

Collected Poems

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Chapter I

1925

You are so silly.	1
You run like the morning wind,	2
sometime you'll be knocked down by a car.	3
By the way, I scrubbed clean my little table,	4
and now the tender light of my bread shines purer.	5
Well, come back; if you want	6
I'll buy a blanket for my iron bed.	7
A plain, grey blanket.	8
It will suit my Poverty, who loves you,	9
and the Lord loves you also very much,	10
and He also loves me.	11
The Lord never comes in a blaze of glory,	12
He doesn't want to ruin my eyes,	13
which long to see you,	14
and will look at you very beautifully.	15
When you come back, I will kiss you carefully,	16
I won't rip off your coat.	17
I will tell you all the many jokes,	18
because I devised many since then,	19
and how merry you'll be and will blush,	20
how you'll look down to the ground,	21
and we will crack up,	22
how it will resound in our neighbour's house,	23
to the taciturn, austere day labourers,	24
and in their tired, shattered dreams,	25
they will also smile.	26

Autumn

French

Ne sois pas si bête.	1
Tu cours comme le vent matinal,	2
un jour tu seras renversée par une auto.	3
D'ailleurs, j'ai récuré my petite table,	4
et maintenant la lumière suave de mon pain est plus pure.	5
Hé bien, reviens; si tu veux	6
j'achèterai une couverture pour mon lit de fer.	7
Une couverture ordinaire, grise.	8
Elle conviendra à ma Pauvreté, qui t'aime,	9
et le Seigneur t'aime aussi beaucoup,	10
et Il m'aime aussi.	11
Le Seigneur ne vient jamais dans toute sa splendeur,	12
Il ne veut pas abîmer mes yeux,	13
qui ont hâte de te voir,	14
et qui te regarderont avec beauté.	15
Quand tu reviendras, je t'embrasserai doucement,	16
je n'arracherai pas ton manteau.	17
Je te raconterai toutes les nouvelles blagues,	18
parce que j'en ai inventé beaucoup depuis,	19
et que tu seras gaie et que tu rougieras,	20
et que tu regarderas vers le sol,	21
et que nous éclaterons de rire,	22
et que cela résonnera chez les voisins,	23
vers les journaliers taciturnes et austères,	24
et, dans leurs rêves fatigués et brisés,	25
eux aussi ils sourieront.	26

Automne

Spanish

No seas tonta.	I
Corres como el viento de la madrugada,	2
algún día te atropellará un coche.	3
De hecho, fregué my mesita,	4
y ahora la luz suave de mi pan queda más pura.	5
Pues regresa; si quieres	6
compraré una manta para mi cama de hierro.	7
Una manta ordinaria, gris.	8
Le caerá bien a mi Pobreza, que te quiere,	9
y el Señor también te ama,	10
y me ama también.	11
El Señor no viene nunca con gran esplendor,	12
no quiere dañar a mis ojos,	13
que anhelan verte,	14
y que te mirarán con belleza.	15
Cuando regreses, te besaré con cuidado,	16
no te arrancaré el abrigo.	17
Te contaré todos los nuevos chistes,	18
porque hallé muchos desde entonces,	19
y qué alegre te pondrás y te sonrojarás,	20
y cómo mirarás al suelo,	21
y nos echaremos a reír,	22
y cómo eso resonará en casa de los vecinos,	23
hacia los taciturnos y austeros jornaleros,	24
y, en sus sueños cansados y rotos,	25
ellos también se sonreirán.	26

Otoño

Original Hungarian

<i>Olyan¹ bolond² vagy³</i>	I
<i>szaladsz⁴</i>	2
<i>akár⁵ a reggeli⁶ szél.⁷</i>	3
<i>Még⁸ elüt⁹ valamelyik¹⁰ autó.¹¹</i>	4
<i>Pedig¹² lesikáltam¹³ kis¹⁴ asztalomat¹⁵</i>	5
<i>és most¹⁶</i>	6
<i>tisztábban¹⁷ világít¹⁸ kenyerem¹⁹ enyhe²⁰ fénye.²¹</i>	7
<i>No²² gyere²³ vissza,²⁴ ha²⁵ akarod²⁶</i>	8
<i>veszek²⁷ takarót vaságyamra.</i>	9
<i>Egyszerű,²⁸ szürke²⁹ takarót.³⁰</i>	10
<i>Illik³¹ az</i>	11

¹ arch. *oly* ‘such’ + deadj. adv.-forming *-an* → ‘such a/an’

² adj. ‘silly/foolish’

³ vb. *van* ‘to be’ + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

⁴ vb. *szalad* ‘to run’ + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-sz*

⁵ lit. ‘just like’

⁶ *reggel* ‘morning’ + adj.-forming *-i*

⁷ ‘wind’

⁸ adv. ‘moreover/after/sometime’

⁹ vb. pref. *el-* ‘away’ + vb. *üt* ‘to hit’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

¹⁰ pron. pref. *vala* ‘some-’ + inter. *myelik* ‘which/what’ → ‘one/any of’

¹¹ ‘car’

¹² conj. expressing contrast ‘whereas/but/although’ or addition ‘and (by contrast)’

¹³ vb. pref. *le-* expressing downward direction, completion, continuous action till exhaustion

¹⁴ adj. ‘small’

¹⁵ *asztal* ‘table’ + 1st pers. sg. single poss. *-(o)m* + acc. *-(a)t*

¹⁶ adv. ‘now’

¹⁷ adj. *tiszta* ‘clean/clear’ + comp. *-bb* + deadj. adv.-forming *-am* → ‘more clearly/cleanly’

¹⁸ *világ* ‘light (arch.)/world’ + caus. vb.-forming *-ít* ‘to make smth ...-like’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. ‘to make shine’

¹⁹ *kenyér* ‘bread’ + 1st pers. sg. single poss. *-em*

²⁰ *enyh* ‘light/mild/tender/faint’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e* ‘of’

²¹ *fény* ‘light’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e*

²² interj. ‘well/now’

²³ vb. *jön* ‘to come’ + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

²⁴ adv. ‘back[wards]’

²⁵ conf. ‘if’ + cond. or ‘when/once’

²⁶ vb. *akar* ‘to want’ + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-od*

²⁷ vb. *vesz* ‘to take/grab/buy/get/consider/put on’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-ek*

²⁸ *egy* ‘one’ + *-szerű* ‘-like’ → ‘plain/simple/unadorned/humble (< 1945)’

²⁹ adj. ‘grey’

³⁰ vb. *takar* ‘to cover (protect)’ + pres. part. *-ó* → ‘cover/blanket’ + acc. *-t*

³¹ vb. ‘to suit/match/fit’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<i>szegénységemhez,</i> ³² <i>aki</i> ³³ <i>szeret</i> ³⁴ <i>téged</i> ³⁵	12
<i>és az Úr</i> ³⁶ <i>is szeret</i> ³⁷ <i>nagyon</i> ³⁸	13
<i>és engem</i> ³⁹ <i>is szeret</i> ⁴⁰ <i>az Úr</i>	14
<i>nem jön</i> ⁴¹ <i>soha</i> ⁴² <i>nagy</i> ⁴³ <i>fényességgel</i> ⁴⁴	15
<i>Nem akarja,</i> ⁴⁵ <i>hogy elromoljanak</i> ⁴⁶	16
<i>szemeim,</i> ⁴⁷ <i>akik</i> ⁴⁸	17
<i>nagyon</i> ⁴⁹ <i>kívánnak</i> ⁵⁰ <i>látni</i> ⁵¹ <i>téged.</i> ⁵²	18
<i>És nagyon</i> ⁵³ <i>szépen</i> ⁵⁴ <i>néznek</i> ⁵⁵ <i>majd</i> ⁵⁶ <i>terád</i> ⁵⁷	19
<i>ha</i> ⁵⁸ <i>visszajössz</i> ⁵⁹	20
<i>vigyázva</i> ⁶⁰ <i>foglak</i> ⁶¹ <i>megcsókolni,</i> ⁶²	21

³² *szegény* 'poor' + noun-forming *-ség* (state of being) + 1st pers. sg. single poss. *-em* + all. *-hez* 'to'

³³ conj. 'who'

³⁴ vb. 'to love' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

³⁵ pron. *te* 'you' sg. + acc.

