

Attila József's poem 'Hopelessly' ends with the lines '...the heart aches & bleeds. / But who to talk to anyway'. Piette & Lehóczky's translations in *The Song of the Cosmos* answer that question. A member of the great line of European poètes maudits stretching from François Villon through to Sean Bonney, readers will find an author who lived and wrote as if they were missing a warm enough coat and their top layer of skin. József's poems – raw, tender, desperate, and despairing – explore a landscape that is alternatively homely, blasted and overwhelming. József's also an important poet in how successfully he depicts the decades between the first and second world wars in Central-Eastern Europe when it seemed that the whole of the populace were holding their breath – there is an intensity and dread in so many of his poems. Finally, Hungarian is a fiendishly difficult language to bring across into English. The translators' handling of József's electric language in their brilliant translations have produced a fully-realised collection in English. To his translators – kudos! Attila József lives!

Tim Atkins

Attila József is no stranger to English readers, his poems have appeared in quite a few translations. In 2005 one of his collections was named Book of the Year by Seamus Heaney in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Each new translation not only further expands the range of his poems available in English, but also offers new perspectives to them. The works of Attila József deserve the attention of poetry readers on both sides of the Atlantic. He was a contemporary of the Leftist group of poets in the 1930s. With W. H. Auden, Louis MacNeice and others their poetry shared a vibrant sensitivity to social issues and expressed committed anti-fascist views during the 'low, dishonest decade'. Attila József was strongly influenced by the psychology of Sigmund Freud, his self-analytical poems – and his tragic suicide – can be read as an early Eastern European variant of the post-war American confessional poetry, above all that of Sylvia Plath. The selection by Adam Piette and Ágnes Lehóczky faithfully represents the impressive integrity and formal virtuosity of Attila József's poetry. But the volume is more than just a selection. Accompanying essays introduce the reader to Attila József's oeuvre, and transcriptions-pastiches by contemporary poets indicate the lasting vitality of his work. The contemporaneous illustrations for the title poem by György Békeffi, the graphic artist who was killed as a young man in the Nazi concentration camp in Bergen-Belsen, make this book a real curiosity.

Győző Ferencz

Like Attila József's glassblowers, Adam Piette and Ágnes Lehóczky free-blow the molten gather of this Hungarian poetry into viscous spheres within fragile spheres: elegies within elegies, odes within odes, songs within songs. In their book-within-a-book, the structural instability, akin to glass's liquid state, renders transparent József's 'working in this cosmos' – for us to also 'stare into the glass darkly' to see our faces and constellations.

Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese

For Walter Benjamin the work of art finds its translator and these translations are the embodiment of that task. This new book of translations discovers the English in Attila József's poetry, embodying its afterlife, to cast a remarkable light across the shadows of its original. A revelation to this reader, the sonnet sequence 'The Song of the Cosmos' takes its place as József's early masterpiece, akin to Jack Spicer's 'Imaginary Elegies' in his oeuvre, forgotten and now re-remembered.

The test of a great translation is that it be great poetry in English as well as in its original language, and this work captures and reflects the brilliance and tragedy of József's poems in all their hard density and heartbreak, joy and bitterness. Two of our finest poet-translators, Adam Piette and Ágnes Lehóczky, make the impossible pitch and catch of poetry in one possible. This brilliant book is a work of true scholarship and love.

