# Collected Poems

Attila József

September 2, 2025

# Chapter 1

# 1934

French

# Consciousness (Eszmélet)

I

Dawn unbinds sky from earth

and upon its clear, soft word	2
beetles and children	3
spin forth into the daylight;	4
there is no moisture in the air,	4
the bright levity floats!	(
Overnight they alighted on the trees	7
like small butterflies, the leaves.	8
L'aube détache le ciel de la terre	]
et, à sa voix claire et douce,	2
scarabées et enfants virevoltent	3
en entrant sur la scène du jour;	
l'air n'est pas humide,	
la brillante légèreté flotte!	(
Avec la nuit, elles se posèrent sur les arbres	7
comme de petits papillons, les feuilles.	:

Ι

```
Földtől<sup>1</sup> eloldja<sup>2</sup> az eget<sup>3</sup>
                                                                                                                            Ι
a hajnal<sup>4</sup> s<sup>5</sup> tiszta<sup>6</sup>, lágy<sup>7</sup> szavára<sup>8</sup>
                                                                                                                            2
a bogarak,9 a gyerekek
                                                                                                                            3
kipörögnek<sup>10</sup> a napvilágra<sup>11</sup>;
                                                                                                                            4
a levegőben<sup>12</sup> semmi pára<sup>13</sup>,
                                                                                                                            5
a csilló<sup>14</sup> könnyűség<sup>15</sup> lebeg!<sup>16</sup>
                                                                                                                            6
Az éjjel<sup>17</sup> rászálltak<sup>18</sup> a fákra,<sup>19</sup>
                                                                                                                            7
mint<sup>20</sup> kis<sup>21</sup> lepkék,<sup>22</sup> a levelek.<sup>23</sup>
                                                                                                                            8
```

```
I-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)
```

```
<sup>1</sup> föld 'earth' + abl. -től 'without/from'
<sup>2</sup> vb. pref. el- 'away' + vb. old 'to unbind' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. -ja
 ^{3} ég 'sky' + acc. -et \rightarrow eget
4 'dawn'
 <sup>5</sup> poetic abbrv. es 'and' (does not count as a syllable)
<sup>6</sup> adj. 'bright'
7 adj. 'soft'
 <sup>8</sup> szo 'voice', 'word' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -a \rightarrow szava + subl. -ra 'by' \rightarrow szavara
^9 bogár 'beetle' + pl. -(a)k → bogarak
<sup>10</sup> vb. kipörög 'to spin' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. -nek
пар 'sun/day' + világ 'world' + subl. -ra 'onto'
12 levegő 'air' + innes. -ben 'in'
13 'moisture/mist'
<sup>14</sup> vb. csillog 'to glitter' + adj.-forming -o \rightarrow csillo; usually csillogo
15 könnyű 'simplicity/easiness' + noun-forming -ség (state of being)
<sup>16</sup> vb. lebeg 'to float (in the air)', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
<sup>17</sup> poetic éj 'night' + instr. -vel 'with' \rightarrow éjjel
pointed action rá- 'on' + vb. száll 'to fly/land/to come down' + 3rd pers. sg. past indef. -tak
<sup>19</sup> fa 'tree' + pl. -k + subl. -ra 'onto' \rightarrow f\acute{a}kra
<sup>20</sup> 'like'
2I 'small'
<sup>22</sup> lepke 'butterfly' + pl. -k \rightarrow lepk\acute{e}k
^{23} level 'leaf' + pl. -(e)k
```

	CONTROLICATER	/ /
T T		(
1.1.	CONSCIOUSNESS	

### II

I saw paintings daubed with blue,	I
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

