

# Collected Poems

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# Chapter I

1934

## I.I Consciousness (*Eszmélet*)

### I

Dawn unbinds sky from earth  
and at its clear, soft word  
beetles and children  
spin forth into the daylight;  
there is no moisture in the air,  
the bright levity floats!  
Overnight they alighted on the trees  
like small butterflies, the leaves.

*Földtől<sup>1</sup> eloldja<sup>2</sup> az eget<sup>3</sup>  
a hajnal<sup>4</sup> s tiszta<sup>5</sup>, lágy<sup>6</sup> szavára<sup>7</sup>  
a bogarak,<sup>8</sup> a gyerekek  
kipörögnek<sup>9</sup> a napvilágra<sup>10</sup>;  
a levegőben<sup>11</sup> semmi pára<sup>12</sup>,  
a csilló<sup>13</sup> könnyűség lebeg!<sup>14</sup>  
Az éjjel<sup>15</sup> rászálltak<sup>16</sup> a fákra,<sup>17</sup>  
mint<sup>18</sup> kis<sup>19</sup> lepkek,<sup>20</sup> a levelek.<sup>21</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>*föld* “earth” + ablative *-től* “without/from”

<sup>2</sup>*el-* “away” + vb. stem *old* “to unbind” + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

<sup>3</sup>*ég* “sky” + acc. *-et* → *eget*

<sup>4</sup>“dawn”

<sup>5</sup>adj. “bright”

<sup>6</sup>adj. “soft”

<sup>7</sup>*szó* “voice”, “word” + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a* → *szava* + subl. *-ra*

“onto/by” → *szavára*

<sup>8</sup>*bogár* “beetle” + pl. *-(a)k* → *bogarak*

<sup>9</sup>vb. stem *kipörög* “to spin” + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-nek*

<sup>10</sup>*nap* “sun/day” + *világ* “world” + subl. *-ra* “onto/by”

<sup>11</sup>*levegő* “air” + inessive *-ben* “in”

<sup>12</sup>“moisture”, “mist”

<sup>13</sup>vb. stem *csillog* “to glitter” + adj.-forming *-o* → *csilló*

<sup>14</sup>vb. stem *lebeg* “to float (in the air)”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>15</sup>*éj* “night” + instrumental *-vel* “with” → *éjjel*

<sup>16</sup>pointed action *rá-* “on” + vb. stem *száll* “to fly/to land” + 3rd pers. sg. past indef. *-tak*

<sup>17</sup>*fa* “tree” + pl. *-k* + subl. *-ra* “onto/by” → *fákra*

<sup>18</sup>“like”

<sup>19</sup>“small”

<sup>20</sup>*lepke* “butterfly” + pl. *-k* → *lepkek*

<sup>21</sup>*level* “leaf” + pl. *-(e)k*

## II

I saw paintings daubed with blue,  
red, yellow in my dreams  
and felt that everything was just so —  
not one speck of dust flying madly about.  
Now a blur, my dream reaches my members  
and the iron world is in order.  
During the day a moon rises inwardly and,  
when the night is out, a sun shines within.

*Kék, piros, sárga, összekent<sup>22</sup>  
képeket<sup>23</sup> láttam<sup>24</sup> álmaimban<sup>25</sup>  
és úgy éreztem,<sup>26</sup> ez a rend<sup>27</sup> —  
egy szalló<sup>28</sup> porszem<sup>29</sup> el nem hibbant.<sup>30</sup>  
Most homályként<sup>31</sup> száll tagjaimban<sup>32</sup>  
álmom s a vas<sup>33</sup> világ a rend.  
Nappal<sup>34</sup> hold<sup>35</sup> kel<sup>36</sup> bennem<sup>37</sup> s ha<sup>38</sup> kinn<sup>39</sup> van  
az éj<sup>40</sup> — egy nap süt<sup>41</sup> idebent.<sup>42</sup>*

<sup>22</sup>össze “together” + ken “smear” → összekent + 3rd pers. sg. past indef. -t

<sup>23</sup>kép “picture” + pl. -(e)k + acc. -et

<sup>24</sup>vb. stem lát “to see” + short base -t, 1st pers. sg. past def.

<sup>25</sup>álom “dream” + 1st pers. sg. poss. -a + mult. poss. -i + 1st pers. sg. pers.