³⁶ 'Lord' (the Christian god)

³⁷ vb. *szeret* 'to love' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-i*

³⁸ adj. *nagy* 'great' + adv.-forming *-on* → 'very (to a high degree)'

³⁹ pron. *én* 'I' + acc. → 'me'

⁴⁰ vb. 'to love' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

⁴¹ vb. 'to come' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

⁴² adv. 'never'

⁴³ adj. 'great'

⁴⁴ *fény* 'light' + adj.-forming *-es* 'with/having' → 'bright' + noun-forming *-ség* (state of being) → 'brightness' + instr. *-vel* 'with' (*-gel* after consonant *g*) → 'with brightness'

⁴⁵ vb. 'to want' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-ja*

⁴⁶ vb. pref. *el-* completion + vb. *romlik* 'to break down/deteriorate' + 3rd pers. pl. subj. indef. *-janak*

⁴⁷ *szem* 'eye' + 1st pers. sg. mult. poss. *-eim*

⁴⁸ pron. 'who' + pl. *-k*

⁴⁹ adj. *nagy* 'great' + adv.-forming *-on* → 'very (to a high degree)'

⁵⁰ vb. *kíván* 'to wish' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-nak*

⁵¹ vb. *lát* 'to see' + inf. *-ni*

⁵² pron. *te* 'you' sg. + acc.

⁵³ adj. *nagy* 'great' + adv.-forming *-on* → 'very (to a high degree)'

⁵⁴ adj. *szép* 'beautiful'

⁵⁵ vb. *néznek* 'to look at smth' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-nek*

⁵⁶ adv. 'sometime/later'

⁵⁷ pron. sg. *te* 'you' (here emph.) + pron. *rá* + 2nd pers. sg. 'on/of you'

⁵⁸ conf. 'if' + cond. or 'when/once'

⁵⁹ vb. pref. *vissza-* 'back-' + vb. *jön* 'to come' + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-sz*

⁶⁰ vb. *vigyáz* 'to protect/pay attention' + adv. part. *-va* result of action or simultaneous actions

⁶¹ vb. aux. *fog* 'to will' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. 2nd obj. *-lak* 'you'

⁶² perfect. vb. pref. *meg-* + vb. *csókol* 'to kiss' + inf. *-ni*

<i>nem tépem</i> ⁶³ <i>le</i> ⁶⁴ <i>rólad</i> ⁶⁵ <i>a kabátot</i> ⁶⁶	22
<i>és elmondom</i> ⁶⁷ <i>mind</i> ⁶⁸ <i>a sok</i> ⁶⁹ <i>tréfát</i> , ⁷⁰	23
<i>mert</i> ⁷¹ <i>sokat</i> ⁷² <i>kieszeltem</i> ⁷³ <i>azóta</i> , ⁷⁴	24
<i>hogy te</i> ⁷⁵ <i>is</i> ⁷⁶ <i>örülj</i> , ⁷⁷	25
<i>majd</i> ⁷⁸ <i>elpirulsz</i> , ⁷⁹	26
<i>lenézel</i> ⁸⁰ <i>a földre</i> ⁸¹ <i>és kacagunk</i> ⁸²	27
<i>hangosan</i> , ⁸³ <i>hogy behallatszik</i> ⁸⁴ <i>szomszédunkba</i> ⁸⁵	28
<i>a szótlán</i> , ⁸⁶ <i>komoly</i> ⁸⁷ <i>napszámosokhoz</i> ⁸⁸ <i>is behallik</i> ⁸⁹	29
<i>és fáradt</i> , ⁹⁰ <i>összetört</i> ⁹¹	30
<i>álmukban</i> ⁹² <i>majd</i> ⁹³ <i>elmosolyodnak</i> ⁹⁴ <i>ők</i> ⁹⁵ <i>is</i> . ⁹⁶	31

Ősze

⁶³ vb. *tép* 'to tear/rend' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def. -em

⁶⁴ comp. 'down'

⁶⁵ pron. *róla* 'about/off her' + 2nd pers. sg.

⁶⁶ *kabát* 'coat' + acc. -(o)t

⁶⁷ vb. *elmond* 'to tell' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def. -om

⁶⁸ pron. sg. 'all/each of'

⁶⁹ adj. 'many'

⁷⁰ *tréfa* 'joke' + acc. -(a)t

⁷¹ conj. 'because'

⁷² *sok* 'many' + acc. -at

⁷³ vb. *kieszel* 'to devise' + 1st pers. sg. past. -tem

⁷⁴ art. *az* 'that' + *óta* 'since' → 'since then'

⁷⁵ pron. sg. 'you'

⁷⁶ doublet of *és* 'and', adv. 'also'

⁷⁷ vb. *örül* 'to rejoice' + 2nd pers. sg. subj. indef. -j

⁷⁸ adv. 'sometime/later'

⁷⁹ perfect. vb. pref. *el-* + vb. *pirul* 'to blush' + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -sz

⁸⁰ vb. 'to look down' + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -el

⁸¹ *föld* 'earth/ground' + subl. -re 'onto'

⁸² vb. *kacag* 'to laugh (a lot)' + 1st pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. -unk

⁸³ adv. 'loudly'

⁸⁴ vb. pref. *be-* 'inwardly' + vb. *hall* 'to hear' + caus. -at + vb.-forming -szik → 'to cause to sound in'

⁸⁵ *szomszéd* 'neighbour' + 1st pers. pl. single poss. -unk + illative -ba 'into'

⁸⁶ *szó* 'word/voice' + privative adj.-forming -tlan 'less'

⁸⁷ adj. 'severe/austere'

⁸⁸ *napszámos* 'day labourer' + pl. -(o)k + allat. '-hoz' 'towards'

⁸⁹ syn. *behallatszik*

⁹⁰ vb. *fárad* 'to tire' + past. part. -t

⁹¹ *össze* 'together' + vb. *tör* 'to break' + past. part. -t

⁹² *álmom* 'dream' + 3rd pers. pl. single poss. -uk + innes. -ban 'in'

⁹³ adv. 'sometime/later'

⁹⁴ TODO

⁹⁵ pron. 'they'

⁹⁶ doublet of *és* 'and', adv. 'also'

Chapter 2

1934

2.I Consciousness (*Eszmélet*)

I

Dawn unbinds sky from earth	1
and upon its clear, soft word	2
beetles and children	3
spin forth into the daylight;	4
there is no moisture in the air,	5
the bright levity floats!	6
Overnight they alighted on the trees	7
like small butterflies, the leaves.	8

French

L'aube détache le ciel de la terre	1
et, à sa voix claire et douce,	2
scarabées et enfants virevoltent	3
en entrant sur la scène du jour;	4
l'air n'est pas humide,	5
la brillante légèreté flotte!	6
Avec la nuit, elles se posèrent sur les arbres	7
comme de petits papillons, les feuilles.	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Földtől¹ eloldja² az eget³</i>	1
<i>a hajnal⁴ s⁵ tiszta⁶, lágy⁷ szavára⁸</i>	2
<i>a bogarak,⁹ a gyerekek</i>	3
<i>kipörögnek¹⁰ a napvilágra¹¹;</i>	4
<i>a levegőben¹² semmi pára¹³,</i>	5
<i>a csilló¹⁴ könnyűség¹⁵ lebeg!¹⁶</i>	6
<i>Az éjjel¹⁷ rászálltak¹⁸ a fákra,¹⁹</i>	7
<i>mint²⁰ kis²¹ lepkék,²² a levelek.²³</i>	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: e-e(8)/á-[r]a(9)/e-e(8)/á-[r]a(9)

5-8: á-[r]a(9)/e-e(8)/á-[r]a(9)/e-e(8)

¹ *föld* ‘earth’ + abl. *-től* ‘without/from’

² vb. pref. *el-* ‘away’ + vb. *old* ‘to unbind’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

³ *ég* ‘sky’ + acc. *-et* → *eget*

⁴ ‘dawn’

⁵ poetic abbrv. *es* ‘and’ (does not count as a syllable)

⁶ adj. ‘bright’

⁷ adj. ‘soft’

⁸ *szó* ‘voice’, ‘word’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a* → *szava* + subl. *-ra* ‘by’ → *szavára*