5

# **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.

J'ai vu des tableaux barbouillés de bleu,	I
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

```
Kék, piros, sárga, összekent<sup>24</sup>
                                                                                                                     Ι
képeket<sup>25</sup> láttam<sup>26</sup> álmaimban<sup>27</sup>
                                                                                                                     2
és úgy éreztem,28 ez a rend29 —
                                                                                                                     3
egy szalló<sup>30</sup> porszem<sup>31</sup> el<sup>32</sup> nem hibbant.<sup>33</sup>
                                                                                                                     4
Most homályként<sup>34</sup> száll<sup>35</sup> tagjaimban<sup>36</sup>
                                                                                                                     5
álmom s a vas<sup>37</sup> világ a rend.
                                                                                                                     6
Nappal<sup>38</sup> hold<sup>39</sup> kél<sup>40</sup> bennem<sup>41</sup> s ha<sup>42</sup> kinn<sup>43</sup> van
                                                                                                                     7
az éj<sup>44</sup> — egy nap süt<sup>45</sup> idebent.<sup>46</sup>
                                                                                                                     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)
```

46 adv. ide 'here' + bent 'within'

```
<sup>24</sup> \ddot{o}ssze 'together' + ken 'smear' \rightarrow \ddot{o}sszeken + 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
   <sup>27</sup> álom 'dream' + 1st pers. sg. poss. -a + poss. pl. -i + 1st pers. sg. pers. -m + innes. -ban 'in' \rightarrow
álmaimban
   <sup>28</sup> vb. érez 'to feel', 1st pers. sg. past def.
   29 'order'
   <sup>30</sup> vb. száll 'to fly' + pres. part. -ό
   31 'a speck of dust'
   <sup>32</sup> el nem + past. part.; the verbal prefix el emphasises the completion of the action
   <sup>33</sup> vb. hibban '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' \rightarrow
tagjaimban
   <sup>37</sup> 'iron'
   ^{38} nap 'day' + instr. -val 'with' \rightarrow nappal
   39 'moon'
   40 vb. 'to rise', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def., arch. alt. kel
   <sup>41</sup> 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.
```

1.1. CONSCIOUSNESS (ESZMÉLE
-----------------------------

# III

I am thin, at times I only eat bread;	I
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	(
the mouse outdoors and the one indoors.	7

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.

Je suis maigre, parfois je ne mange que du pain;	I
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

```
Sóvany<sup>47</sup> vagyok, csak kenyeret<sup>48</sup>
                                                                                                                          Ι
eszem<sup>49</sup> néha,<sup>50</sup> e<sup>51</sup> léha,<sup>52</sup> locska<sup>53</sup>
                                                                                                                          2
lelkek<sup>54</sup> közt<sup>55</sup> ingyen<sup>56</sup> keresek<sup>57</sup>
                                                                                                                          3
bizonyosabbat,58 mint59 a kocska.60
                                                                                                                          4
Nem dörgölődzik<sup>61</sup> sült<sup>62</sup> lopcska<sup>63</sup>
                                                                                                                          5
számhoz<sup>64</sup> s szivemhez<sup>65</sup> kisgyerek<sup>66</sup> —
                                                                                                                           6
ügyeskedhet,<sup>67</sup> nem fog<sup>68</sup> a macska<sup>69</sup>
                                                                                                                           7
egyszerre<sup>70</sup> kint<sup>71</sup> s bent<sup>72</sup> egeret.<sup>73</sup>
                                                                                                                           8
```

#### Chiastic structure:

<sup>73</sup> egér 'mouse" + acc. -(e)t  $\rightarrow$  egeret

```
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'
<sup>48</sup> kenyér 'bread' + acc. -(e)t \rightarrow kenyeret
<sup>49</sup> vb. esz 'to eat', rare without verbal pref., inf. enni + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def. -em \rightarrow eszem
50 adv. 'sometimes'
51 poetic abbrv. eme/ez 'this'
52 'improvident/idler'
53 adj. 'blethering'
54 lélek 'soul' + pl. -(e)k \rightarrow lelkek
55 post. 'between/amid' from között: köz 'interval' + loc. -ött
56 fig. arch. 'in vain'; usually 'free of charge'
<sup>57</sup> vb. keres 'to seek' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
58 adj. bizonyos 'certain' + comp. -abb 'more' + acc. -t
59 'like'
60 'a die'
<sup>61</sup> vb. 'to press against', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
62 vb. sül 'to roast' + past part. -t
<sup>63</sup> 'chuck' (shoulder meat cut, probably pork)
<sup>64</sup> száj 'mouth' + 1st pers. sg. single poss. -m \rightarrow szám + allat. -hoz 'towards' \rightarrow számhoz
65 szivem 'heart' + allat. -hez 'towards'
66 kis 'small' + gyerek 'child'
<sup>67</sup> vb. ügyesked 'to be clever' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. potential -het
<sup>68</sup> vb. 'to hold', 3rd pers. sg. pers. indef.
<sup>70</sup> adv. egyszer 'at once' + abl. -re 'onto'
71 adv. 'outside'
72 adv. 'inside'
```

### IV

Just like a pile of logs,	I
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.