Simon Smith

The Song of the Cosmos

Attila József Selected Poems

Translated by Adam Piette & Ágnes Lehóczky

Edited by Ágnes Lehóczky

Bilingual edition

Introductions and afterwords by

Ágnes Lehóczky, George Szirtes,

György Tverdota, Aranka Kemény & Adam Piette

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Part One

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A foreword to the Cosmos

Attila József (1905–1937), a celebrated 20th-century Hungarian poet of working-class origin, endured a tragic childhood marked by the early loss of both parents. Born to an unskilled worker and a washerwoman, he was orphaned and spent his formative years in foster care, even working as a swineherd from the age of three before being reunited with his mother. Despite these hardships, he pursued higher education, studying Hungarian and French literature at the University of Szeged. However, his academic career was cut short in 1925 after a disagreement over his poem ‘with a pure heart’ (*‘Tiszta szívvel’*), leading him to continue his studies in Vienna and Paris. In the 1920s, he sympathised with anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist ideals, and from 1930 to 1933, he actively participated in the illegal Communist Party, from which he was later expelled due to disillusionment with Moscow-inspired ideology and his interest in Freudian psychoanalysis. József’s life was marked by poverty, passion, and instability as he wandered, living as a bohemian, poet, thinker, non-conformist, vagabond, and lover. Despite his talent, he remained largely unrecognised during his lifetime, even his work as managing editor of the independent leftist review *Szép Szó* and his final collection, *How It Hurts / Nagyon fáj* (1936), failed to bring widespread acclaim. He died by suicide, struck by a train in Balatonszárszó on Lake Balaton, aged only 32. This five-year project aims to translate a significant selection of his poems, chosen chronologically from his oeuvre.

His poetry is surrealist, quasi anarchist, existentialist, Villonesque, tough-minded, deeply drenched in Hungarian folklore and folk songs, passionate, lyrical, elegiac, marked by his solitary wandering, his keen observation of the lives of the people, by his psychoanalytically inflected gaze into the unconscious, into the mind and body of lovers, his philosophical focus on dialectic and social injustice. The lyrics, free verse and formal, in an astonishing number of experimental forms, range from the metaphysical to the memoir, have filiations to French medieval, post-symbolist and surrealist poetry, fuse Nietzsche, Marx, Hegel and Freud in daring raids on the inarticulate, sing with haunting vernacular and ancient beauty and rise to extraordinary heights and flights of the imagination, yet are always grounded in the real, in the concrete particulars of the metropolis, the dark streets of the underclasses of this world.

This collaborative book, born from several research trips to Budapest, is the result of a unique partnership between the translators Piette & Lehoczky. Long-time friends and colleagues, they are also fellow poets,

their creative minds intertwined in a way that makes them inseparable. Perhaps the most fruitful collaboration occurs when a sculptor meets an anatomist on the surgical slab. One's vibrant, reconstructive architectural sculpting could only emerge after the other's precise, anatomical dissection of the poems through a rigorous textual autopsy. And vice versa. The poems, stripped bare to their essence through neurosurgical obsession and contextual analysis, were then resurrected in a new language, into a new linguistic milieu and into, therefore, a completely new life. This symbiotic process required intensive exchange, a dynamic interplay across linguistic and historical-cultural boundaries within a translingual zone. It unfolded within a liminal space of transcreation, a continuous dialogue until the final draft emerged on the page. Adam's 'Endnotes: on translating József' offers a lens into the sensitive and symbiotic process of how translators navigate this linguistic interplay between texts and trans-languages, specifically through the experience of an English translator.

The poems have been selected and organised here in chronological order yet presented within the time capsules in a looser structure allowing the reader to navigate themselves and to create their own emerging themes, motifs, and narratives. They also come in twos, the new text in English accompanied, echoed, shadowed by its own ghost. Here the selection is a real fusion starting from József's early period of Modernist free verse via his surrealist period of *poésie pure* and Hungarian folk song arriving at his mature psychoanalytic work, philosophical elegies and political verse and final period of his heartbreaking Flora and farewell poems. The selection of the poems has been a conscious one; we have included here what the canon considers major poems as much as 'fragments' and early, less recognised work by József. For the translations, we have relied on Béla Stoll's second critical edition, *József Attila összes versei I–III*; Critical Edition, vols. 1916–1927; 1927 and 1927–1937, published in 2005. This edition is widely accepted as the most contemporary and authoritative critical edition in József Attila Studies.

