

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 blush,	20
how you'll look down to the ground,	21
and we will crack up,	22
and we will be heard by our neighbours	23
and even by the taciturn, austere day labourers	24
who, amidst their tired, shattered dreams,	25
will then begin to smile too.	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 ma 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 rougieras,	20
et tu baisseras les yeux vers le sol,	21
et nous éclaterons de rire,	22
et nos voisins nous entendront	23
et jusqu'aux journaliers taciturnes et austères	24
qui, parmi leurs rêves fatigués et brisés,	25
esquisseront un sourire aussi.	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 mi mesita,	4
y ahora la luz suave de mi pan brilla 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 nunca viene con gran esplendor,	12
no quiere arruinar 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 reiremos a carcajadas,	22
y nos oirán nuestros vecinos	23
y hasta los taciturnos y austeros jornaleros	24
que, entre sus sueños cansados y quebrados,	25
empezarán a sonreirse también.	26

Otoño

Original Hungarian

Olyan ¹ bolond ² vagy ³	I
szaladsz ⁴	2
akár ⁵ a reggeli ⁶ szél. ⁷	3
Még ⁸ elüt ⁹ valamelyik ¹⁰ autó. ¹¹	4
Pedig ¹² lesikáltam ¹³ kis ¹⁴ asztalom ¹⁵	5
és most ¹⁶	6
tisztábban ¹⁷ világít ¹⁸ kenyérem ¹⁹ enyhe ²⁰ fénye. ²¹	7
No ²² gyere ²³ vissza, ²⁴ ha ²⁵ akarod ²⁶	8
veszek ²⁷ takarót ²⁸ vaságyamra. ²⁹	9
Egyszerű, ³⁰ szürke ³¹ takarót.	10
Illik ³² az	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-* completion + vb. *sikál* 'to scrub/scour (out)' + 1st pers. sg. ind. past.def. *-am*

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

²⁹ *vas* 'iron' + *ágy* 'bed' + 1st pers. sg. single poss. *-am* + all. *-ra* 'onto/on'

³⁰ *egy* 'one' + *-szerű* '-like' → 'plain/simple/unadorned/humble (< 1945)'

³¹ adj. 'grey'

³² vb. 'to suit/match/fit' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

szegénységemhez, ³³ aki ³⁴ szeret ³⁵ téged ³⁶	12
és az Úr ³⁷ is szereti ³⁸ nagyon ³⁹	13
és engem ⁴⁰ is szeret ⁴¹ az Úr	14
nem jön ⁴² soha ⁴³ nagy ⁴⁴ fényességgel ⁴⁵	15
Nem akarja, ⁴⁶ hogy elromoljanak ⁴⁷	16
szemeim, ⁴⁸ akik ⁴⁹	17
nagyon ⁵⁰ kívánnak ⁵¹ látni ⁵² téged. ⁵³	18
És nagyon ⁵⁴ szépen ⁵⁵ néznek ⁵⁶ majd ⁵⁷ terád ⁵⁸	19
ha ⁵⁹ visszajössz ⁶⁰	20
vigyázva ⁶¹ foglak ⁶² megcsókolni, ⁶³	21

³³ *szegény* 'poor' + noun-forming *-ség* (state of being) + 1st pers. sg. single poss. *-em* + all. *-hez* 'to'

³⁴ conj. 'who'

³⁵ vb. 'to love' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

³⁶ pron. *te* 'you' sg. + acc.

³⁷ 'Lord' (the Christian god)

³⁸ vb. *szeret* 'to love' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-i*

³⁹ adj. *nagy* 'great' + adv.-forming *-on* → 'very (to a high degree)'

⁴⁰ pron. *én* 'I' + acc. → 'me'

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

⁴² vb. 'to come' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

⁴³ adv. 'never'

⁴⁴ adj. 'great'

⁴⁵ *fény* 'light' + adj.-forming *-es* 'with/having' → 'bright' + noun-forming *-ség* (state of being) → 'brightness' + instr. *-vel* 'with' (*-gel* after consonant *g*) → 'with brightness'

⁴⁶ vb. 'to want' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-ja*

⁴⁷ perfect. vb. pref. *el-* + vb. *romlik* 'to break down/deteriorate' + 3rd pers. pl. subj. indef. *-janak*

⁴⁸ *szem* 'eye' + 1st pers. sg. mult. poss. *-eim*

⁴⁹ pron. 'who' + pl. *-k*

⁵⁰ adj. *nagy* 'great' + adv.-forming *-on* → 'very (to a high degree)'

⁵¹ vb. *kíván* 'to wish' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-nak*

⁵² vb. *lát* 'to see' + inf. *-ni*

⁵³ pron. *te* 'you' sg. + acc.