⁹ *bogár* ‘beetle’ + pl. *-(a)k* → *bogarak*

¹⁰ vb. *kipörög* ‘to spin’ + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-nek*

¹¹ *nap* ‘sun/day’ + *világ* ‘world’ + subl. *-ra* ‘onto’

¹² *levegő* ‘air’ + innes. *-ben* ‘in’

¹³ ‘moisture/mist’

¹⁴ vb. *csillog* ‘to glitter’ + adj.-forming *-o* → *csilló*; usually *csillogó*

¹⁵ *könnyű* ‘simplicity/easiness’ + noun-forming *-ség* (state of being)

¹⁶ vb. *lebeg* ‘to float (in the air)’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

¹⁷ poetic *éj* ‘night’ + instr. *-vel* ‘with’ → *éjjel*

¹⁸ pointed action *rá-* ‘on’ + vb. *száll* ‘to fly/land/to come down’ + 3rd pers. sg. past indef. *-tak*

¹⁹ *fa* ‘tree’ + pl. *-k* + subl. *-ra* ‘onto’ → *fákra*

²⁰ ‘like’

²¹ ‘small’

²² *lepke* ‘butterfly’ + pl. *-k* → *lepkék*

²³ *level* ‘leaf’ + pl. *-(e)k*

II

I saw paintings daubed with blue,	1
red, yellow in my dreams	2
and felt that everything was just so —	3
not one speck of dust flying madly about.	4
Now my dream comes down as a blur into my members,	5
and the iron world is the order.	6
During the day a moon rises inwardly and,	7
when the night is out, a sun shines herewithin.	8

Cursory remark

Verses 1-4 are about the night, verses 5-7 transition to the day, and verse 8 brings us back to the night — this cyclic structure supporting the mismatched, recurring alternance of days and nights.

French

J'ai vu des tableaux barbouillés de bleu,	1
rouge et jaune dans mes rêves	2
et je sentis que tout était en ordre —	3
pas un seul grain de poussière qui vole agité.	4
Maintenant mon rêve descend, estompé, dans mes membres,	5
et le monde de fer est l'ordre.	6
Avec le jour, une lune point en moi et,	7
à la nuit tombée, un soleil brille ci-dedans.	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Kék, piros, sárga, összekent</i> ²⁴	1
<i>képeket</i> ²⁵ <i>láttam</i> ²⁶ <i>álmaimban</i> ²⁷	2
<i>és úgy éreztem</i> , ²⁸ <i>ez a rend</i> ²⁹ —	3
<i>egy szallo</i> ³⁰ <i>porszem</i> ³¹ <i>el</i> ³² <i>nem hobbant</i> . ³³	4
<i>Most homályként</i> ³⁴ <i>száll</i> ³⁵ <i>tagjaimban</i> ³⁶	5
<i>álmom s a vas</i> ³⁷ <i>világ a rend</i> .	6
<i>Nappal</i> ³⁸ <i>hold</i> ³⁹ <i>kél</i> ⁴⁰ <i>bennem</i> ⁴¹ <i>s ha</i> ⁴² <i>kinn</i> ⁴³ <i>van</i>	7
<i>az éj</i> ⁴⁴ — <i>egy nap sütt</i> ⁴⁵ <i>idebent</i> . ⁴⁶	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: e-ent(8)/ai-an(9)/a-rend(8)/i-an(9)

5-8: i-an(9)/a-rend(8)/ai-an(9)/e-ent(8)

²⁴ *össze* ‘together’ + *ken* ‘smear’ → *összekent* + 3rd pers. sg. past indef. -*t*

²⁵ *kép* ‘picture’ + pl. -(*e*)*k* + acc. -(*e*)*t*

²⁶ vb. *lát* ‘to see’ + short base -*t* + 1st pers. sg. past def. -*tam*

²⁷ *álom* ‘dream’ + 1st pers. sg. poss. -*a* + poss. pl. -*i* + 1st pers. sg. pers. -*m* + innes. -*ban* ‘in’ → *álmaimban*

²⁸ vb. *érez* ‘to feel’, 1st pers. sg. past def.

²⁹ ‘order’

³⁰ vb. *száll* ‘to fly’ + pres. part. -*ó*

³¹ ‘a speck of dust’

³² *el nem* + past. part.; the verbal prefix *el* emphasises the completion of the action

³³ vb. *hobbant* ‘to become imbalanced’, arch. + past part. -*t*

³⁴ *homály* ‘blur’ + essive formal -*ként* ‘as’

³⁵ vb. ‘to land/to come down’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres.

³⁶ *tag* ‘member’ + 1st pers. sg. poss. -(*j*)*a* + poss. pl. -*i* + 1st pers. sg. pers. -*m* + innes. -*ban* ‘in’ → *tagjaimban*

³⁷ ‘iron’

³⁸ *nap* ‘day’ + instr. -*val* ‘with’ → *nappal*

³⁹ ‘moon’

⁴⁰ vb. ‘to rise’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def., arch. alt. *kel*

⁴¹ pron. *benne* ‘inside smth/smb’ + 1st pers. sg. pers. -*m*

⁴² ‘when’

⁴³ ‘outside’

⁴⁴ ‘night’

⁴⁵ vb. ‘to roast/shine’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

⁴⁶ adv. *ide* ‘here’ + *bent* ‘within’

III

I am thin, at times I only eat bread;	1
amidst those idle and blithering souls,	2
I seek in vain more certainty, like the die.	3
No chuck roast reaches my mouth	4
while I cuddle a small child to my heart —	5
however clever, the cat cannot catch at once	6
the mouse outdoors and the one indoors.	7

Cursory remark

J cannot pursue his art and, at the same time, keep a job that would put real food on his table. Cuddling a small child to his heart is his metaphor for the creation of poetry. J is the cat in verses 6-7.

French

Je suis maigre, parfois je ne mange que du pain ;	1
entouré par ces âmes oisives et bavardes,	2
je cherche en vain plus de certitude, comme le dé.	3
Aucun rôti de palette ne trouve ma bouche	4
quand j'étreins un enfant sur mon cœur —	5
aussi fûté soit-il, le chat ne peut attrapper d'un coup	6
la souris dehors et celle dedans.	7

Original Hungarian

<i>Sóvány</i> ⁴⁷ <i>vagyok, csak kenyeret</i> ⁴⁸	1
<i>eszem</i> ⁴⁹ <i>néha</i> , ⁵⁰ <i>e</i> ⁵¹ <i>léha</i> , ⁵² <i>locska</i> ⁵³	2
<i>lelkek</i> ⁵⁴ <i>közt</i> ⁵⁵ <i>ingyen</i> ⁵⁶ <i>keresek</i> ⁵⁷	3
<i>bizonyosabbat</i> , ⁵⁸ <i>mint</i> ⁵⁹ <i>a kocska</i> . ⁶⁰	4
<i>Nem dörgölődzik</i> ⁶¹ <i>sült</i> ⁶² <i>lopcska</i> ⁶³	5
<i>számhoz</i> ⁶⁴ <i>s szívemhez</i> ⁶⁵ <i>kisgyerek</i> ⁶⁶ —	6
<i>ügyeskedhet</i> , ⁶⁷ <i>nem fog</i> ⁶⁸ <i>a macska</i> ⁶⁹	7
<i>egyszerre</i> ⁷⁰ <i>kint</i> ⁷¹ <i>s bent</i> ⁷² <i>egeret</i> . ⁷³	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: e-ret(8)/o-cska(9)/e-ek(8)/o-cska(9)

5-8: o-cska(8)/e-ek(8)/a-cska(8)/e-ret(8) — same length

⁴⁷ 'slim/thin', fig. 'poor'

⁴⁸ *kenyér* 'bread' + acc. *-(e)t* → *kenyeret*

⁴⁹ vb. *esz* 'to eat', rare without verbal pref., inf. *enni* + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-em* → *eszem*

⁵⁰ adv. 'sometimes'

⁵¹ poetic abbrv. *eme/ez* 'this'

⁵² 'improvident/idler'

⁵³ adj. 'blethering'

⁵⁴ *lélek* 'soul' + pl. *-(e)k* → *lelkek*

⁵⁵ post. 'between/amid' from *között*: *köz* 'interval' + loc. *-ött*

⁵⁶ fig. arch. 'in vain'; usually 'free of charge'

⁵⁷ vb. *keres* 'to seek' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

⁵⁸ adj. *bizonyos* 'certain' + comp. *-abb* 'more' + acc. *-t*

⁵⁹ 'like'

⁶⁰ 'a die'

⁶¹ vb. 'to press against', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

⁶² vb. *süül* 'to roast' + past part. *-t*

⁶³ 'chuck' (shoulder meat cut, probably pork)

⁶⁴ *száj* 'mouth' + 1st pers. sg. single poss. *-m* → *szám* + allat. *-hoz* 'towards' → *számhoz*

⁶⁵ *szívem* 'heart' + allat. *-hez* 'towards'

⁶⁶ *kis* 'small' + *gyerek* 'child'

⁶⁷ vb. *ügyesked* 'to be clever' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. potential *-het*

⁶⁸ vb. 'to hold', 3rd pers. sg. pers. indef.