The collaborative work on this book significantly expanded beyond its initial scope. Instead of simply involving two translators, it evolved into a multifaceted project. Through intensive dialogue, various dramatic turns and U-turns and collaboration with literary institutions in Budapest and Balatonszárszó between 2024 and 2025, the project gained depth and complexity. Key contributors included Aranka Kemény, senior museologist and literary historian at Petőfi Literary Museum (MNMKK–PIM), and György Tverdota, a leading scholar of Attila József and President of the Attila József Society. Psychogeographical trips to significant sites like Petőfi Literary Museum, the Fiume Road National Graveyard, the two Attila

József Memorial Houses – in Gát Street, Budapest and at Balatonszárszó – further enriched the research. The collaborative research and archival work not only deepened the project but also profoundly and rather dramatically influenced the book's design. Therefore, this collection of poems in translation aims to recreate 'The Song of the Cosmos' / 'A Kozmosz éneke', an unpublished sequence of sonnets that József intended to publish in the early 1920s. We have selected the title of József's unpublished 1920s collection for this book, as it aptly captures József's original vision.

What does *the song of the cosmos* refer to? Who sings to whom and about what? The original concept of the sonnet sequence, the 'song of the cosmos' may have been to explore the powerful scope of human consciousness and its connection to a larger, universal dimension. 'Cosmos' here isn't the physical universe but rather the soul expanded to cosmic proportions, a 'universe imbued with a political subject'. In the sonnet cycle, József thus wanted to sing the song of the cosmic soul, as a lyrical outpouring of the cosmos and as a song of the human species, channelling cosmic forces and singing as global collective, as global consciousness, a planetary cosmos speaking about and for itself. For József, a poem is an 'amplified cosmos' with an intricate network of historically politicised algorithms and disharmonies where human planetary-beings seek connection, meaning, understanding, empathy, and solidarity. The subject, the solitary self doesn't merely reside within this universe, they actively inhabit it and seek to establish a hope that harmony between the individual and society can and will be established. This 'dwelling' of this perpetual 'anarchist', this universal, political 'do-er', prophetic, non-conformist wanderer, visionary flâneur, is not a passive or an indifferent *modus vivendi* but a radical and revolutionary existential-creative *modus operandi*, and vice versa, an activist's creative dwelling/being in the world, deeply engaged with its own historical and social vulnerabilities capable of reinforcing dialogue superior to authority for a fairer future. Importantly, this poetic engagement, where 'doing' and 'being' can co-exist in the realm of 'writing', transcends introspection, actively seeking interconnections and dialogue with the other. This collection aims to resurrect 'The Song of the Cosmos', presenting it as a distinct 'book within the book'. Therefore, our aim was twofold: to revive the previously abandoned sonnet sequence within the book while also creating a new collection encompassing not only the sonnets but poems carefully selected from the entirety of József's oeuvre.

The original graphic illustrations of György Békeffi, a young artist of the 1920s Hungarian avant-garde, are central to this book's impact. A close friend to the poet, Békeffi's artistic journey, which continued in Belgium after his 1931 emigration, was tragically ended in Bergen-Belsen in 1944.

His work largely dispersed, and his name nearly lost. By reuniting these sonnets with Békeffi's art, this book seeks to recreate the vibrant, collaborative milieu of the 1920s, where Hungarian writers and artists thrived.

Miklós Ferencz's reimagined cover for 'The Song of the Cosmos' dives into the concept of cosmic space. By reconfiguring Békeffi's original graphics, Ferencz blends drawing with construction-deconstruction, highlighting the interplay of positive and negative spaces and dynamic curves. The densely intersecting lines aim to evoke a cosmic web, with radiating arcs directly echoing the 'Cosmos arcs' from the original cover. Through strategic use of red and black crescendos, Ferencz's new cover intends to create a palpable tension, resulting in a composition that is both chaotic and richly textured, while remaining true to constructivist design principles. This *book within a book* also includes Békeffi's original cover and the planned graphics for the abandoned sonnet sequence.

This bilingual volume, which would not have been possible without the unwavering support and commitment to European poetics provided by our publisher, Tony Frazer, presents a chronological selection of Attila József's poetry, featuring both English translations and the original Hungarian texts chosen from Stoll's 2005 critical edition. It provides context for readers through introductions and afterwords by George Szirtes, György Tverdota, and Aranka Kemény. Faithfully and playfully reconstructing the original graphic design, conceived by József's artist friend György Békeffi in the 1920s, Miklós Ferencz executed the book design specifically for this edition. An additional introductory piece sheds light on the fascinating history of this unpublished manuscript, exploring its origins and the unique artistic vision of the original illustrator.