-m + inessive -ban “in” → álmaimban

<sup>26</sup>vb. stem érez “to feel”, 1st pers. sg. past def.

<sup>27</sup>“order”

<sup>28</sup>vb. stem száll “to fly” + pres. part. -ó

<sup>29</sup>“a speck of dust”

<sup>30</sup>vb. stem hibban “to become imbalanced”, arch. + past part. -t

<sup>31</sup>homály “blur” + essive formal -ként “as”

<sup>32</sup>tag “member” + 1st pers. sg. poss. -ja + mult. poss. -i + 1st pers. sg.

pers. -m + inessive -ban “in” → tagjaimban

<sup>33</sup>“iron”

<sup>34</sup>nap “day” + instrumental -val “with”

<sup>35</sup>“moon”

<sup>36</sup>arch. var. of kel, vb. stem “to rise”, 3rd pers. sg. pres. def.

<sup>37</sup>pron. benne “inside smth/smb” + 1st pers. sg. pers. -m

<sup>38</sup>“when”

<sup>39</sup>“outside”

<sup>40</sup>“night”

<sup>41</sup>vb. stem “to roast/to shine”, 3rd pers. sg. pres. indef.

<sup>42</sup>adv. ide “here” + bent “within”

**III**

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

*Sóvány<sup>43</sup> vagyok, csak kenyeret<sup>44</sup>  
 eszem<sup>45</sup> néha,<sup>46</sup> e<sup>47</sup> léha,<sup>48</sup> locska<sup>49</sup>  
 lelkek<sup>50</sup> közt<sup>51</sup> ingyen<sup>52</sup> keresek<sup>53</sup>  
 bizonyosabbat,<sup>54</sup> mint<sup>55</sup> a kocska.<sup>56</sup>  
 Nem dörgölődzik<sup>57</sup> sült<sup>58</sup> lopcska<sup>59</sup>  
 számhoz<sup>60</sup> s szívemhez<sup>61</sup> kisgyerek<sup>62</sup> —  
 ügyeskedhet,<sup>63</sup> nem fog<sup>64</sup> a macska<sup>65</sup>  
 egyszerre<sup>66</sup> kint<sup>67</sup> s bent<sup>68</sup> egeret.<sup>69</sup>*

<sup>43</sup>“slim”, “thin”, fig. “poor”

<sup>44</sup>*kenyér* “bread” + acc. *-et* → *kenyeret*

<sup>45</sup>vb. stem *esz* “to eat”, rare without verbal pref., inf. *enni* + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-em* → *eszem*

<sup>46</sup>adv. “sometimes”

<sup>47</sup>poetic abbrv. *eme/ez* “this”

<sup>48</sup>“improvident/idler”

<sup>49</sup>adj. “blethering”

<sup>50</sup>*lélek* “soul” + pl. *-(e)k* → *lelkek*

<sup>51</sup>post. “between/amid” from *között*: *köz* “interval” + locative *-ött*

<sup>52</sup>fig. arch. “in vain”, usually “free of charge”

<sup>53</sup>vb. stem *keres* “to seek” + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>54</sup>adj. *bizonyos* “certain” + comp. *-abb* “more” + acc. *-t*

<sup>55</sup>“like”

<sup>56</sup>“a die”

<sup>57</sup>vb. stem “to press against”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>58</sup>vb. stem “to roast”, inf. *sülni* + past part. *-t*

<sup>59</sup>“chuck” (shoulder meat cut, probably pork)

<sup>60</sup>*száj* “mouth” + 1st pers. sg. single poss. *-m* → *szám* + allative *-hoz* “towards” → *számhoz*

<sup>61</sup>*szívem* “heart” + allative *-hez* “towards”

<sup>62</sup>*kis* “small” + *gyerek* “child”

<sup>63</sup>vb. stem *ügyesked* “to be clever” + 3rd pers. sg. pres. potential *-het*

<sup>64</sup>vb. stem “to hold”, 3rd pers. sg. pers. indef.

<sup>65</sup>“cat”

<sup>66</sup>adv. *egyszer* “at once” + ablative *-re* “onto”

<sup>67</sup>adv. “outside”

<sup>68</sup>adv. “inside”

<sup>69</sup>*egér* “mouse” + acc. *-t* → *egeret*



**IV**

Just like a pile of logs,  
the world lies in a jumble;  
each thing presses, weighs on,  
holds fast to another,  
and so everything is determined.  
Only what is not, what is of the shrub,  
only that becomes; that flower,  
what is, it falls to pieces.