⁶⁹ 'cat'

⁷⁰ adv. *egyszer* 'at once' + abl. *-re* 'onto'

⁷¹ adv. 'outside'

⁷² adv. 'inside'

⁷³ *egér* 'mouse' + acc. *-(e)t* → *egeret*

IV

Just like a pile of logs,	1
the world lies in a jumble;	2
each thing presses, weighs on,	3
holds fast to the next,	4
and so everything is determined.	5
Only what is not has a shrub,	6
only that will be that flower;	7
what is falls to pieces.	8

Cursory remark

‘To be or not to be’ is usually construed as the dichotomy between life and death. J tells us that not-to-be is potential beauty, whereas to-be is actual death.

French

Tout comme un tas de bûches,	1
le monde gît en vrac;	2
chaque chose presse, pèse,	3
s’arrime à l’autre,	4
et ainsi tout est déterminé.	5
Seul ce qui n’est pas a un arbuste,	6
seul cela sera cette fleur;	7
ce qui est tombera en pièces.	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Akár</i> ⁷⁴ <i>egy halom</i> ⁷⁵ <i>hasított</i> ⁷⁶ <i>fa</i> , ⁷⁷	1
<i>hever</i> ⁷⁸ <i>egymáson</i> ⁷⁹ <i>a világ</i> , ⁸⁰	2
<i>szorítja</i> , ⁸¹ <i>nyomja</i> , ⁸² <i>összefogja</i> ⁸³	3
<i>egyik</i> ⁸⁴ <i>dolog</i> ⁸⁵ <i>a másikat</i> ⁸⁶	4
<i>s így</i> ⁸⁷ <i>mindenik</i> ⁸⁸ <i>determinált</i> . ⁸⁹	5
<i>Csak</i> ⁹⁰ <i>ami</i> ⁹¹ <i>nincs</i> , <i>annak</i> ⁹² <i>van bokra</i> , ⁹³	6
<i>csak</i> ⁹⁴ <i>ami lesz</i> , ⁹⁵ <i>az a virág</i> ,	7
<i>ami van</i> , <i>széthull</i> ⁹⁶ <i>darabokra</i> . ⁹⁷	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: o-a(9)/i-á(8)/o-a(9)/i-á(8)

5-8: i-á(8)/o-a(9)/i-á(8)/o-a(9)

⁷⁴ conj. literary ‘just like’

⁷⁵ ‘pile/heap’

⁷⁶ vb. *hasít* ‘to cleave/split’ + past. part. *-ott*

⁷⁷ ‘tree’

⁷⁸ vb. ‘to lie’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

⁷⁹ pron. *egymás* ‘each other/one another’ + super. *-on* ‘on’

⁸⁰ ‘world’

⁸¹ vb. *szorít* ‘to press/constrict’, inf. *szorítani* + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

⁸² vb. *nyom* ‘to weigh’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

⁸³ *össze* ‘together’ + vb. *fog* ‘to hold’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

⁸⁴ *egy* ‘one’ + 3rd pers. pl. mult. poss. *-ik* ‘of’

⁸⁵ ‘thing’

⁸⁶ adj. *más* ‘other’ + noun-forming *-ik* → ‘another’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a* + acc. *-t* → *-át*

⁸⁷ ‘just so’

⁸⁸ adv. *minden* ‘everyone/everything’

⁸⁹ Latin *determinare* + vb.-forming *-ál* ‘to determine’ + past part. *-t*

⁹⁰ adv. ‘only’

⁹¹ rel. pron. ‘which/that’

⁹² art. *az* ‘that’ + attr. poss. *-nak* → *annak*

⁹³ *bokor* ‘shrub/bush’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a*

⁹⁴ adv. ‘only’

⁹⁵ vb. ‘to become’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. fut. indef.

⁹⁶ vb. ‘to fall apart’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

⁹⁷ adv. *darab* ‘piece/chunk’ + pl. *-ok* + subl. *-ra* ‘into’

V

At the freight train station,	1
I lay down just so behind the tree's butt,	2
like a piece of silence;	3
a grey weed reached my mouth,	4
raw, strange-sweet.	5
Playing dead, I watched the guard, sensing what,	6
and his shadow on the quiet wagons	7
stubbornly leaping at the bright, dewy coal.	8

Cursory remark

This is likely a memory from J's childhood, when his family was so poor that he would occasionally steal lumps of coal from the wagons at the freight train station nearby his home.

French

À la gare de fret,	1
je m'étais ainsi derrière le pied de l'arbre,	2
comme un morceau de silence;	3
une herbe grise atteignit ma bouche,	4
crue, étrange-sucrée.	5
Faisant le mort, je regardais le garde, suspectant quoi,	6
et son ombre qui, sur les wagons silencieux,	7
s'entêtait à bondir sur les charbons reluisants,	8
couverts de rosée.	9

Original Hungarian

<i>A teberpályaudvaron</i> ⁹⁸	1
<i>úgy</i> ⁹⁹ <i>lapultam</i> ¹⁰⁰ <i>a fa</i> ¹⁰¹ <i>tövéhez</i> , ¹⁰²	2
<i>mint</i> ¹⁰³ <i>egy darab</i> ¹⁰⁴ <i>csönd</i> ¹⁰⁵ ; <i>szürke</i> ¹⁰⁶ <i>gyom</i> ¹⁰⁷	3
<i>ért</i> ¹⁰⁸ <i>számhoz</i> , ¹⁰⁹ <i>nyers</i> , ¹¹⁰ <i>különös</i> ¹¹¹ <i>-édes</i> . ¹¹²	4
<i>Holtan</i> ¹¹³ <i>lestem</i> ¹¹⁴ <i>az őrt</i> , ¹¹⁵ <i>mit</i> ¹¹⁶ <i>érez</i> , ¹¹⁷	5
<i>s a hallgatag</i> ¹¹⁸ <i>vagónokon</i> ¹¹⁹	6
<i>árnyát</i> , ¹²⁰ <i>mely</i> ¹²¹ <i>ráugrott</i> ¹²² <i>a fényes</i> , ¹²³	7
<i>harmatos</i> ¹²⁴ <i>szénre</i> ¹²⁵ <i>konokon</i> . ¹²⁶	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: a-o(8)/é-e(9)/e-o(8)/é-e(9)

5-8: é-e(9)/o-o(8)/é-e(9)/o-o(8)

⁹⁸ *teber* 'freight' + *pálya* 'track' + *udvar* 'courtyard' + super. *-on* 'on'

⁹⁹ adv. 'so (in this/that manner)'

¹⁰⁰ vb. *lapul* 'to lie low' + 1st pers. sg. past indef. *-tam*

¹⁰¹ 'tree'

¹⁰² *tő* 'base of the stem of a plant' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e* 'of' → *töve* + allat. *-hez* 'towards' → *tövéhez*

¹⁰³ 'like'

¹⁰⁴ 'piece'

¹⁰⁵ 'silence', alt. *csend*

¹⁰⁶ adj. 'grey'

¹⁰⁷ 'weed'

¹⁰⁸ vb. *ért* 'to reach', arch. 'to touch', fig. 'to understand', 3rd pers. sg. past indef.

