fighting is also only with due

care for the Geneva Convention
and the gentlemen's agreement

Kill the thing
Strictly for research purposes
And out of respect for our ancestors
And tradition
Our tradition
The tradition of every real man
And common law.

And all the while in that other bay
Red-handed men are putting red seals
into red snow
And taking them out
Shaking them all about
A wee bit o' purifying fire
A wee bit o' hell
In out in out
red hands
– from our faults which stretch across the seven seas
from our most manifold omissions.

But our tradition is cooperation the defence
of the fallen the nets hooks neighbours whose
lips stomachs souls injured by sharp cans and
the rescue of people fallen into the water through
their own fault or not through their own fault the
defence of the community the Earth the defence
of all creation and the honourable surrender
a salute to our executioners

one harpoon
one bow
one scream
one tear for the orphaned calf

for every minute passed in terror

because you too shrink into the foetal position human
when you're afraid
and you're continually afraid
that you will lose something
because there's never enough
and there's always that curve
the fever
and Nineveh – cursed
because it repented

---.....---

---.....---

---.....---

---.....---

though if you knew what a beautiful pattern
organic venation connects us – with you too –
what the inexhaustible map of our songs
our wanderings our voyages of discovery
our solitary retreats our shared festivities
the possibilities for our coexistence
reveals

That the way we treat each other
Is our home

This too you learned from us
You did not yet exist
You had not yet left
the very first
clumsy marks
of the strange workings of your hands
When you were still humans

Living for others that's the real net
You can catch living things in it
And dead things with the death of death

If one among you
If just one among us

WITH THE UNDERCOVER AGENTS

(A beépített ügynökökkel)

It's harder and harder with the undercover agents they're not blown away by anyone they see what you're up to they never ask for permission forgiveness asking nicely gets you nowhere they never turn up at the right moment they hold their ground they don't like the dark dropping hints sneakiness they're happy in the light they don't prevaricate you can't listen in on them lead them by the nose blackmail them you can't grease their palms the truth will out it doesn't show off doesn't resist doesn't aspire to honours isn't afraid doesn't ask for doesn't laze around is all there never bites eyes with suspicion doesn't turn a person against his neighbour will suck it up doesn't beat around the bush never does a U-turn trusts you implicitly doesn't adorn itself with borrowed plumes always takes its pills is grey simple colourless but sticks up for its principles if required always hits the nail on its transfigured head it never gets up to no good doesn't look for what's in it for itself doesn't pinch pennies doesn't go out of the frying pan into the fire doesn't walk out on anyone doesn't expect a life of Riley puts the work in itself doesn't sleep on the job knows where the problem is if there's trouble it drops everything knows the drill what's what it's got all its marbles the luck of the devil a bridle leaves no stone unturned speaks its mind lends a helping hand to you too has a good word for everyone doesn't blow its own trumpet isn't quick to judge would give you the shirt off its back is always in a hurry bites off more than it can chew takes things too far sees red thumbs its nose at the crowd stands its ground is as pure as the driven snow is patient is not jealous does not brag is not proud not easily provoked is not tactless does not harbour a grudge does not rejoice in evil finds joy in the triumph

of justice bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things. there's plenty can be held against it. it requests that the agents' files be made public.

THE LONG-NAMED ONE

(*A hosszú nevű*)

and that other one
who barely bends the knee
who regards others as a lower form of life
who drinks from rapture's other ditch
– if there is anything in it –
keeps others waiting
makes them kneel
covets his neighbour's wife house his ability to be swayed
is always waiting for the other salvation
for the current one is too uncomfortable
is daring
as which of these lower life-forms will withstand
the fattening gaze of the good farmer
where the *appell* is sounded
when it's filthy Friday
bloody Thursday
when it's before time

come now come now

there's a crisis on sir
the deterioration of public morals
they say
there's maybe a modicum of truth in it
we couldn't pull off a consolation goal
that last time either
couldn't restore our honour
though it wasn't down to us

from the North stand to the South stand
from every parliamentary horseshoe every
sector came the clanking
of so many *deus* and *exmachina*
here we stand
tell them we did our duty

mea culpa mea culpa mea circus maximus

You who have had enough of exchange
rate fluctuations
who pray to the other Golden Calf
instead of our own sacred cow
you'll be counted one by one
and will be recorded
in nice big databases
then you'll be taken out
made even bigger
in out in out
– each according to his great worth –

our modesty is exceeded only by our humility
and the fever of keeping to the rules

Give us this day our daily ethical code
our cudgels
our sweet little purse
but tomorrow too and always the day after tomorrow
our need is great you know
the household deficit is great

In our great exposure do not abandon us
oh great exposed one!