The concluding section, which includes ekphrastic 'guest poems' by George Szirtes, István Vörös, Adam Piette and Ágnes Lehóczky entitled 'Variations' offers different speculative scenarios about the life of Attila József using his tragic death at Balatonszárszó in December 1937 as only one of the many chance events. These imaginary accounts explore different possibilities surrounding the poet's demise, inviting readers to consider the various theories that have been proposed over the years. The poems create and propose speculative scenarios of what ifs each playing on one of József's final poems 'There, I've found my home at last...' / '[Ime, hát meggleltem hazámat...]'.

What if Attila József had not met his own tragic end in December 1937, Balatonszárszó?

Ágnes Lehóczky

Sheffield-Budapest-Balatonszárszó, April 2025

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The Glassblowers

The glassblowers stoke up their enormous fires
& with their sweat & with their blood
they stir & mix the molten mass together
boiling in their cauldron to transparency
& pour it then into the marver slabs
& with the draining strength of their strong arms
they roll it out so wonderfully smooth
& when the day dawns,
out to the towns and shacks of farms
they go taking the light with them.

Times you'll call them day labourers
times you'll call them poets
though it's all one to them yes all one
for their blood's draining from them
in equal measure they're transparent too
great crystal windows shining bright & clear
in the future that's built from me & you.

'Üvegöntők', 1923

Üvegöntők

Az üvegöntők nagy tüzeket raknak
és vérükkel meg veritékükkel
összekeverik az anyagot,
mely katlanukban átlátszóvá forr.
Azután meg táblákba öntik
s erős karjuk fogyó erejével
egészen simára hengerelik.
És amikor megvirrad a nap,
a városokba meg a tanyai viskókba
elviszik vele a világosságot.

Néha napszámosnak hívjátok őket,
néha pedig költőnek mondjátok,
noha nem több egyik a másiknál.
Lassan egyformán elfogy a vérük,
ők maguk is átlátszóvá lesznek,
ragyogó, nagy kristályablakok
a belőletek épülő jövőn.

Lessons

1

There will be those who will laugh you to scorn –
give them no heed.

They're like those posh kids
in their gabled manor houses
laughing at the pug-nosed pleb
driving his cart full of shit early in the morning
for to leaven the earth unto bread.

And there will be those who, mortified,
spread gossip and rumour amongst the people;
what's he jabbering on about?
He must be off his head, lock him up quick.
A bout of solitary will do him good, cool his blood-hot creed.

All I say to all this is
that my determination is not a madness
but is as a rich ripe field of standing corn
whilst the grain still sleeps in your fields.
My creed has the warmth of the earth,
and just as the earth spreads its warmth amongst us all
so do I share my creed with you, my people.

So don't you listen to them, the mockers & the shocked,
and don't despise them,
you're all of you my brothers, all of you my sisters.

Tanítások

1

Lesznek, akik majd kinevetnek.

Ti ne hallgassatok azokra.

Olyanok ők, mint a cserepes

Urasági kastély gyermekei:

Nevetik a durvaorrú parasztot,

Mikor trágycás szekerén elindul,

Hogy kenyérré kovászolja a földet.

És lesznek, akik elszörnyűködven

Ilyesfélét beszélnek egymásnak:

Miket össze nem fecseg ez az ember!

Hisz ez bolond, zárjuk el hamar,

Lázás hitét lehűti majd a magányosság.

Erre pedig csak azt mondhatom,

Az én akarásom nem bolondság,

Hanem tövigkalászos táblája a tibennetek

Még csak csirázó búzaszemeknek.

Az én hitem a földnek melegsége

És miként a föld szétosztja melegét

Gyenge füveknek, rengeteg erdőknek egyaránt,

Az én hitemet úgy osztom szét közöttetek.