¹⁰⁹ *száj* 'mouth' + 1st pers. sg. single poss. *-m* → *szám* + allat. 'towards' *-hoz* → *számhoz*

¹¹⁰ adj. 'raw'

¹¹¹ 'strange'

¹¹² 'sweet'

¹¹³ *holt* 'dead' + adv.-forming *-an*

¹¹⁴ vb. *les* 'to spy' + 1st pers. sg. past indef. *-tem*

¹¹⁵ *őr* 'guard' + acc. *-t*

¹¹⁶ inter. 'what'

¹¹⁷ vb. 'to feel/smell/taste', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

¹¹⁸ vb. *hallgat* 'to remain silent/to listen' + adj.-forming *-ag*

¹¹⁹ *vagón* 'wagon' + pl. *-ok* + super. *-on* 'on'

¹²⁰ *árny* 'shadow/ghost' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a* + acc. *-t* → *-át*

¹²¹ literary, 'which/that'

¹²² pointed action *ra-* 'at' + vb. *ugrik* 'to leap/jump' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past. indef. *-(o)tt* → *ugrott*

¹²³ *fény* 'light/glitter' + adj.-forming *-es* → 'bright'

¹²⁴ adj. 'dewy'

¹²⁵ *szén* 'coal' + subl. *-re* 'onto'

¹²⁶ adj. *konok* 'stubborn' + super. *-on* 'on (that manner)'

VI

Behold the anguish inside,	1
yet the explanation lies outside.	2
Your wound is the world — on fire, burning up —	3
and you feel your soul, the fever.	4
You are captive as long as your heart rebels —	5
then you are free if it indulges	6
not building for yourself a house	7
where a landlord settles in.	8

Cursory remark

We are not captives of the world, but of our own heart, which invited the world (the landlord) in for us to contend with. The inner struggle is felt as anguish and yields a feverish soul.

French

Voici le tourment intérieur,	1
pourtant l'explication se trouve à l'extérieur.	2
Ta blessure est le monde — en feu, s'échauffant —	3
et tu sens ton âme, la fièvre.	4
Tu es captif tant que ton cœur se révolte —	5
ainsi tu es libre s'il se complâit	6
à ne plus bâtir pour toi une maison	7
où un propriétaire vient demeurer.	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Im</i> ¹²⁷ <i>itt a szenvedés</i> ¹²⁸ <i>belül</i> , ¹²⁹	1
<i>ám</i> ¹³⁰ <i>ott kívül</i> ¹³¹ <i>a magyarázat</i> . ¹³²	2
<i>Sebed</i> ¹³³ <i>a világ — ég</i> , ¹³⁴ <i>hevíl</i> ¹³⁵	3
<i>s te</i> ¹³⁶ <i>lelkedet</i> ¹³⁷ <i>érezed</i> , ¹³⁸ <i>a lázat</i> . ¹³⁹	4
<i>Rab</i> ¹⁴⁰ <i>vagy, amíg</i> ¹⁴¹ <i>a szíved</i> ¹⁴² <i>lázad</i> ¹⁴³ —	5
<i>úgy</i> ¹⁴⁴ <i>szabadulsz</i> , ¹⁴⁵ <i>ha</i> ¹⁴⁶ <i>kényedül</i> ¹⁴⁷	6
<i>nem raksz</i> ¹⁴⁸ <i>magadnak</i> ¹⁴⁹ <i>olyan</i> ¹⁵⁰ <i>házat</i> , ¹⁵¹	7
<i>melybe</i> ¹⁵² <i>háziúr</i> ¹⁵³ <i>települ</i> . ¹⁵⁴	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: e-ül(8)/á-at(9)/e-ül(8)/á-at(9)

5-8: á-ad(9)/e-ül(8)/á-at(9)/e-ül(8)

¹²⁷ literary, abbrev. *íme* ‘here is/ behold’

¹²⁸ vb. *szenved* ‘to suffer’ + noun-forming *-és*

¹²⁹ ‘inside’

¹³⁰ poetic, interj. contrad. ‘but’

¹³¹ adv. ‘outdoor/outside’

¹³² vb. *magyaráz* ‘to explain’ + noun-forming *-at*

¹³³ *seb* ‘wound’ + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-ed*

¹³⁴ vb. ‘to be on fire’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

¹³⁵ vb. ‘to grow hot’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

¹³⁶ inform. sg. ‘you’

¹³⁷ *lélek* ‘soul’ + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-ed* → *lelked* + acc. *-(e)t*

¹³⁸ vb. *érez* ‘to feel’, 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. def.

¹³⁹ *láz* ‘fever’ + acc. *-(a)t*

¹⁴⁰ ‘captive’

¹⁴¹ adv. ‘as long as’; ‘until’ if followed by negated verb

¹⁴² *szíved* ‘heart’ + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-ed*

¹⁴³ vb. *to rebel*, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

¹⁴⁴ *úgy ... ha ...* ‘then ... if ...’

¹⁴⁵ *szabad* ‘free’ + vb.-forming *-ul* + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-sz*

¹⁴⁶ ‘if’

¹⁴⁷ literary, vb. ‘to indulge’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

¹⁴⁸ vb. *rak* ‘to set up/to build’, 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-sz*

¹⁴⁹ *maga* ‘oneself’ + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-d* + dat. *-nak*

¹⁵⁰ pron. ‘such/that kind of thing’

¹⁵¹ *ház* ‘house’ + acc. *-(a)t*

¹⁵² literary, arch. *mely* ‘which’ + illative *-be* ‘into (the inside of)’

¹⁵³ *ház* ‘house’ + adj.-forming ‘of the’ *-i* + *úr* ‘master’

¹⁵⁴ vb. ‘to settle (somewhere)’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

VII

I looked up from beneath the evening	1
to the cogwheels of the heavens —	2
from the glittering threads of chance	3
the loom of the past wove the law;	4
and I looked up again onto the sky	5
from beneath the steam of my dreams,	6
and I saw the fabric of the law	7
always tearing up somewhere.	8

Cursory remark

Whereas verses 1-2 echo the ancient mechanical understanding of the firmament as concentric spheres, and verses 2-4 hearken back at the mythological Fates (Parcæ), verses 5-8 evoke the image of an aerostat, whose aeronaut is J, where J's dreams are the steam that tries to lift him up, and the law is the envelope, whose tears are J's constant misfortune. (The metaphor is a little off, as balloons use hot air, not steam.)

French

Par dessous le soir,	1
j'ai levé les yeux aux rouages des cieux —	2
des fils scintillants de la chance	3
le métier du passé avait tissé la loi;	4
par dessous la vapeur de mes rêves,	5
j'ai regardé à nouveau dans les cieux	6
et j'ai vu le tissu de la loi	7
toujours se déchirer quelque part.	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Én fölnéztem</i> ¹⁵⁵ <i>az est</i> ¹⁵⁶ <i>alól</i> ¹⁵⁷	1
<i>az eget</i> ¹⁵⁸ <i>fogaskerekére</i> ¹⁵⁹ —	2
<i>csilló</i> ¹⁶⁰ <i>véletlen</i> ¹⁶¹ <i>szálaiból</i> ¹⁶²	3
<i>törvényt</i> ¹⁶³ <i>szőtt</i> ¹⁶⁴ <i>a mult</i> ¹⁶⁵ <i>szövőszéke</i> ¹⁶⁶	4
<i>és megint</i> ¹⁶⁷ <i>fölnéztem az égre</i> ¹⁶⁸	5
<i>álmaim</i> ¹⁶⁹ <i>gőzei</i> ¹⁷⁰ <i>alól</i>	6
<i>s láttam</i> , ¹⁷¹ <i>a törvény szövedéke</i> ¹⁷²	7
<i>mindig</i> ¹⁷³ <i>fölfeslik</i> ¹⁷⁴ <i>valahol</i> . ¹⁷⁵	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: a-ól(8)/é-e(9)/a[i]-ól(9)/é-e(9)

5-8: é-e(9)/[i]a-ól(8)/é-e(9)/a-ol(8)

¹⁵⁵ vb. pref. *föl-* ‘upwards’ + vb. *néz* ‘to look’ + 1st pers. sg. past. def. *-tem*

¹⁵⁶ arch. ‘(in the) evening’

¹⁵⁷ *al* ‘lower part’ + abl. *-l* ‘from’

¹⁵⁸ *ég* ‘sky’ + acc. *-(e)t*

¹⁵⁹ *fogas* ‘tooth’ + *kerék* ‘wheel’: ‘cogwheel’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e* + subl. *-re* ‘towards’

¹⁶⁰ vb. *csillog* ‘to glitter’ + adj.-forming *-o* → *csilló*; usually *csillogó*

¹⁶¹ ‘chance’

¹⁶² *szál* ‘thread’ + 3rd pers. sg. poss. *-a* + poss. pl. *-i* + elative *-ból* ‘from/out of’

¹⁶³ *törvény* ‘law/principle’ + acc. *-t*

¹⁶⁴ vb. *sző* ‘to weave’, past part.