OLYMPIA
(*Olympia*)

When the great punch-ups began again
– granted they never stopped –
when the waters broke and the doctors' rounds
were over and we were left to ourselves sick
in the childbed always-fever
covered in boils from the disease
because we're in it we're placed in it
we're Zeitgeist
symptom
I'm a modern poet
a 21th-century one
vaccinated with Moderna
sufficiently pragmatic sufficiently insane
engrafted with more than everything
that can cause pain pinch scratch itch
that always puts a tick next to my box
that nurses and will bury you
if the great cleaner-upper clears you away
and *you are thrust there by necessity*
greetings to the victor
sine ira et studio
and gloria victis

We've been left alone
with our daily joys fears beliefs
that even if it's not better it's easier to grasp
that what why

and – mainly – why not
for in that we're world champions
olympic record holders

the Greeks – it's always them – had a custom
that the glory went not to the one driving
the chariot but to whoever had set it up fitted it
out not to the one who ran but to the merciful God

and we run

we can't stop.
Nor do we want to.

SPECIAL DAY

(Ünnep)

We were created to create just sometimes
we resist we flail quite successfully against
our fate like so many Jonahs and well that
shiny picky cosy city
– our kind of

flashmob.

Which became flesh.

The sty prinked up.

We mucked out under the body.

CATHARSIS

(Katarzisz)

Coming down off the substance and airing out
the eloquent silence. Welcoming in is metrical.
Opening up is eight mora.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN,
THE PSALM OF THE LITERATE
(Az éneklőmesternek, az írástudóknak zsoltára)

Healthy self-criticism and healthy erotica
lift the veil the exposure of metrical feet
to public view can cause moral crisis long
winding queues in front of the mausoleum
decorated with medals from the waist up
above a certain level it's just downhill there
are too many curators and too few poets
you learn something new every day
no one is responsible

ESPRIT DE CORPS
(Összetartás)

When that certain innocence was lost
or was lost on purpose it not being
trendy to believe that the portrait a given word
said aloud written down has power
not only in the time of cholera plague
and world-sized lies
their waves lap at the threshold
we could even go under

a second christening
second coming
umpteenth language death

Falling always just at first
Like someone who can barely see
Who is always looking inwards
– while the protection money is collected –
to keep up appearances.

WAR ECONOMY

(Hadigazdaság)

What a brave thing it is to wage war from
the couch to make peace while chewing
over others' petitions for divorce meanwhile
continuing – because you've got to live right –
the violence within the family the estate
the soul-temple one's own body
because the aim is noble

■ and ■
and depleting the human resources
once and for all
because ■

displaying strength glory radiance for the triumphant
procession
lots of slaves
stolen treasures
going into the holy of holies in muddy shoes
standing on the moral table in boots
and getting someone else into trouble
humiliating one's own child partner
preaching
about love between people
with a furred tongue
because the inorganic becomes organic
and nothing can be as dispassionate
as an angel-less icon

How little the soul weighs after the recognition of sins.
How light is the last-but-one judgement.

SLUICE GATE

(Zsilip)

It's that one sluice gate that divides exactly
that two-sided dyke the bubblewrap the air
is running out again now they're demobilizing
now they're mobilizing there's a state of emergency
a state of need a slippery wall with nothing to grip
onto the firedamp faceless pressure just builds
and builds – the colourless odourless mixture

THE WAY OF FLESHES PLANTS

(Húsok növények útja)

If we let the plants and the plant-eating
meats just walk over us and photosynthesis
take place with the exception of us if we let
the light wear away too in all the tax returns
– because you still have to pay tax –
there are many hungry mouths mainly ours
if we balance the books to a tee

let's at least have the bravery to do that one.
For the prophesying ceases knowledge vanishes
away the source dries up and in our great need
we begin to speak in tongues. And on our
tongues there will no longer be words.