Ti mégse hallgassatok a szörnyűködőkre

És meg ne vessétek őket:

Mindannyian és egyformán

Testvéreim vagytok.

2

Every single one of you is so good,
so why would you want to spoil that?

You sometimes dream of a little wrong-doing
like an opium eater with his pipe.
Pleasure sure to last as long as the high,
then, boom, the crash and you hate yourself.

Why drink that poisonous brandy rather than milk?
You mother's milk was never poison, was it?
Each and every one of you is good
& you rejoice in goodness with open arms,
so listen carefully to what I say:
those who rhapsodise with their pet snakes
have never been bitten by the thing that lames.

3

Let not cruelty dwell in your heart
& let there be no mercy among you.

If you are cruel, so will your sons be.
If thorns spout out from a bush,
its shoots will spout out thorns.
And since they spread just everywhere
the gardener will tear them up at their roots
& throw them upon the fire.
Time will tear out of the fat earth
those who are innocently cruel,
if only for their parents' sake,
and throw them onto the fire, into the wars.

Let not cruelty dwell in your heart
& let there be no mercy among you.

2

Ti jók vagytok mindannyian,
Miért csinálnátok hát a rosszat?

Néha úgy vagytok a rosszal,
Mint az ópiumot szívó a pipájával.
Ameddig csak tart a mámor, gyönyörűséggel telik meg,
Aztán pedig irtózik önnönmagától is.
Mert miért isztok pálinkát tej helyett?
Hisz anyátok teje sose válik pálinkává.

Ti jók vagytok mindannyian,
Hisz mindnyájan örültök a jónak
S fontoljátok meg amit mondok:
Nem sánta az, aki
Együtt lelkendezik a csúszkálókkal.

3

Ne legyen bennetek kegyetlenség
És irgalmasság se legyen bennetek.

Ha kegyetlenek vagytok,
Fiaitok is kegyetlenek lesznek.
Ha valamely bokron tövis terem,
Sarjadékán is tövis terem.
S elszaporodván tövestül kitépi
És kemencére veti a gazda.
Így szakajtja ki kövér földjéből
Az ártatlanul kegyetleneket,

Már csak szülējük miatt is
S tűzre, háborúba veti: az idő.

Ne legyen bennetek kegyetlenség
És irgalmasság se legyen bennetek.

The merciful will wait on mercy's grace,
but you should live your life
expecting no mercy, doing nothing
that might require an other's mercy,
their rationed pity and power.

4

It's time now to tell of the men of the future.

They will be men of strength, of gentleness.
They will tear off knowledge's iron mask
to bask in the soul's complexion.
They'll kiss the milk, and kiss the bread,
as their hands caress the head of the child.
They'll squeeze out iron, they'll squeeze out metal
from the minerals, build cities from the hills.
With calm & mighty lungs, they'll suck
in cyclones & storms, cast peace upon the waters.
They're ready to welcome the stranger guest,
as they'd be welcomed by a table set & ready,
laid out just as their heart might be,
o yea they are the loving brothers of the Lord.

So do like them, brothers, sisters,
so that your little children with their lily feet
might one day in their innocence
pass over the sea of blood that lies ahead.

5

Glassblowers tend giant fires,
& blend their blood & sweat
with the matter that burns

Az irgalmasok irgalmasságra várnak,
Ti pedig éljetez úgy és úgy tegyetek,
Hogy ne legyen szükségték irgalomra
S ne legyen miért irgalmazni nektek.

4

Most a jövőendő férfiakról szölok.

Ök lesznek az erő és szelídség,
Szétszakgatják a tudás vasálarát,
Hogy az arcán meglássák a lelkét.
Megcsókolják a kenyeret, a tejet
S amely kezükkel simogatják gyermekük fejét,
Ugyanavval kifacsarják az érckövekből
A vasat és minden fémeket.
Városokat raknak a hegyekből,
Nyugodt és roppant tüdejük a vihart,
A fergeteget magába szívja
S megcsöndesülnek mind az óceánok.
Mindig várnak váratlan vendégre,
Az ő számára is terítetnek
És megterítik a szívüket is.
Az Isten szerető öccsei ök.