⁵⁴ adj. *nagy* 'great' + adv.-forming *-on* → 'very (to a high degree)'

⁵⁵ adj. *szép* 'beautiful'

⁵⁶ vb. *néznek* 'to look at smth' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-nek*

⁵⁷ adv. 'sometime/later'

⁵⁸ pron. sg. *te* 'you' (here emph.) + pron. *rá* + 2nd pers. sg. 'on/of you'

⁵⁹ conf. 'if' + cond. or 'when/once'

⁶⁰ vb. pref. *vissza-* 'back-' + vb. *jön* 'to come' + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-sz*

⁶¹ vb. *vigyáz* 'to protect/pay attention' + adv. part. *-va* result of action or simultaneous actions

⁶² vb. aux. *fog* 'to will' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. 2nd obj. *-lak* 'you'

⁶³ perfect. vb. pref. *meg-* + vb. *csókol* 'to kiss' + inf. *-ni*

nem tépem ⁶⁴ le ⁶⁵ rólad ⁶⁶ a kabátot ⁶⁷	22
és elmondom ⁶⁸ mind ⁶⁹ a sok ⁷⁰ tréfát, ⁷¹	23
mert ⁷² sokat ⁷³ kieszelttem ⁷⁴ azóta, ⁷⁵	24
hogy te ⁷⁶ is ⁷⁷ örülj, ⁷⁸	25
majd ⁷⁹ elpirulsz, ⁸⁰	26
lenézel ⁸¹ a földre ⁸² és kacagunk ⁸³	27
hangosan, ⁸⁴ hogy behallatszik ⁸⁵ szomszédunkba ⁸⁶	28
a szótlán, ⁸⁷ komoly ⁸⁸ napszámosokhoz ⁸⁹ is behallik ⁹⁰	29
és fáradt, ⁹¹ összetört ⁹²	30
álmukban ⁹³ majd ⁹⁴ elmosolyodnak ⁹⁵ ők ⁹⁶ is. ⁹⁷	31

Ősze

⁶⁴ vb. *tép* 'to tear/rend' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def. -em

⁶⁵ comp. 'down'

⁶⁶ pron. *róla* 'about/off her' + 2nd pers. sg.

⁶⁷ *kabát* 'coat' + acc. -(o)t

⁶⁸ vb. *elmond* 'to tell' + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def. -om

⁶⁹ pron. sg. 'all/each of'

⁷⁰ adj. 'many'

⁷¹ *tréfa* 'joke' + acc. -(a)t

⁷² conj. 'because'

⁷³ *sok* 'many' + acc. -at

⁷⁴ vb. *kieszél* 'to devise' + 1st pers. sg. past. -tem

⁷⁵ art. *az* 'that' + *óta* 'since' → 'since then'

⁷⁶ pron. sg. 'you'

⁷⁷ doublet of *és* 'and', adv. 'also'

⁷⁸ vb. *örül* 'to rejoice' + 2nd pers. sg. subj. indef. -j

⁷⁹ adv. 'sometime/later'

⁸⁰ perfect. vb. pref. *el-* + vb. *pirul* 'to blush' + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -sz

⁸¹ vb. 'to look down' + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -el

⁸² *föld* 'earth/ground' + subl. -re 'onto'

⁸³ vb. *kacag* 'to laugh (a lot)' + 1st pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. -unk

⁸⁴ adv. 'loudly'

⁸⁵ vb. pref. *be-* 'inwardly' + vb. *hall* 'to hear' + caus. -at + vb.-forming -szik → 'to cause to sound in'

⁸⁶ *szomszéd* 'neighbour' + 1st pers. pl. single poss. -unk + illative -ba 'into'

⁸⁷ *szó* 'word/voice' + privative adj.-forming -tlan 'less'

⁸⁸ adj. 'severe/austere'

⁸⁹ *napszámos* 'day labourer' + pl. -(o)k + allat. '-hoz 'towards'

⁹⁰ syn. *behallatszik*

⁹¹ vb. *fárad* 'to tire' + past. part. -t

⁹² *össze* 'together' + vb. *tör* 'to break' + past. part. -t

⁹³ *álmom* 'dream' + 3rd pers. pl. single poss. -uk + innes. -ban 'in'

⁹⁴ adv. 'sometime/later'

⁹⁵ vb. inf. *elmosolyodni* 'to start to smile' + 3rd pers. ind. pres. indef.