Tout comme un tas de bûches,	I
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

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

```
1-4: 0-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)
```

```
<sup>74</sup> conj. literary 'just like'
75 'pile/heap'
<sup>76</sup> vb. hasít 'to cleave/split' + past. part. -ott
<sup>78</sup> vb. 'to lie', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
<sup>79</sup> pron. egymás 'each other/one another' + super. -on 'on'
80 'world'
<sup>81</sup> 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
<sup>83</sup> 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'
<sup>86</sup> adj. m\acute{a}s 'other' + noun-forming -ik \rightarrow 'another' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -a + acc. -t \rightarrow -\acute{a}t
87 'just so'
88 adv. minden 'everyone/everything'
<sup>89</sup> 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 \rightarrow annak
93 bokor 'shrub/bush' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -a
94 adv. 'only'
95 vb. 'to become', 3rd pers. sg. ind. fut. indef.
<sup>96</sup> 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,	I
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.

À la gare de fret,	I
je m'étalai 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

```
A teherpályaudvaron<sup>98</sup>
                                                                                                                       Ι
úgy99 lapultam100 a fa101 tövéhez,102
                                                                                                                       2
mint<sup>103</sup> egy darab<sup>104</sup> csönd<sup>105</sup>; szürke<sup>106</sup> gyom<sup>107</sup>
                                                                                                                       3
ért<sup>108</sup> számhoz, <sup>109</sup> nyers, <sup>110</sup> különös <sup>111</sup>-édes. <sup>112</sup>
                                                                                                                       4
Holtan<sup>II3</sup> lestem<sup>II4</sup> az őrt, <sup>II5</sup> mit<sup>II6</sup> érez, <sup>II7</sup>
                                                                                                                       5
s a hallgatag<sup>118</sup> vagónokon<sup>119</sup>
                                                                                                                       6
árnyát, 120 mely 121 ráugrott 122 a fényes, 123
                                                                                                                       7
harmatos<sup>124</sup> szénre<sup>125</sup> konokon. <sup>126</sup>
                                                                                                                       8
```