Legyetek hasonlók hozzájuk,
Hogy kisgyerekeitek liliomlábaikkal
Ártatlanul mehessenek át
Az előttük álló vértengeren.

5

Az üvegöntők nagy tüzeket raknak
És vérükkel meg verítékükkel
Összekeverik az anyagot,

transparent in the flames
of the furnace, and then
they pour them onto the marver slab
& with their strong arms weakening
they roll them all out flat.
When the sun comes up,
they cast their light upon the cities and farmhouses.

You'll call them navvies at times,
at others you'll call them poets,
though it's even stevens either or.
Blood flows just as slow from them both,
& they'll turn transparent too.
Great crystal windows sparkling,
the future tremendously there,
built from within you.

6

There'll always be someone who goes on before
as there'll always be someone who comes after you.

Some of you still feel pain when you walk,
& you feel the hurt of the gravelly, muddy tarn
where you wash off the sweat & dust of the road
from off of those tired limbs.
We the people find them repulsive,
long for a long soak in our bath,
but maybe they will always humbly bathe
in the crystal blood of many saviours.
For them, though, life is a muddy trench,
and they wash themselves in unhappiness,
and, like fresh laundry in my good mother's hands,
they're spick & span, spotless, blanched & neat.

Mely katlanukban átlátszóvá forr.
Azután meg táblákba öntik
S erős karjuk fogyó erejével
Egészen simára hengerelik.
És amikor megvirrad a nap,
A városokba meg a tanyai viskókba
Elviszik vele a világosságot.

Néha napszámosnak hívjátok őket,
Néha pedig költőnek mondjátok,
Noha nem több egyik a másiknál.
Lassan egyformán elfogy a vérük,
Ők maguk is átlátszóvá lesznek,
Ragyogó, nagy kristályablakok
A belőletek épülő jövőn.

6

Előttetek egy ember ment el
S utánaatok is jön egy ember.

Néhányatoknak mégis fáj a járás
S fájnak a földes, iszapos tavak,
Hol a verítéket és az út porát
Le kell mosni a fáradt tagokról.
Irtóznak tőlük s tisztaságra vágynak
S tán alázattal fürödnének mindig
Kristályvérében a megváltóknak,
De nekik az élet iszapos gödör,
Boldogtalanság öblögeti őket,
Míg patyolat-fehérré facsarodnak,
Mint a mosott ruha jó anyám kezében.

They live in terror of the mud of the waters,
& yet, & yet, unclean,
they haven't the strength to go on.

Unhappy lost ones, know you're not alone,
there'll always be someone who goes on before
as there'll always be someone who comes after you.

Look at your little grandchildren
playing tig with such innocent joy,
then look at your grey old grandfathers,
ambling along also with joy,
like those soldiers after battles won or lost,
hearts longing for peace and so so tired,
whistling their way back home.

7

They wash away their yesterdays & their fathers
in a bath of caustic cries,
so there's really no need, you see, to dig wells
or fill desiccated lakes with your tears.
Come along with me, don't get left behind,
from my mouth new fountains spring,
dip your bloody mind in them,
throw down your weapons,
there's no room in your arms for your tools,
chuck them out of the museums too,
so that those I abandoned

Reszketnek a vizek iszapjától
És mégis, mégis, tisztátalanul
Semmi kedvük sincsen továbbmenni.

Ti boldogtalanok, nem egyedül vagytok,
Előttetek egy ember ment el
S utánaatok is jön egy ember.

Nézzetek apró unokáitokra:
Boldog örömmel élnek a fogócskát
És nézzetek ősz nagyapáitokra:
Boldog örömmel ballagnak ők is,
Miként azok a katonák,
Kik akár vesztek, akár nyert csaták után,
Békességet áhító szivekkel
Fáradtan, de fűtörésze hazafele mennek.