*Akár<sup>70</sup> egy halom<sup>71</sup> hasított<sup>72</sup> fa,<sup>73</sup>  
 hever<sup>74</sup> egymáson<sup>75</sup> a világ,<sup>76</sup>  
 szorítja,<sup>77</sup> nyomja,<sup>78</sup> összefogja<sup>79</sup>  
 egyik<sup>80</sup> dolog<sup>81</sup> a másikat<sup>82</sup>  
 s így<sup>83</sup> “just so” mindenik<sup>83</sup> determinált.<sup>84</sup>  
 Csak<sup>85</sup> ami<sup>86</sup> nincs, annak<sup>87</sup> van bokra,<sup>88</sup>  
 csak ami lesz,<sup>89</sup> az a virág,  
 ami van, szétbull<sup>90</sup> darabokra.<sup>91</sup>*

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<sup>70</sup>conj. literary “just like”

<sup>71</sup>“pile/heap”

<sup>72</sup>vb. stem *hasít* “to cleave/to split” + past. part. *-ott*

<sup>73</sup>“tree”

<sup>74</sup>vb. stem “to lie”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>75</sup>pron. *egymás* “each other/one another” + superessive *-on* “on”

<sup>76</sup>“world”

<sup>77</sup>vb. stem *szorít* “to press/to constrict”, inf. *szorítani* + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

<sup>78</sup>vb. stem *nyom* “to weigh” + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

<sup>79</sup>*össze* “together” + vb. stem *fog* “to hold” + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

<sup>80</sup>*egy* “one” + 3rd pers. pl. poss. *-ik* “of”

<sup>81</sup>“thing”

<sup>82</sup>pron. *másik* “another” + acc. *-at (-át?)*

<sup>83</sup>adv. *minden* “everyone/everything”

<sup>84</sup>Latin *determinare* + vb.-forming *-ál* “to determine” + past part. *-t*

<sup>85</sup>“only”

<sup>86</sup>“which”

<sup>87</sup>*az* “that” + dat. sg. *-nak* “of” → *annak*

<sup>88</sup>“shrub/bush”

<sup>89</sup>vb. stem “to become”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>90</sup>vb. stem “to fall apart”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>91</sup>adv. *darab* “piece/chunk” + pl. *-ok* + subl. *-ra* “into”

V

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

*A teherpályudvaron*<sup>92</sup>  
*úgy*<sup>93</sup> *lapultam*<sup>94</sup> *a fa*<sup>95</sup> *tövéhez*,<sup>96</sup>  
*mint*<sup>97</sup> *egy darab*<sup>98</sup> *csönd*<sup>99</sup>; *szürke*<sup>100</sup> *gyom*<sup>101</sup>  
*ért*<sup>102</sup> *számhoz*,<sup>103</sup> *nyers*,<sup>104</sup> *különös-édes*.  
*Holtan*<sup>105</sup> *lestem*<sup>106</sup> *az őrt*,<sup>107</sup> *mit*<sup>108</sup> *érez*,<sup>109</sup>  
*s a hallgató*<sup>110</sup> *vagónokon*<sup>111</sup>  
*árnyát*,<sup>112</sup> *mely*<sup>113</sup> *ráugrott*<sup>114</sup> *a fényes*,<sup>115</sup>  
*harmatos*<sup>116</sup> *szénre*<sup>117</sup> *konokon*.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>92</sup> *teher* “freight” + *pálya* “track” + *udvar* “courtyard” (*pályaudvar* “train station”) + superessive *-on* “on”

<sup>93</sup> adv. “so (in this/that manner)”

<sup>94</sup> vb. stem *lapul* “to lie low” + 1st pers. sg. past indef. *-tam*

<sup>95</sup> “tree”

<sup>96</sup> *tő* “base of the stem of a plant” + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e* “of” → *tövé* + allative *-hez* “towards” → *tövéhez*

<sup>97</sup> “like”

<sup>98</sup> “piece”

<sup>99</sup> “silence”, alt. *csend*

<sup>100</sup> adj. “grey”

<sup>101</sup> “weed”

<sup>102</sup> vb. stem *ért* “to reach/to understand”, arch. “to touch”, 3rd pers. sg. past indef.