8:36

(8 óra 36)

Important meeting.
There are no more arguments.
What could go out has gone out of us.
We've been left here, ex-leprous,
on the bad edge
of silence-rutting.
Every new messiah yells in your face.
That old one stands behind you in silence.
The crowd mingles.

THE MINISTRY OF HUMANITY

(Emberiség minisztérium)

We were sensitive to news and gullible
we believed it had value the whispering
proganada the words that slipped out by
accident had news value according to which
a new world was coming always a newer one
look our children are also pressing forward
on smart gadgets machines writing poems
and there are laws rules paragraphs on the souls
too though there's a housing crisis in the body
eviction m o r a t o r i u m or no eviction
m o r a t o r i u m this once fertile oasis is going
to dry up the local colour will gradually disappear
they'll catch and break first the spokesman then
the letter-sower the rest they'll buy off whole
households three oceans wash its shores and every
sea on its empire the sun never sets it doesn't even rise

SHARED VALUES

(Nemzeti minimum)

Perhaps we are also entitled to be presumed
innocent we've done nothing unlawful nothing
that other people haven't – you've got to move
with the times – just the usual little deals bits
of business *why should I behave honourably* he doesn't
lay his cards on the table in any case no-one's going
to put up a statue to you not even Christ's coffin
was guarded for free don't you tell me what to do
I've got a r i g h t to it and come to think of it
a d u t y too because I can't end up out of pocket
there's equal opportunities equally poor treatment
and I'm also due this much pay-back that regular
allowance came from my taxes it's common property
they could be grateful for it come to that they could
say thanks or something

LIKE A SLAP
(*Mint egy pofon*)

Like a slap dealt by the most beloved hand
you write
meanwhile the light also falls in chafes
 the barrel gets a tap
 the fruit tree a flower
and in the chambers of the heart the
sad chamberlain's
 undeveloped picture.
This makes it beautiful
This makes it different.
And this makes it so true.

On the streets veterans process remembering
lost wars the castle is open to visitors
humanity takes a big breath and pauses
overcoming ourselves of course putting
a large bet on the losing moment.

TACHYON. SECOND COMING.
(*Tachion. Második eljövétel*)

To the Chief Musician, the Psalm of the Anointed

*Pushes it before him faster than light that's why you can't
see him approaching receding keeping you at a distance
you know not the place nor the hour there is no margin
for error penalties to pay loyalty card left at home indulgences
quota it doesn't make a great noise doesn't draw attention
to itself you can't prepare for it prepare yourself for it
but why bother he's there behind all light approaching
receding keeping you at a distance we always know
the place and the hour there's no need for a margin
of error penalties to pay soulless quotas he could
enter anytime but just say the word you won't make
a noise you'll understand instantly*

MYSTERIES II
(Rejtelmek II)

*I love you dad and you're a nice kid too there comes
a time you have to grow up I know you have to follow
in the footsteps shivering alone and making heat energy
tummo alone but I know there's no need even to look
back it's enough to reach your hand out behind you
there'll always be someone who'll grasp it someone
to whom with whom we pray we tuck ourselves into
a poem of an evening and there'll come a time when
nothing itches any more for the world will awaken
will receive the light and will receive me too but till
then please rub the ointment on me one last time
place your healing hands on me smooth away still
this small anomaly under our soul-skin*

FEOFAN
(Feofán)

Early afternoon when the light falling in
isn't blinding and the groans outside
also leave off stretched out on the wooden
bench – hands direct me in the right direction
with your back to the iconostasis
– for if anyone imagines you must look at
what can be seen from inside it would be
better for him if he poured lead
into his own eyes
eye-to-eye with the off-white projected
on the wall for days and weeks *sustainedly*
– because it is sustained
it sustains
feeling the damp confession of the plaster
if it gets mixed up with yours
then paint.
When the plaster falls off you're free.

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

(*Acceptance criteria*)

After living the life of Riley it's time to get
to the bottom of it figure out how it's going
to work develop defensive methods lay down
arms test the dome – art nouveau – let off
steam deliver the missing specifications
APIs the harvest run a regtest – to live –
be *de facto* present when going live *face to face*
end to end to hope to finally make peace with
ourselves to handle every arising incident ours
other's reassure the partners and – there's always
something in the backlog – take out the next ticket.
After the new release the refactoring.
After the refactoring an infinite loop.