7

A tegnapiak és atyáitok
A jajok lúgjával próbáltak mosakodni
S íme, tinéktek nem kell kutakat ásni
És nem szükséges,
Hogy teleszúrjátok a kiapadt tavakat,
Csak gyertek velem
És el ne maradjatok tőlem,
Az én számról friss források fakadnak,
Merítsétek bele véres értelmeteket,
Hányjátok el fegyvereiteket,
Mert a szerszámok nem férnek kezetekbe,
Még a múzeumokból is vessétek ki azokat,
Nehogy ők, akiből én előrejöttem,

can chuck you out too from their midst,
the arms and their arms,
for if you must choose,
I'd choose the death of a brother
over the death of two strangers.

8

Spin a penny to the beggar,
though you also begged for truth,
you're no different to the murderers
or crooks lavishing their money on girls,
you still lock them away or hang them,
for where has peace vanished to from the earth,
& who's been wasting brotherly love on lapdogs?

Take my word for it, every last deed
will be inscribed in the book of Time.

Cursed be they who climb no mountains,
who dodge my words as if they were chasms,
for mother's milk has turned into tears,
& our brothers & sisters have fallen
as fruit fall from the tree when the hail batters down.
There'll be no-one, no no-one, not one
to gather the basket.

9

I bring you news of the kingdom of god.

His soft breath caresses us,
sweeps prisons & cells aside,
weighs our past suffering with wisdom,
the endless deserts of our pain.

Titeket vessenek ki majd magukból,
Mint a fegyverek fegyvereit,
Mert hogyha már muszáj választani,
Inkább testvéreink közül hulljon el egy,
Mint két idegen felebarát.

8

A koldusszegénynek krajcárt adtok,
Noha ti is igazságot kértek
S nem vagytok különbek a gyilkosoknál,
A sikkasztóknál, akik lányra pazarolnak,
Mégis felakasztjátok, becsukjátok őket.
Vagy hová lett a békesség a földről?
És kik pazarolták ölebekre
A felebaráti szeretetet?

Bizony, mindezek a dolgok
Meglátszanak az idő könyvében.

Ó, jaj azoknak, akik
Nem másszák meg a magasságokat
S úgy kerülnek szavamat, mint a szakadékot,
Mert az anyák teje könnyekké változott,
Testvéreink elhulltak úgy,
Mint jégzivatarban a gyümölcsök,
Amelyeket senki, senki, senki
Kosarába többé nem szed össze.

9

Isten országát hirdetem néktek.

Szelid lehelete megsimogat minket
És a börtönöket elsodorja.
Fölméri örökdedigi szenvedésünk
Fájdalmunk végtelen homoksivatagját.

With our sweat we sacrificed in vain,
with our blood & tears, & with our thoughts.
He will turn the earth into spices, rich humus,
so that cheerful copse & solemn academy
will guide us home from our sorry wandering.
With his peaceful words he shepherds the disarmed
herd of weapons into factories instead.
Envious machines love his every word,
and the cornfields humbly kiss his hands as he reaps.

I bring you news of the kingdom of god.
He will come among us, here on earth,
he who is feast-day, greater than holiday,
feast-day for every one of us.

We should prepare for his coming accordingly:
bring out the souls we've stored away safe
from the dirt of work and put them on at last.
Let's patch up our indifferences,
let women wear their best motherliness,
let men perfume their foreheads & beards
with their ancient brotherliness & kindheartedness,
let children carry flowers in their small hands,
make sure they're given lightheartedness.
Let's rejoice, but wisely, and make haste,
make haste, for as soon as we're ready accordingly,
we who have been expelled by the lieutenants,
shall surely find, calmly & in our secret hearts,
the coming of the kingdom of god.

Hiába hullott veritékünkkel
Könnyünkkel vérünkkel gondolatunkkal
Televénnyé forgatja majd
Hogy vig erdők és komoly akadémiák
Hazatrallalázzák bujdosó kedvünket.
Mebékélt nyáját a fegyvereknek
Nyugodt szavával gyárakba tereli
Az irigy gépek szerelemmel magasztalják
S arató kezeit
Alázattal nyalogatják a buzaföldek.

Isten országát hirdetem néktek
Aki eljön hozzánk: a földre
Aki nagyobb ünnep nálunk
Mert mindnyájunk ünnepe.