<sup>103</sup> *száj* “mouth” + 1st pers. sg. single poss. *-m* → *szám* + allative “towards” *-hoz* → *számhoz*

<sup>104</sup> adj. “raw”

<sup>105</sup> *holt* “dead” + adv.-forming *-an*

<sup>106</sup> vb. stem *les* “to spy” + 1st pers. sg. past indef. *-tem*

<sup>107</sup> *őr* “guard” + acc. *-t*

<sup>108</sup> inter. “what”

<sup>109</sup> vb. stem “to feel/to smell/to taste”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>110</sup> vb. stem *hallgat* “to remain silent/to listen” + adj.-forming *-ag*

<sup>111</sup> *vagón* “wagon” + pl. *-ok* + superessive *-on* “on”

<sup>112</sup> *árny* “shadow/ghost” + acc. *-at* (*-át?*)

<sup>113</sup> literary, “which/that”

<sup>114</sup> pointed action *ra-* “at” + vb. stem *ugrik* “to leap/to jump” + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past. indef. *-ott* → *ugrott*

<sup>115</sup> adj. “bright”

<sup>116</sup> adj. “dewy”

<sup>117</sup> *szén* “coal” + subl. *-re* “onto”

<sup>118</sup> adj. *konok* “stubborn” + superessive *-on* “on (that manner)”

**VI**

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

*Im*<sup>119</sup> *itt a szenvedés*<sup>120</sup> *belül*,<sup>121</sup>  
*ám*<sup>122</sup> *ott kívül*<sup>123</sup> *a magyarázat*.<sup>124</sup>  
*Sebed*<sup>125</sup> *a világ — ég*,<sup>126</sup> *bevül*<sup>127</sup>  
*s te lelkedet*<sup>128</sup> *érezed*,<sup>129</sup> *a lázat*.<sup>130</sup>  
*Rab*<sup>131</sup> *vagy, amíg*<sup>132</sup> *a szíved*<sup>133</sup> *lázad*<sup>134</sup> —  
*úgy*<sup>135</sup> *szabadulsz*,<sup>136</sup> *ha*<sup>137</sup> *kényedül*<sup>138</sup>  
*nem raksz*<sup>139</sup> *magadnak*<sup>140</sup> *olyan*<sup>141</sup> *házat*,<sup>142</sup>  
*melybe*<sup>143</sup> *háziúr*<sup>144</sup> *települ*.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>119</sup>literary, abbrev. *íme* “here is/ behold”

<sup>120</sup>vb. stem *szenved* “to suffer” + noun-forming *-és*

<sup>121</sup>“inside”

<sup>122</sup>poetic, interj. contrad. “but”

<sup>123</sup>adv. “outdoor/outside”

<sup>124</sup>vb. stem *magyaráz* “to explain” + noun-forming *-at*

<sup>125</sup>*seb* “wound” + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-ed*

<sup>126</sup>vb. stem “to be on fire”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>127</sup>vb. stem “to grow hot”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>128</sup>*lelek* “soul” + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-ed* → *lelked* + acc. *-et*

<sup>129</sup>vb. stem *érez* “to feel”, 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. def.

<sup>130</sup>*láz* “fever” + acc. *-at*

<sup>131</sup>“captive”

<sup>132</sup>adv. “as long as”; “until” if followed by negated verb

<sup>133</sup>*szíved* “heart” + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-ed*

<sup>134</sup>vb. stem *to rebel*, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>135</sup>*úgy ... ha ...* “then ... if ...”

<sup>136</sup>*szabad* “free” + vb.-forming *-ul* + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-sz*

<sup>137</sup>“if”

<sup>138</sup>literary, vb. stem “to indulge”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>139</sup>vb. stem *rak* “to set up/to build”, 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-sz*

<sup>140</sup>*maga* “oneself” + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-d* + dat. *-nak*

<sup>141</sup>pron. “such/that kind of thing”

<sup>142</sup>*ház* “house” + acc. *-at*

<sup>143</sup>literary, arch. *mely* which” + illative *-be* “into (the inside of)”

<sup>144</sup>*ház* “house” + adj.-forming “of the” *-i* + *úr* “master”

<sup>145</sup>vb. stem “to settle (somewhere)”, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.