⁹⁶ pron. 'they'

⁹⁷ 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

Spanish

El amanecer desata el cielo de la tierra	1
y, al son de su voz clara y suave,	2
escarabajos y niños entran	3
y giran en la luz del día;	4
el aire no es húmedo,	5
¡la brillante levedad flota!	6
Con la noche se asentaron en los árboles	7
como pequeñas mariposas, las ojas.	8

Original Hungarian

Földtől ¹ eloldja ² az eget ³	1
a hajnal ⁴ s ⁵ tiszta ⁶ , lágy ⁷ szavára ⁸	2
a bogarak, ⁹ a gyerekek	3
kipörögnek ¹⁰ a napvilágra ¹¹ ;	4
a levegőben ¹² semmi pára ¹³ ,	5
a csilló ¹⁴ könnyűség ¹⁵ lebeg! ¹⁶	6
Az éjjel ¹⁷ rászálltak ¹⁸ a fákra, ¹⁹	7
mint ²⁰ kis ²¹ lepkék, ²² a levelek. ²³	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 *lepké* 'butterfly' + pl. *-k* → *lepkék*

²³ *level* 'leaf' + pl. *-(e)k*

Chiastic structure:

1-4: e-e(8)/á-ra(9)/e-e(8)/á-ra(9)

5-8: á-ra(9)/e-e(8)/á-ra(9)/e-e(8)

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 follement.	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

Spanish

Vi cuadros embadurnados con azul,	1
rojo y amarillo en mis sueños	2
y sentí que todo estaba en orden —	3
ni una sola mota de polvo que vuela locamente.	4
Ahora mi sueño se pone, esfumado, en mis miembros,	5
y el mundo de hierro es el orden.	6
Con el día, una luna sale en mí y,	7
al llegar la noche, un sol brilla aquí dentro.	8

Original Hungarian

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

³⁷ 'iron'

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

³⁹ 'moon'

⁴⁰ vb. 'to rise', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def., arch. alt. *kél*

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

Spanish

Estoy flaco, a veces sólo como pan;	1
rodeado por esas almas ociosas y facundas,	2
busco en vano más certidumbre, como el dado.	3
Ninguna paleta asada halla mi boca	4
cuando ciño a un niño sobre mi corazón —	5
por muy astuto que sea, el gato no puede pillar a la vez	6
el ratón de fuera y el de dentro.	7

Original Hungarian

Sóvány ⁴⁷ vagyok, csak kenyeret ⁴⁸	1
eszem ⁴⁹ néha, ⁵⁰ e ⁵¹ léha, ⁵² locska ⁵³	2
lelkek ⁵⁴ közt ⁵⁵ ingyen ⁵⁶ keresek ⁵⁷	3
bizonyosabbat, ⁵⁸ mint ⁵⁹ a kocska. ⁶⁰	4
Nem dörgölődzik ⁶¹ sült ⁶² lopcska ⁶³	5
számhoz ⁶⁴ s szívemhez ⁶⁵ kisgyerek ⁶⁶ —	6
ügyeskedhet, ⁶⁷ nem fog ⁶⁸ a macska ⁶⁹	7
egyszerre ⁷⁰ kint ⁷¹ s bent ⁷² egeret. 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 abbrev. *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. ind. pres. 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 arbrisseau,	6
seul cela sera cette fleur;	7
ce qui est tombera en pièces.	8

Spanish

Así como un montón de leña,	1
el mundo yace a granel;	2
cada cosa aprieta, pesa,	3
se arrima a la próxima,	4
y así todo está determinado.	5
Sólo lo que no es tiene una mata,	6
sólo eso será esta flor;	7
lo que es caera a pedazos.	8

Original Hungarian

Akár ⁷⁴ egy halom ⁷⁵ hasított ⁷⁶ fa, ⁷⁷	1
hever ⁷⁸ egymáson ⁷⁹ a világ, ⁸⁰	2
szorítja, ⁸¹ nyomja, ⁸² összefogja ⁸³	3
egyik ⁸⁴ dolog ⁸⁵ a másikat ⁸⁶	4
s így ⁸⁷ mindenik ⁸⁸ determinált. ⁸⁹	5
Csak ⁹⁰ ami ⁹¹ nincs, annak ⁹² van bokra, ⁹³	6
csak ⁹⁴ ami lesz, ⁹⁵ az a virág,	7
ami van, széthull ⁹⁶ darabokra. 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. lit. '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 chunk 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 une masse de silence;	3
une herbe grise atteignit ma bouche,	4
crue, étrange-sucrée.	5
Faisant le mort, je regardais le garde, ressentant quoi,	6
et son ombre qui, sur les wagons silencieux,	7
s'entêtait à bondir sur les charbons reluisants, couverts de rosée.	8

Spanish

A la estación de tren de carga,	1
me tumbé así detrás del pie del árbol,	2
como una masa de silencio;	3
una hierba gris alcanzó mi boca,	4
cruda, extraña-dulce.	5
Haciendome el muerto, miraba al guardia, que sentía qué,	6
y, sobre los quietos vagones, a su sombra	7
que se empeñaba en saltar sobre los relucientes, rociados carbones.	8