```
I-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 teher '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
   t\ddot{o} 'base of the stem of a plant' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -e 'of' \to t\ddot{o}ve + allat. -hez 'towards' \to
tövéhez
   103 'like'
  104 'piece'
  ios 'silence', alt. csend
  106 adj. 'grey'
  107 'weed'
  <sup>108</sup> vb. ért 'to reach', arch. 'to touch', fig. 'to understand', 3rd pers. sg. past indef.
  <sup>109</sup> száj 'mouth' + 1st pers. sg. single poss. -m \rightarrow szám + allat. 'towards' -hoz \rightarrow számhoz
   по adj. 'raw'
   III 'strange'
   112 'sweet'
   113 holt 'dead' + adv.-forming -an
   ^{\text{II4}} vb. les 'to spy' + 1st pers. sg. past indef. -tem
   ^{\text{II5}} őr 'guard' + acc. -t
   п6 inter. 'what'
   <sup>117</sup> vb. 'to feel/smell/taste', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
   <sup>118</sup> vb. hallgat 'to remain silent/to listen' + adj.-forming -ag
   "9 vagón 'wagon' + pl. -ok + super. -on 'on'
  ^{120} árny 'shadow/ghost' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -a + acc. -t \rightarrow -\acute{a}t
   12.1 literary, 'which/that'
   pointed action ra- 'at' + vb. ugrik 'to leap/jump' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past. indef. -(o)tt 	o ugrott
   <sup>123</sup> f\acute{e}ny 'light/glitter' + adj.-forming -es \rightarrow 'bright'
  124 adj. 'dewy'
   125 szén 'coal' + subl. -re 'onto'
   <sup>126</sup> adj. konok 'stubborn' + super. -on 'on (that manner)'
```

13

### VI

Behold the anguish inside,	I
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	$\epsilon$
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.

pourtant l'explication se trouve à l'extérieur.
podituit i expileation se trouve a resterieur.
Ta blessure est le monde — en feu, s'échauffant —
et tu sens ton âme, la fièvre.
Tu es captif tant que ton cœur se révolte —
ainsi tu es libre s'il se complaît
à ne plus bâtir pour toi une maison
où un propriétaire vient demeurer.

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

#### Chiastic structure:

I-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, abbrv. íme 'here is/behold'
<sup>128</sup> vb. szenved 'to suffer' + noun-forming -és
129 'inside'
130 poetic, interj. contrad. 'but'
131 adv. 'outdoor/outside'
<sup>132</sup> 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'
<sup>137</sup> lélek 'soul' + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. -ed \rightarrow lelked + acc. -(e)t
138 vb. érez 'to feel', 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. def.
139 láz 'fever' + acc. -(a)t
140 'captive'
<sup>141</sup> adv. 'as long as'; 'until' if followed by negated verb
142 szíved 'heart' + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. -ed
<sup>143</sup> vb. to rebel, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
<sup>144</sup> úgy ... ha ... 'then ... if ...'
145 szabad 'free' + vb.-forming -ul + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -sz
<sup>147</sup> literary, vb. 'to indulge', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
148 vb. rak 'to set up/to build', 2rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -sz
<sup>149</sup> 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)'
<sup>153</sup> ház 'house' + adj.-forming 'of the' -i + \mu r 'master'
154 vb. 'to settle (somewhere)', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
```

### 15

### VII

I looked up from beneath the evening	I
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.)

Par dessous le soir,	I
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

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

#### Chiastic structure:

175 'somewhere'

```
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
<sup>159</sup> fogas 'tooth' + kerék 'wheel': 'cogwheel' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -e + subl. -re 'towards'
<sup>160</sup> vb. csillog 'to glitter' + adj.-forming -o \rightarrow csillo; usually csillogo
161 'chance'
^{162} szál 'thread' + 3rd pers. sg. poss. -a + poss. pl. -i + elative -b\acute{o}l 'from/out of'
<sup>163</sup> törveny 'law/principle' + acc. -t
<sup>164</sup> vb. sző 'to weave', past part.
165 múlt? rare, past part. 'past', inf. múlik
<sup>166</sup> szövő 'weaver' + szék 'chair': 'loom' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -e
167 meg 'again' (short action) + adv.-forming -int
<sup>168</sup> 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
<sup>171</sup> vb. lát 'to see' + short base -t, 1st pers. sg. past def. -tam
<sup>172</sup> szövedék 'fabric/cloth/web' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -e
<sup>173</sup> mind 'always' (repetition) + term. 'until' -ig
<sup>174</sup> vb. pref. föl- 'upwards'+ arch., poetic, vb. feslik 'to come unstitched', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
```

1.1. CONSCIOUSNESS ( <i>ESZMÉLET</i> )
--

# VIII

The silence listened intently — One struck.	I
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

Ι
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

17

Fülelt <sup>176</sup> a csend <sup>177</sup> — egyet <sup>178</sup> ütött <sup>179</sup>	I
Fölkereshetnéd <sup>180</sup> ifjúságod; <sup>181</sup>	2
nyirkos <sup>182</sup> cementfalak <sup>183</sup> között <sup>184</sup>	3
képzelhetsz <sup>185</sup> egy kis sabadságot <sup>186</sup> —	4
gondoltam.¹ <sup>87</sup> S hát¹ <sup>88</sup> amint¹ <sup>89</sup> fölállok¹ <sup>90</sup>	S
a csillagok, 191 a Göncölök 192	C
úgy fénylenek <sup>193</sup> fönt, <sup>194</sup> mint a rácsok <sup>195</sup>	7
a hallqataq <sup>196</sup> cella <sup>197</sup> fölött. <sup>198</sup>	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)
```

<sup>198</sup> *föl-* 'up/upwards' + loc. *-ött*: 'above', alt. *elett* 