¹⁶⁵ *mult*? rare, past part. ‘past’, inf. *múlik*

¹⁶⁶ *szövő* ‘weaver’ + *szék* ‘chair’: ‘loom’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e*

¹⁶⁷ *meg* ‘again’ (short action) + adv.-forming *-int*

¹⁶⁸ *ég* ‘sky’ + subl. sg. *-re* ‘onto’

¹⁶⁹ *álom* ‘dream’ + 1st pers. sg. poss. *-a* + poss. pl. *-i* + 1st pers. sg. pers. *-m*

¹⁷⁰ *gőz* ‘steam, vapour’ + 3rd pers. sg. poss. *-e* + pl. poss. *-i*

¹⁷¹ vb. *lát* ‘to see’ + short base *-t*, 1st pers. sg. past def. *-tam*

¹⁷² *szövedék* ‘fabric/cloth/web’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e*

¹⁷³ *mind* ‘always’ (repetition) + term. ‘until’ *-ig*

¹⁷⁴ vb. pref. *föl-* ‘upwards’ + arch., poetic, vb. *feslik* ‘to come unstitched’, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

¹⁷⁵ ‘somewhere’

VIII

The silence listened intently — One struck.	1
You could visit your childhood;	2
between the damp cement walls	3
you could imagine a bit of freedom —	4
I thought. And as soon as I stood up,	5
the stars, the Great Bear	6
indeed were glittering above,	7
like the grilles up in the silent cell.	8

Cursory remark

This is likely a memory of J's imprisonment in 1931.

French

Le silence écoutait attentivement — Une heure sonna.	1
Tu pourrais visiter ton enfance;	2
entre les murs de ciment humide	3
tu pourrais imaginer un peu de liberté —	4
me dis-je. Et dès que je fus sur pied,	5
les étoiles, la Grande Ourse	6
scintillaient en effet au-dessus,	7
comme les grilles en haut dans ma cellule.	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Fülelt</i> ¹⁷⁶ <i>a csend</i> ¹⁷⁷ — <i>egyet</i> ¹⁷⁸ <i>ütött</i> ¹⁷⁹	1
<i>Fölkereshetnéd</i> ¹⁸⁰ <i>ifjúságod</i> , ¹⁸¹	2
<i>nyirkos</i> ¹⁸² <i>cementfalak</i> ¹⁸³ <i>között</i> ¹⁸⁴	3
<i>képzelhetsz</i> ¹⁸⁵ <i>egy kis szabadságot</i> ¹⁸⁶ —	4
<i>gondoltam</i> . ¹⁸⁷ <i>S hát</i> ¹⁸⁸ <i>amint</i> ¹⁸⁹ <i>fölállok</i> ¹⁹⁰	5
<i>a csillagok</i> , ¹⁹¹ <i>a Göncölök</i> ¹⁹²	6
<i>úgy fénylenek</i> ¹⁹³ <i>fönt</i> , ¹⁹⁴ <i>mint a rácsok</i> ¹⁹⁵	7
<i>a hallgatatag</i> ¹⁹⁶ <i>cella</i> ¹⁹⁷ <i>fölött</i> . ¹⁹⁸	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: ü-ö[tt](8)/á-o(9)/ö-ö[tt](8)/á-o(9)

5-8: á-o[k](9)/ö-ö(8)/á-o[k](9)/ö-ö[tt](8)

¹⁷⁶ *fül* ‘ear’ + vb.-forming *-el*: ‘to listen (intently)’ + 3rd pers. ind. past indef. *-t*

¹⁷⁷ ‘silence’. alt. *csönd*

¹⁷⁸ *egy* + acc. *-t*

¹⁷⁹ vb. *üt* ‘to strike’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past indef. *-(ö)tt*

¹⁸⁰ *föl-* ‘upwards’ + *keres* ‘to seek’: ‘to visit’ + pot. ‘may/might’ *-het* + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. cond. *-ned*, alt. *felkeres*

¹⁸¹ adj. *ifjú* ‘young’ + noun-forming *-ság* (state of being): ‘youth’ + 2nd pers. informal sg. poss. single poss. *-od*: ‘your childhood’ (informal)

¹⁸² adj. ‘humid/damp’

¹⁸³ *cement* ‘cement’ + *fal* ‘wall’ + pl. *-ak*

¹⁸⁴ post. ‘between/amid’, *köz* ‘interval’ + loc. *-ött*

¹⁸⁵ *kép* ‘image’ + vb.-forming *-(z)el*: ‘to imagine’ + pot. *-het* + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. *-sz*

¹⁸⁶ *szabad* ‘free’ + *-ság* (state of being): ‘freedom’ + acc. *-(a)t*

¹⁸⁷ vb. *gondol* ‘to think/plan/guess/worry’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. past *-tam*

¹⁸⁸ ‘back body’, ‘well...’, ‘then/and/but’ (questioning back), ‘surely’

¹⁸⁹ *az* + *mint* ‘like’: ‘as soon as’, literary ‘as’

¹⁹⁰ *föl-* ‘upwards’ + vb. *áll* ‘to stand’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-ok*, alt. *felállok*

¹⁹¹ *csillag* ‘star’ + pl. *-ak*

¹⁹² *Göncöl* + pl. *-ök*: ‘the Great Bear’ (constellation)

¹⁹³ *fény* ‘light’ + freq. vb.-forming *-lik*: ‘to glitter’ + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-ek*

¹⁹⁴ adv. ‘above/up/awake/upstairs’, alt. *fent*

¹⁹⁵ *rács* ‘grid/grille’ + pl. *-ok*

¹⁹⁶ vb. *hallgat* ‘to remain silent/to listen’ + adj.-forming *-ag*

¹⁹⁷ ‘cell’

¹⁹⁸ *föl-* ‘up/upwards’ + loc. *-ött*: ‘above’, alt. *elett*

IX

I heard iron weeping,	1
I heard rain laughing.	2
I saw that the past was cracked	3
and that only memories may be forgotten,	4
and how I cannot but love,	5
bending under my burdens —	6
why should I also forge a weapon	7
out of you, golden self-awareness!	8

Cursory remark

Verses 1-2 refer to the sounds of iron being forged and quenched in water. The blacksmith is fixing a crack, which reminds J of a painful past event, possibly a break-up. Verses 3-6 form a chiasm: verse 5 echoes verse 4: to avoid his love fading away, he will keep loving; verse 6 answers verse 3: instead of hammering the crack to make it disappear, J bends under it. Then there is no need to forge a sword blade to become strong. J's self-consciousness is golden, like the glow that illuminates all the interior of the kiln.