COHORS

(*Cohors*)

Two years ago today, the application reminds me
we were at the Gizella-Major Roman fort we climbed
the fence no problem I never thought it would be this
easy to take a fort well even the sorrowful samurai *cohors*
living within us one by one six 80-strong *centuria* barbarian
impacts versus defended bastions salients glazed vessels
strange smoothings prickings incisions we're poised on
a knife-edge the *limes* is always being pushed on the noose
is tightening around the inner legion we're being chased
off fabricated charges arise the electoral threshold is now
unattainable

THE OCEAN IN A DROP

(Cseppben a tenger)

I like how parched water horror trickles down
my chin onto my clothes not because of the
pleasant lack of discipline nor on account
of the elemental power the thirst but the slightly
tilted-back head the surrender the wounds
acquired in the course of the absolution
and the christenings that have fallen into
their constituent parts suspended dust holy
smog the ocean in soul-drops without a point
of reference abused language in lots of talk
bad silence a continually abusive mouth though
who is the one who doesn't if you have to deny
if you have to profess if you have to grow up
– just because – without bail

FROM THE HADIK BARRACKS

(Hadik laktanyából)

The Hadik barracks became a secret police
operations base around it firedamp – that
of the many million lives lied away – every day
a new sun-way in words in poems in presence
concentrated silences' urbane pulsation there's
a spot on the upper stretch of the Danube
at Württemberg where periodically the water
dries up leaks out several not yet even river
kilometres downstream – what flow what flux!! –
emerges once more the dry riverbed is the apotheosis
of good silence-keeping the stones swimming
drowning in air and this daybreak drunkenness
the umpteenth my daughter wrote too she can't
sleep she loves me and celestial blue pours from
Pauler Street too what else might come how many
angelic upbraidings the atmosphere is explosive

ABRASIONS

(*Horzsolások*)

For the opening of Ágota Véres's exhibition

As on the sloping vineyards at Beregszász the growing
cycle a Ruthenian wedding in the distance between
neatly ploughed fields an area gone to seed old chapel
stone-red monastery and the believable belief bringing it
into today
the silence laid in a stack.

You have to write down the name give it a title then
forget it start everything
from scratch
that has its start
within you.

In the beginning was the picture then the scratch.
In spine-chilling times – always – icon painting.
Because we are at one.
The image is in us.
A projection in our mismatched hands.

I'm writing down your name
Sweet good Amrita
I'm writing down your name
Great Forest of Debrecen.
In you is the search
and the algorhythm.
In you is the votive stone.
The choirmaster's choral work.

For a long time the material in you stands still until
the spin in it is subdued. You subdue its own twirling
to yourself and you start out on your own orbit.
Holding against spinning out.
Galvanized light against insanity.

You write about the holy duration of indeterminacy.
And how in that state the material has certain beautiful
dyings. Like the crumb of the loaf the heel the crunchy
rim of the splits in the bread.

When living humans – living due to being hungry
and cold – first stroked the material with their
fingers when they knocked God out of the rock
with their stone axe and breathed into it merciful
anger against the mediocre
– when they were able to give it a name –
when they first stood against
and when they first did not
the bloody-muddy mark on their forehead
a brick a flower in their fist
suspended dust in the scattered light
concentration
dried clay
that's what we'll be like.

We'll be like
the abrasions on Cain's hand
like Juliette Binoche
scraping her bunched fist on the wall
the redness of embers
laughline

broken promise
broken bread
like scratches on a tree
bruises on kidneys
on foetuses pulled out with forceps.
scratches on the carefully built-up image.
abrasions on old summers.

From above it's like a tapestry.
Close up as mute as a harbour without seagulls.
Maltreatment bruises splits beats cuts into.
Only woundedness has texture.
Absence explains.

As apartment prices go up paint paper canvas silk
as suffering too brings more and more to those
rutting with passion
so the value of protection money increases

though it is i n d e f e n s i b l e
– because defended from the start.