Készüljünk rája illendőképpen:
Igazi lelkek melyet elzártatok
Hogy be ne szennyeződjék a robotban
Vegyétek elő immáron a öltözet magatokra.
Foltozzák be a nem-törődömséget
És kössék maguk elé az asszonyok
Legtiszta banyaságukat
Illatosítsák meg homlokukat
És szakállukat a férfiak
Ősi testvériségükkel jószándékaikkal
A gyerekek kezében virágok legyenek
És gondtalanságot adjatok nekik.
Bölcs szivekkel örvendezzetek
És siessetek siessetek
Mert alighogy méltón fölkészültünk
Akit elűztek a hadnagyok
Nyugodtan biztosan észrevétlenül
Isten országa hazatalál.

13

I'd like to see you put embers in
your almost all-seeing eyes
so they don't just see
but are glowing too!
Black kids in dungarees will light
the fiery torch in all of our eyes
for now doves doze in the darkness within
should they be flying with bat's wings?
Because they're coming those charcoal bats
with their ragged piercing red cries they'll break
the windows of the ground floor of all of our pasts.

14

I have read in ancient books of wisdom that we are made of dust.
But I who channel the whispering of the grasses
& guide the comets' thunder to your meridian,
know we are made of more than dust:
dust of the earth & the dust of god.

As we fall back down,
dust blends with dust
as we fall back down,
god blends with soul.

Who amongst you has smelt the flowers of heaven?
Who'd stand calmly in front of a thundering train?
Not even those praying day & night.
Yet they bury their soul alive beneath the earth.
Your eyelids should be snipped so you can't close your eyes.
Who'd bury their muscly working body under ground?

13

Mikor raktok parazsokat
Már-máron látó szemetekbe,
Hogy ne csak lássanak,
Világítsanak is!
Szurkos fáklyát gyujtanak szemükben
Immár a hátulgombolós négergyerekek
S bennünk még sötétben alusznak a galambok.
Denevér-szárnynon röpködjenek?
Mert eljönnek a kormos fűtyülő fickók
És darabos piros kiáltással behajítják
A földszintes mult apró ablakait.

14

Bölcs, vén könyvekben áll, hogy por vagyunk.
De én, aki a füvek beszédjét
S a kométák dübörgését delelőrként terelem,
Tudom, hogy nemcsak por vagyunk:

Por és Istenpor vagyunk.

Visszahullván
A por a porral elkeveredik,
Visszahullván
Igy keveredik el Istennel a lélek.

Ki szagolta meg közületek az égi virágokat?
Ki állna nyugodtan robogó vonat előtt?
Lám, az örökké-könyörgők se
S mégis eltemetik a lelkük elevenen.
Le kéne vágni szemhéjukat, mert mindig lecsukják,
S akadna-e közülük is,
Aki élő izmait elásná?

So if we must pray, let's pray like so:
we're here to create things not to adore them,
our children aren't here to adore us either,
though we're your children, Father, nevertheless.
We believe in the goodness of your strength,
we know you are All-Embracing Will,
we know that's why you willed us and it all into being,
so that when time runs out
& things start ceasing to exist,
you will then perfect yourself as All-Embracing Reason.
And so, therefore, tired and exhausted,
here we kneel before ourselves and say:
deliver us from evil,
amen.

'Tanítások', 1923

SAMPLER

Ha már nagyon kell imádkozni,
Imádkozzunk:

Alkotni vagyunk, nem dicsérni.
Gyerekeink sem azért vannak,
Hogy tiszteljenek bennünket
S mi, Atyánk, a Te gyerekeid vagyunk.
Hiszünk az erő jószándokában,
Tudjuk, hogy a Teljes Akarat voltál,
Tudjuk, azért akartál bennünket és mindent
Hogy az idő kifogytával
És a dolgok elmúltával
A Teljes Értelemmé tökéletesedj.
Most mégis megfáradván
Dicséreteddel aratunk új erőt
S enmagunk előtt is térdet hajtunk, mondván:
Szabadíts meg a gonosztól.

Ámen