French

J'ai entendu le fer sangloter,	1
j'ai entendu la pluie rire.	2
Je vis que le passé était craquelé	3
et que seuls les souvenirs peuvent s'oublier,	4
et comment je ne peux qu'aimer,	5
pliant sous mes fardeaux —	6
pourquoi devrais-je aussi forger une arme	7
de toi, for intérieur doré!	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Hallottam</i> ¹⁹⁹ <i>sírni</i> ²⁰⁰ <i>a vasat</i> , ²⁰¹	1
<i>hallottam az esőt</i> ²⁰² <i>nevetni</i> . ²⁰³	2
<i>Láttam</i> , ²⁰⁴ <i>hogy</i> ²⁰⁵ <i>a mult</i> ²⁰⁶ <i>meghasadt</i> ²⁰⁷	3
<i>s csak</i> ²⁰⁸ <i>képzetet</i> ²⁰⁹ <i>lehet</i> ²¹⁰ <i>feledni</i> ; ²¹¹	4
<i>s hogy</i> ²¹² <i>nem tudok</i> ²¹³ <i>mást</i> , ²¹⁴ <i>mint</i> ²¹⁵ <i>szeretni</i> , ²¹⁶	5
<i>görnyedve</i> ²¹⁷ <i>terheim</i> ²¹⁸ <i>alatt</i> ²¹⁹ —	6
<i>minek</i> ²²⁰ <i>is</i> ²²¹ <i>kell</i> ²²² <i>fegyvert</i> ²²³ <i>veretni</i> ²²⁴	7
<i>belőled</i> , ²²⁵ <i>arany</i> ²²⁶ <i>öntudat</i> ! ²²⁷	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: a-a[t](8)/e[t]-[n]i(9)/a-a[dt](8)/e[d]-[n]i(9)

5-8: e[t]-[n]i(9)/a-a[tt](8)/e[t]-[n]i(9)/u-a[t](8)

¹⁹⁹ vb. *hall* ‘to hear’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. past def. -*ottam*

²⁰⁰ vb. *sír* ‘to cry/weep’ + inf. -*ni*

²⁰¹ *vas* ‘iron’ + acc. -(a)*t*

²⁰² vb. *es*, inf. *esik* + pres. part. -*ő* + acc. -*t*

²⁰³ vb. *nevet* ‘to laugh’, inf. *nevetni*

²⁰⁴ vb. *lát* ‘to see’ + short base -*t*, 1st pers. sg. past def. -*tam*

²⁰⁵ adv. ‘how’

²⁰⁶ **mult**? rare, past part. ‘past’, inf. *múlik*

²⁰⁷ perfective *meg-* + vb. *hasad* ‘to crack/split apart’ + past part. -*t*

²⁰⁸ adv. ‘only’

²⁰⁹ *képzet* ‘idea/image/notion’ + acc. -*t*

²¹⁰ pot. vb. *van/lesz*: ‘may be/may become’, 3rd pers. sg. ind.

²¹¹ lit. vb. *feled* ‘to forget’, alt. *felejt*

²¹² adv. ‘how’

²¹³ vb. *tud* ‘to know’/aux. ‘can + inf.’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -*ok*

²¹⁴ adj. *más* ‘other/different’ + acc. -*t*

²¹⁵ comp. different degrees ‘than’

²¹⁶ inf. vb. *szeret* ‘to love’

²¹⁷ vb. *görnyed* ‘to bend (under a burden)’ + adv.-forming -*ve*

²¹⁸ *teher* ‘freight/burden’ + 1st pers. sg. poss. mult. poss. -*eim* → *terheim*

²¹⁹ post. *al-* ‘lower part’ + loc. -(a)*tt*

²²⁰ *mi* + dat. -*nek*: ‘for what’

²²¹ doublet of *és* ‘and’, adv. ‘also’

²²² aux. vb. ‘must/need to/have to + inf.’

²²³ *fegyver* ‘weapon’ + acc. -*t*

²²⁴ inf. vb. ‘to hammer’, alt. *veretés*

²²⁵ pron. *belőle* ‘out of him/her/it’ + 2nd pers. sg. -*d*

²²⁶ ‘gold/golden’

²²⁷ ‘self-awareness’

X

He is a grown man he who has	1
neither mother nor father in his heart,	2
he who knows that he receives life	3
as an extra to death, and that he returns it	4
any time, like a found object	5
— therefore he treasures it,	6
he who is neither a god nor a priest,	7
neither to himself nor to others.	8

Cursory remark

An integral man (the Hungarian language is actually gender neutral) knows that his parents cannot protect him anymore from the truth of mortality. This truth is not treasured by gods, as they are immortal, nor Christian priests, who preach eternal life.

French

Il est un homme accompli celui qui n'a	1
ni mère ni père en son cœur,	2
celui qui sait qu'il reçoit la vie	3
tel un supplément à la mort, et qu'il la rendra	4
à tout moment, comme un objet trouvé	5
— par conséquent il la garde précieusement,	6
celui qui n'est ni un dieu ni un prêtre,	7
ni pour lui-même, ni pour autrui.	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Az meglelt²²⁸ ember²²⁹, akinek²³⁰</i>	1
<i>szívében²³¹ nincs se anyja,²³² apja,²³³</i>	2
<i>ki²³⁴ tudja,²³⁵ hogy²³⁶ az életet²³⁷</i>	3
<i>halálra²³⁸ ráadásul²³⁹ kapja²⁴⁰</i>	4
<i>s mint²⁴¹ talált²⁴² tárgyat²⁴³ visszaadja²⁴⁴</i>	5
<i>bármikor²⁴⁵ — ezért²⁴⁶ őrizi²⁴⁷ meg,²⁴⁸</i>	6
<i>ki²⁴⁹ nem istene²⁵⁰ és nem papja²⁵¹</i>	7
<i>se²⁵² magának,²⁵³ sem senkinek.²⁵⁴</i>	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: [k]i-[n]e[k](8)/a[p]-[j]a(9)/e-e(8)/a[p]-[j]a(9)

5-8: a[d]-[j]a(9)/i-e(8)/a[p]-[j]a(9)/[k]i-[n]e[k](8)

²²⁸ obs. ‘adult’

²²⁹ ‘person’

²³⁰ pron. *aki* ‘who’ + attr. poss. *-nek*

²³¹ *szív* ‘heart’ + poss. ‘his’ *-e* + innes. ‘in’ *-ben*

²³² *anya* ‘mother’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-(j)a*

²³³ *apa* ‘father’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-(j)a*

²³⁴ pron. rel. arch. ‘he who’, alt. *aki*

²³⁵ vb. *tud* ‘to know’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

²³⁶ conj. ‘so that’

²³⁷ *élet* ‘life’ + acc. *-(e)t*

²³⁸ vb. *hal* ‘to die’ + arch. noun-forming *-ál* → ‘death’ + subl. ‘on/for’ *-ra* → ‘to death’

²³⁹ *ráadás* ‘addition/extra’ + essive ‘as/with the intention of’ *-ul*

²⁴⁰ vb. *kap* ‘to receive’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pers. def. *-ja*

²⁴¹ ‘like’

²⁴² vb. *talált* ‘to find’ + past part.

²⁴³ *tárgy* ‘object/thing/subject’ + acc. *-(a)t*

²⁴⁴ vb. *visszaad* ‘to give back’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

²⁴⁵ *bár* ‘any’ + adv. *mikor* ‘when’ → ‘any time’

²⁴⁶ conj. ‘therefore’

²⁴⁷ vb. *őriz* ‘to guard’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-i*

²⁴⁸ arch. emph.

²⁴⁹ ‘he who’

²⁵⁰ *isten* ‘god’ + 3rd pers. sg. sing. poss. *-e*

²⁵¹ *pap* ‘priest’ + 3rd pers. sg. sing. poss. *-(j)a*

²⁵² alt. *sem, sem ..., sem ...* ‘neither ... nor ...’

²⁵³ pron. refl. 3rd pers. ‘himself’

²⁵⁴ pron. *senki* ‘no one/nobody’

XI

I saw happiness; it was soft, bright	1
and one and half a quintal.	2
On the coarse grass of the farmyard	3
its curly smile swayed.	4
It plopped into the squishy, tepid puddle,	5
squinted, further grunted at me once —	6
To this day I see how hesitantly	7
the sunlight toyed with its bristles.	8

Cursory remark

While this seems a rather descriptive poem, the first and last two verses are subjective. Also the last verse echoes the first, in the fashion of a chiasm: verse 1 is about seeing happiness, and the last features light and playfulness: the Hungarian uses *fény* for 'light', but it could figuratively also mean 'joy', hence my translation: 'the sunlight toyed'.