Across the swamp across the reedbed echoing
earth boulevard mudslide according to the intentions
of those in hiding and the prince.
Loving the barbed belt the cincture – that chafes too –
and making bird feeders from coffin boards.

In the Philippines people are put on the cross
to this day – they volunteer for it – so that in this
way they can experience His suffering.
Within us two thieves watch tensely.

One membrane-thin
and one barely-chafed.

Every lighting technician in position
every angle measured the light creeps up
like sturgeon salmon into a sheltered bay.
Our hymens have been poked through our
innocence taken away and we were robbed
with their oily *pogácsas* baked in radioactive ash.
The dual nature of the guilty *as if*.
The other point of view is the psychological aspect
of the visual effect. You could be right, because
it has gnawed its way into us especially as we speak
in pictures – if in Hungarian – this is how
an icon becomes a miracle talk a *locus credibilis*.
Every single rusty gate that the wind shakes
an exposed surface a pavement not in use
swings in and out
the creaking of souls can be heard from here
and the plebs
crucify him!
crucify him!
he was quick to strike
he'll be quick to blab

----...----
----...----
----...----

Don't mind the stigma
Hold on tight to every brush
because every brush is yours
and yours every scraping.

Those coming out of death salute you.

But this is just the surface

Just the scratch

Just a little graze.

Though uneven in outcome and occasionally
– possibly most often – lonely.

I am material.

I come from dying. I greet you.

TWO SPOILED HEXAMETERS

(Két rontott hexameter)

The hegemon cannot do anything it wants in this world.

But you can make a world of difference to the inner hegemon.

ZALÁN'S FLIGHT
(*Zalán futása*)

No-one keeps quiet like a poet keeps quiet why
would he say anything anyway the situation after all
speaks for itself the situation also speaks about itself
don't fidget over there on that little pillory in Spanish
boots a metrical iron lung you can always smell the
stink of a rat the dependant sticks out the lifted pinkie
as if the inkpot is merely falling out of the scriptor's
swollen fingers and an invisible hand were checking
its fall a little way above the ground *pushing back against*
the move made by the two-left-handed stage left Leftley

h o v e r i n g he said
always the jolt before the hovering
then the rest is child's play

between the crucifier and the crucified there's just
that one letter three or four mora and the almost
zero-sum game never mind that there's sovereignty-
protection here or there everyone's getting into bed
with everyone else everyone's slut drab the poem
the poet without legal protection identity-protection
without protection of ownership namely the right to
one's own good-death and to keeping quiet all over
without the theoretical possibility of calling for
an encore though the poet runs right and if required
will kick the ball – the same one now going on a couple
of thousand years – ragball ragrug-motif the metric foot

without a host body Rimbaud's ever-slower limping
in the silence of the proto-European desert of Ethiopia
because that's always how it ends up with desertification
and falling silent for lack of language making the nation
the nation will die if of course someone who
– something that? – abandons their own anointed to die
of hunger in word without a word can be called a nation

not even the Earl of Kent would deserve so undignified
an end

You are infinitely patient with us Lord
Your infinite patience is the holiest of sins

HAUERSBRONN ELEGY

(*Haubersbronni élégia*)

The fruit trees – angiosperms – grafted onto the end
of the village faint into wakefulness finite soundlessness
before all fasting somewhere under the as-yet-unnamed sky
 somehow on understandable
 human terrain.

Spaces on a human scale. The monastery's cloister
the lake the waiting the unbribeable milieu.
And the inventory. Beside each item I drew myself.
As you asked me to. Since then the taxman's been
coming at me and won't leave.

People like being debtors.
Debtors like having co-debtors
 on the blank motherboard.

Anything goes in the closed ward and so does
the relief kiss if it has a good credit history.
Pride comes before a fall and even fake modesty
is punishable. There's a lack of gaps
that haven't been admitted to.
I give I get
They give they take.
Wailings.

--- The deer were left out and something Ebnisee.
The time of the great watering holes has come.
A sea of tarns in the wildernesses ---.

Thrice tithes of dogs licking their wounds
Mares with dangling bridles
Pensioner cherubim
Parcae
A whole clutch of hungry angels left to their
 own devices

And Moroccan saffron.

There's a lack of trees where the forest is lacking.
Samarian *plein air*.
Palm Sunday.

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