```
<sup>176</sup> fül 'ear' + vb.-forming -el: 'to listen (intently)' + 3rd pers. ind. past indef. -t
   177 'silence'. alt. csönd
  ^{178} egy + acc. -t
  <sup>179</sup> vb. \ddot{u}t 'to strike' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past indef. -(\ddot{o})tt
  180 föl- 'upwards' + keres 'to seek': 'to visit' + pot. 'may/might' -het + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. cond.
-ned, alt. felkeres
   <sup>181</sup> 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'
   <sup>183</sup> cement 'cement'+ fal 'wall' + pl. -ak
  <sup>184</sup> 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
   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'
  <sup>190</sup> föl- 'upwards' + vb. áll 'to stand' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -ok, alt. felállok
   <sup>191</sup> csillag 'star' + pl. -ak
   <sup>192</sup> G\ddot{o}nc\ddot{o}l + pl. - \ddot{o}k: 'the Great Bear' (constellation)
   <sup>193</sup> fény 'light' + freq. vb.-forming -lik: 'to glitter' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. -ek
  194 adv. 'above/up/awake/upstairs', alt. fent
   <sup>195</sup> rács 'grid/grille' + pl. -ok
  196 vb. hallgat 'to remain silent/to listen' + adj.-forming -ag
```

## 19

### IX

I heard iron weeping,	I
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 breakup. 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.

J'ai entendu le fer sangloter,	I
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

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

```
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
vas 'iron' + acc. -(a)t
vb. es, inf. esik + pres. part. -\delta + acc. -t
<sup>203</sup> vb. nevet 'to laugh', inf. nevetni
<sup>204</sup> vb. lát 'to see' + short base -t, 1st pers. sg. past def. -tam
205 adv. 'how'
206 múlt? rare, past part. 'past', inf. múlik
<sup>207</sup> perfective meg-+ vb. hasad 'to crack/split apart' + past part. -t
208 adv. 'only'
<sup>209</sup> képzet 'idea/image/notion' + acc. -t
<sup>210</sup> pot. vb. van/lesz: 'may be/may become', 3rd pers. sg. ind.
<sup>211</sup> lit. vb. feled 'to forget', alt. felejt
212 adv. 'how'
<sup>213</sup> vb. tud 'to know'/aux. 'can + inf.' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -ok
<sup>214</sup> adj. más 'other/different' + acc. -t
<sup>215</sup> comp. different degrees 'than'
inf. vb. szeret 'to love'
<sup>217</sup> vb. görnyed 'to bend (under a burden)' + adv.-forming -ve
^{218} teher 'freight/burden' + 1st pers. sg. poss. mult. poss. -eim \rightarrow terheim
<sup>219</sup> post. al- 'lower part'+ loc. -(a)tt
mi + dat. -nek: 'for what'
<sup>221</sup> doublet of és 'and', adv. 'also'
<sup>222</sup> aux. vb. 'must/need to/have to + inf.'
<sup>223</sup> fegyever 'weapon' + acc. -t
<sup>224</sup> inf. vb. 'to hammer', alt. veretés
<sup>225</sup> pron. belőle 'out of him/her/it' + 2nd pers. sg. -d
<sup>226</sup> 'gold/golden'
<sup>227</sup> 'self-awareness'
```

### $\mathbf{X}$

He is a grown man he who has	I
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.

Il est un homme accompli celui qui n'a	I
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

Az meglett <sup>228</sup> ember <sup>229</sup> , akinek <sup>230</sup>	I
szívében <sup>231</sup> nincs se anyja, <sup>232</sup> apja, <sup>233</sup>	2
ki <sup>234</sup> tudja, <sup>235</sup> hogy <sup>236</sup> az életet <sup>237</sup>	3
halálra <sup>238</sup> ráadásul <sup>239</sup> kapja <sup>240</sup>	4
s mint²41 talált²42 tárgyat²43 visszaadja²44	5
bármikor <sup>245</sup> — ezért <sup>246</sup> őrzi <sup>247</sup> meg, <sup>248</sup>	6
ki <sup>249</sup> nem istene <sup>250</sup> és nem papja <sup>251</sup>	7
se <sup>252</sup> magának. <sup>253</sup> sem senkinek <sup>254</sup>	8