French

J'ai vu le bonheur; il était doux, brillant	1
et un quintal et demi.	2
Sur la mauvaise herbe de la cour de ferme	3
son sourire courbé se balançait.	4
Il se laissa tomber dans la marre tiède et spongieuse,	5
plissa ses yeux, puis me grogna une fois —	6
Jusqu'à ce jour, je vois avec quelle hésitation	7
la lumière du jour jouait avec ses poils.	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Láttam</i> ²⁵⁵ <i>a boldogságot</i> ²⁵⁶ <i>én,</i> ²⁵⁷	1
<i>lány</i> ²⁵⁸ <i>volt,</i> ²⁵⁹ <i>szőke</i> ²⁶⁰ <i>és másfél</i> ²⁶¹ <i>mázsa.</i> ²⁶²	2
<i>Az udvar</i> ²⁶³ <i>szigorú</i> ²⁶⁴ <i>gyöpén</i> ²⁶⁵	3
<i>imbolygott</i> ²⁶⁶ <i>göndör</i> ²⁶⁷ <i>mosolygása.</i> ²⁶⁸	4
<i>Ledőlt</i> ²⁶⁹ <i>a puha,</i> ²⁷⁰ <i>langy</i> ²⁷¹ <i>tócsába,</i> ²⁷²	5
<i>hunyorogott,</i> ²⁷³ <i>röffen</i> ²⁷⁴ <i>még</i> ²⁷⁵ <i>felém</i> ²⁷⁶ —	6
<i>ma</i> ²⁷⁷ <i>is</i> ²⁷⁸ <i>látom,</i> ²⁷⁹ <i>mily</i> ²⁸⁰ <i>tétovázva</i> ²⁸¹	7
<i>babrált</i> ²⁸² <i>pihéi</i> ²⁸³ <i>közt</i> ²⁸⁴ <i>a fény.</i> ²⁸⁵	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: o-é(8)/á-a(9)/ö-é(8)/á-a(9)

5-8: á-a(9)/e-é(8)/á-a(9)/a-é(8)

²⁵⁵ vb. *lát* ‘to see’ + short base *-t*, 1st pers. sg. past def. *-tam*

²⁵⁶ adj. *boldog* ‘happy’ + noun-forming *-ság* (state of being) + acc. *-(o)t*

²⁵⁷ pron. ‘I’

²⁵⁸ adj. ‘soft’

²⁵⁹ vb. *van* ‘to be’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past indef.

²⁶⁰ adj. *sző* ‘blonde’ + dim. *-ke*

²⁶¹ *más* ‘other/different’ + *fél* ‘half’ → ‘one and a half’

²⁶² ‘quintal’

²⁶³ ‘yard’

²⁶⁴ adj. ‘severe/strict’

²⁶⁵ *gyep* ‘lawn/grass’ + super. *-én*

²⁶⁶ vb. *imbolyog* ‘to sway’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e*

²⁶⁷ adj. ‘curly’

²⁶⁸ *mosolygása* ‘smile’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e*

²⁶⁹ vb. *ledől* ‘to fall down’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past indef. *-t*

²⁷⁰ ‘soft/squishy’

²⁷¹ arch. poetic *langyos* ‘tepid’

²⁷² *tócsa* ‘puddle’ + illative *-ba* ‘into’

²⁷³ vb. *hunyorog* ‘to squint’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past. indef. *-rgott*

²⁷⁴ *röffen* ‘to grunt once (of a pig)’

²⁷⁵ adv. ‘still/moreover’

²⁷⁶ post. *felé* ‘to/towards’ + 1st pers. sg. poss *-m* → pron. ‘towards me’

²⁷⁷ adv. ‘today’

²⁷⁸ doublet of *és* ‘and’, adv. ‘also’

²⁷⁹ vb. *lát* ‘to see’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def.

²⁸⁰ poetic ‘how ...(!)’

²⁸¹ vb. *tétova* ‘to hesitate’ (inf. *tétovázik*) → adv. part. ‘doing smth hesitantly’

²⁸² vb. *babrált* ‘to fiddle’

²⁸³ *pihe* ‘down, fluff’ + adj.-forming *-i*

²⁸⁴ post. ‘between/amid’ from *között*: *köz* ‘interval’ + loc. *-ött*

²⁸⁵ ‘light/glitter’, fig. ‘happiness/joy’

XII

I live by a railroad.	1
Many a train comes and goes,	2
and I watch from afar	3
how the bright windows fly by	4
in the wavering, fluffy darkness.	5
So the lit-up days rush into the eternal night,	6
and I stand in the light from the compartments,	7
I rest on my elbow and remain silent.	8

French

Je vis près du chemin de fer.	1
Nombreux sont les trains	2
qui viennent et vont, et j'observe de loin	3
comment les fenêtres illuminées défilent	4
dans l'obscurité fluctuante et peluchée.	5
Ainsi les jours clairs se pressent dans la nuit éternelle,	6
et je me tiens dans la lumière des compartiments,	7
je m'accoude et garde le silence.	8

Original Hungarian

<i>Vasútnál</i> ²⁸⁶ <i>lakom.</i> ²⁸⁷ <i>Erre</i> ²⁸⁸ <i>sok</i> ²⁸⁹	1
<i>vonat</i> ²⁹⁰ <i>jön</i> ²⁹¹ <i>-megy</i> ²⁹² <i>és el</i> ²⁹³ <i>-elnézem,</i> ²⁹⁴	2
<i>hogy</i> ²⁹⁵ <i>szállnak</i> ²⁹⁶ <i>fényes</i> ²⁹⁷ <i>ablakok</i> ²⁹⁸	3
<i>a lengedező</i> ²⁹⁹ <i>szősz</i> ³⁰⁰ <i>-sötétben.</i> ³⁰¹	4
<i>Így</i> ³⁰² <i>iramlanak</i> ³⁰³ <i>örök</i> ³⁰⁴ <i>éjben</i> ³⁰⁵	5
<i>kivilágított</i> ³⁰⁶ <i>nappalok</i> ³⁰⁷	6
<i>s én</i> ³⁰⁸ <i>állok</i> ³⁰⁹ <i>minden</i> ³¹⁰ <i>fülke</i> ³¹¹ <i>-fényben,</i> ³¹²	7
<i>én könyöklök</i> ³¹³ <i>és hallgatok.</i> ³¹⁴	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: o(8)/é-e(9)/a-o(8)/é-e(9)

5-8: é-e(9)/a-o(8)/é-e(9)/o(8)

²⁸⁶ *vas* 'iron' + *ut* 'way/road' + adess. *-nal* 'at/by'

²⁸⁷ vb. *lak* 'to dwell', inf. *lakik*, 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. *-(o)m*

²⁸⁸ pron. *ez* 'this/it' + subl. sg. *-re* 'onto/to'

²⁸⁹ 'much/many'

²⁹⁰ vb. *von* 'to pull/to draw' + noun-forming *-at* → 'train'

²⁹¹ vb. 'to come' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

²⁹² vb. 'to go/travel/pass by (of time)' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

²⁹³ adv./conj. 'afar/far away'

²⁹⁴ vb. pref. *el* 'continuity over a long time' + vb. *nez* 'to look at'

²⁹⁵ short. *bogyan?* 'how'

²⁹⁶ vb. *száll* 'to fly/land/to come down' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef.

²⁹⁷ *fény* 'light/glitter' + adj.-forming *-es* → 'bright'

²⁹⁸ *ablak* 'window' + pl. *-(o)k*

²⁹⁹ vb. *leng* 'to swing/sway/wave' + freq. vb.-forming *-edezik* (unrounded front-vowel) + pres. part. *-ő* → 'swinging/waving'

³⁰⁰ 'harl/fluff'

³⁰¹ adj./subst. *sötét* 'dark[ness]' + iness. sg. *-ben* 'in'

³⁰² 'just so'

³⁰³ *ir* 'movement' + rare instr. vb.-forming *-amlík* (inf.) → 'to rush/hurry' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-(a)nak*

³⁰⁴ 'perpetual/eternal'

³⁰⁵ poetic *éj* 'night' + innes. 'in' *-ben*

³⁰⁶ vb. pref. *ki* 'outwardly' + *világ* 'light (arch.)/world' → arch. 'illumination' + caus. vb.-forming *-ít* 'to make smth ...-like' → 'to illuminate' + past part. *-ott*

³⁰⁷ *nap* 'day' + instr. *-val* 'with' → *nappal* + pl. *-(o)k*

³⁰⁸ pron. 'I'

³⁰⁹ vb. *áll* 'to stand' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-ok*

³¹⁰ det. 'every'

³¹¹ *fül* 'semi-circular obj./shape' + dim. *-ke* → 'compartment'

³¹² *fény* 'light/glitter' + innes. *-ben* 'in'

³¹³ *könyök* 'elbow' + vb.-forming *-öl* → 'to rest on one's elbow' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pers. *-ök*

³¹⁴ vb. *hallgat* 'to remain silent/to listen' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-ok*