```
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)
```

```
<sup>228</sup> obs. 'adult'
229 'person'
<sup>230</sup> pron. aki 'who' + attr. poss. -nek
<sup>23I</sup> szív 'heart' + poss. 'his' -e + innes. 'in' -ben
<sup>232</sup> anya 'mother' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -(j)a
<sup>233</sup> apa 'father' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -(j)a
<sup>234</sup> pron. rel. arch. 'he who', alt. aki
<sup>235</sup> vb. tud 'to know' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. -ja
<sup>236</sup> conj. 'so that'
<sup>237</sup> élet 'life' + acc. -(e)t
<sup>238</sup> vb. hal 'to die' + arch. noun-forming -\acute{a}l \rightarrow 'death' + subl. 'on/for' -ra \rightarrow 'to death'
<sup>239</sup> ráadás 'addition/extra' + essive 'as/with the intention of -ul
<sup>240</sup> vb. kap 'to receive' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pers. def. -ja
²41 'like'
<sup>242</sup> vb. talált 'to find' + past part.
<sup>243</sup> tárgy 'object/thing/subject' + acc. -(a)t
<sup>244</sup> vb. visszaad 'to give back' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. -ja
^{245} bár 'any' + adv. mikor 'when' \rightarrow 'any time'
<sup>246</sup> conj. 'therefore'
vb. "oriz" to guard' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. -i
<sup>248</sup> arch. emph.
<sup>249</sup> 'he who'
<sup>250</sup> isten 'god' + 3rd pers. sg. sing. poss. -e
<sup>251</sup> pap 'priest' + 3rd pers. sg. sing. poss. -(j)a
<sup>252</sup> alt. sem, sem ..., sem ... 'neither ... nor ...'
<sup>253</sup> pron. refl. 3rd pers. 'himself'
<sup>254</sup> pron. senki 'no one/nobody'
```

### 23

### XI

I saw happiness; it was soft, bright	I
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 once at me —	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'.

J'ai vu le bonheur; il était doux, brillant	I
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

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

```
1-4: 0-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)
```

```
<sup>255</sup> vb. lát 'to see' + short base -t, 1st pers. sg. past def. -tam
<sup>256</sup> adj. boldog 'happy' + noun-forming -ság (state of being) + acc. -(o)t
<sup>257</sup> pron. 'I'
<sup>258</sup> adj. 'soft'
<sup>259</sup> vb. van 'to be'+ 3rd pers. sg. ind. past indef.
<sup>260</sup> adj. sző 'blonde' + dim. -ke
^{261} más 'other/different' + f\acute{e}l 'half' 
ightarrow 'one and a half'
262 'quintal'
<sup>263</sup> 'yard'
<sup>264</sup> adj. 'severe/strict'
<sup>265</sup> gyep 'lawn/grass' + super. -én
<sup>266</sup> vb. imbolyog 'to sway'+ 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -e
<sup>267</sup> adj. 'curly'
<sup>268</sup> mosolygása 'smile' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. -e
^{269} vb. ledo\"ol 'to fall down' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past indef. -t
270 'soft/squishy'
<sup>271</sup> arch. poetic langyos 'tepid'
<sup>272</sup> tócsa 'puddle' + illative -ba 'into'
<sup>273</sup> vb hunyorg 'to squint' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past. indef. -rgott
<sup>274</sup> röffen 'to grunt once (of a pig)'
<sup>275</sup> adv. 'still/moreover'
<sup>276</sup> post. felé 'to/towards' + 1st pers. sg. poss -m \rightarrow pron. 'towards me'
<sup>277</sup> adv. 'today'
<sup>278</sup> doublet of és 'and', adv. 'also'
<sup>279</sup> vb. lát 'to see'+ 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def.
<sup>280</sup> poetic 'how ...(!)'
vb. tétova 'to hesitate' (inf. tétovazik) \rightarrow adv. part. 'doing smth hesitantly'
282 vb. babrál 'to fiddle'
<sup>283</sup> pihe 'down, fluff' + adj.-forming -i
<sup>284</sup> post. 'between/amid' from között: köz 'interval' + loc. -ött
<sup>285</sup> 'light/glitter', fig. 'happiness/joy'
```

	CONTROL ICNTERS	/	ı
TT		( H <b>\                                  </b>	ł
1.1.	CONSCIOUSNESS		1

# XII

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

25

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

Vasútnál <sup>286</sup> lakom. <sup>287</sup> Erre <sup>288</sup> sok <sup>289</sup>	I
vonat <sup>290</sup> jön <sup>291</sup> -megy <sup>292</sup> és el <sup>293</sup> -elnézem, <sup>294</sup>	2
hogy <sup>295</sup> szállnak <sup>296</sup> fényes <sup>297</sup> ablakok <sup>298</sup>	3
a lengedező <sup>299</sup> szösz <sup>300</sup> -sötétben. <sup>301</sup>	4
Így³ <sup>02</sup> iramlanak³ <sup>03</sup> örök³ <sup>04</sup> éjben³ <sup>05</sup>	5
kivilágított <sup>306</sup> nappalok <sup>307</sup>	6
s én³08 állok³09 minden³10 fülke³11-fényben,³12	7
én könyöklök <sup>313</sup> és hallgatok. <sup>314</sup>	8

```
I-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)
  <sup>286</sup> vas 'iron' + ut 'way/road' + adess. -nal 'at/by'
  <sup>287</sup> vb. lak 'to dwell', inf. lakik, 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. -(o)m
  <sup>288</sup> pron. ez 'this/it' + subl. sg. -re 'onto/to'
  289 'much/many'
  <sup>290</sup> vb. von 'to pull/to draw' + noun-forming -at \rightarrow 'train'
  <sup>291</sup> vb. 'to come' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
  <sup>292</sup> vb. 'to go/travel/pass by (of time)' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.
  <sup>293</sup> adv./conj. 'afar/far away'
  <sup>294</sup> vb. pref. el 'continuity over a long time' + vb. nez 'to look at'
  <sup>295</sup> short. bogyan? 'how'
  <sup>296</sup> vb. száll 'to fly/land/to come down' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef.
  <sup>297</sup> fény 'light/glitter' + adj.-forming -es → 'bright'
  <sup>298</sup> ablak 'window' + pl. -(o)k
  <sup>299</sup> vb. leng 'to swing/sway/wave' + freq. vb.-forming -edezik (unrounded front-vowel) + pres. part. -ő
\rightarrow 'waving'
  300 'harl/fluff'
   301 adj./subst. sötét 'dark[ness]' + iness. sg. -ben 'in'
  <sup>303</sup> ir 'movement' + rare instr. vb.-forming -amlik (inf.) \rightarrow 'to rush/hurry' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres.
indef. -(a)nak
  304 'perpetual/eternal'
   <sup>305</sup> poetic éj 'night' + innes. 'in' -ben
  <sup>306</sup> vb. pref. ki 'outwardly' + vil\acute{a}g 'light (arch.)/world' \rightarrow arch. 'illumination' + caus. vb.-forming -it
'to make smth ...-like \rightarrow 'to illuminate' + past part. -ott
  <sup>307</sup> nap 'day' + instr. -val 'with' \rightarrow nappal + pl. -(o)k
  308 pron. 'I'
  <sup>309</sup> vb. áll 'to stand' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -ok
   310 det. 'every'
   ^{3\Pi} fül 'semi-circular obj./shape' + dim. -ke \rightarrow 'compartment'
   <sup>312</sup> fény 'light/glitter' + innes. -ben 'in'
   <sup>313</sup> könyök 'elbow' + vb.-forming -\ddot{o}l \rightarrow 'to rest on one's elbow' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pers. -\ddot{o}k
   314 vb. hallgat 'to remain silent/to listen' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -ok
```