Original Hungarian

A teherpályaudvaron ⁹⁸	1
úgy ⁹⁹ lapultam ¹⁰⁰ a fa ¹⁰¹ tövéhez, ¹⁰²	2
mint ¹⁰³ egy darab ¹⁰⁴ csönd ¹⁰⁵ ; szürke ¹⁰⁶ gyom ¹⁰⁷	3
ért ¹⁰⁸ számhoz, ¹⁰⁹ nyers, ¹¹⁰ különös ¹¹¹ -édes. ¹¹²	4
Holtan ¹¹³ lestem ¹¹⁴ az őrt, ¹¹⁵ mit ¹¹⁶ érez, ¹¹⁷	5
s a hallgatag ¹¹⁸ vagonokon ¹¹⁹	6
árnyát, ¹²⁰ mely ¹²¹ ráugrott ¹²² a fényes, ¹²³	7
harmatos ¹²⁴ szénre ¹²⁵ konokon. 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 *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*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 *vagon* '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
so you will be 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 seras libre s'il se complait	6
à ne pas bâtir pour toi une maison	7
où un propriétaire vient demeurer.	8

Spanish

He aquí el tormento interior,	1
aunque la explicación yace fuera.	2
Tu herida es el mundo — en llamas, caldeando —	3
y sientes tú alma, la fiebre.	4
Quedas cautivo mientras tu corazón se rebela —	5
así serás libre si él se complace	6
en no edificarte una casa	7
donde un dueño se aposenta.	8

Original Hungarian

Im ¹²⁷ itt a szenvedés ¹²⁸ belül, ¹²⁹	1
ám ¹³⁰ ott kívül ¹³¹ a magyarázat. ¹³²	2
Sebed ¹³³ a világ — ég, ¹³⁴ hevül ¹³⁵	3
s te ¹³⁶ lelkedet ¹³⁷ érzed, ¹³⁸ a lázat. ¹³⁹	4
Rab ¹⁴⁰ vagy, amíg ¹⁴¹ a szíved ¹⁴² lázad ¹⁴³ —	5
úgy ¹⁴⁴ szabadulsz, ¹⁴⁵ ha ¹⁴⁶ kényedül ¹⁴⁷	6
nem raksz ¹⁴⁸ magadnak ¹⁴⁹ olyan ¹⁵⁰ házat, ¹⁵¹	7
melybe ¹⁵² háziúr ¹⁵³ települ. 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 verb¹⁴² *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

Spanish

Por debajo del atardecer,	1
levanté los ojos a las ruedas dentadas de los cielos —	2
de los hilos brillantes de la suerte	3
el telar del pasado había tejido la ley;	4
por debajo del vapor de mis sueños,	5
miré de nuevo en los cielos	6
y vi el tejido de la ley	7
siempre destramarse en alguna parte.	8

Original Hungarian

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

Chiastic structure:

1-4: a-ól(8)/é-e(9)/a-ól(9)/é-e(9)

5-8: é-e(9)/a-ól(8)/é-e(9)/a-ól(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 *mindig* '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

Spanish

El silencio escuchaba atentamente — La una sonó.	1
Podrías visitar tu infancia;	2
entre las paredes de cemento húmedo	3
podrías imaginar un poco de libertad —	4
pensé. Y al ponerme en pie,	5
las estrellas, la Osa Mayor	6
destellaban de veras por encima,	7
como las rejas arriba en mi celda.	8

Original Hungarian

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

Chiastic structure:

1-4: ü-ött(8)/á-o(9)/ö-ö(8)/á-o(9)

5-8: á-o(9)/ö-ö(8)/á-o(9)/ö-ött(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 of the kiln's interior.

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

Spanish

Oí el hierro sollozar,	1
oí la lluvia reírse.	2
Vi que el pasado estaba agrietado	3
y que solos los recuerdos pueden olvidarse,	4
y cómo sólo puedo amar,	5
doblándome debajo de mis cargas —	6
¿por qué debería también fraguar un arma	7
de ti, fuero interior dorado!	8

Original Hungarian

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

Chiastic structure:

1-4: a-at(8)/et-ni(9)/a-a[dt](8)/e[d]-ni(9)

5-8: e[t]-ni(9)/a-a[tt](8)/et-ni(9)/u-at(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 a supplement to death, and will return it	4
anytime, 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 la rendra	4
à tout moment, comme un objet trouvé	5
— par conséquent il la garde,	6
celui qui n'est ni un dieu ni un prêtre,	7
ni pour lui-même ni pour autrui.	8

Spanish

Es un hombre mayor el que no tiene	1
madre o padre en su corazón,	2
el que sabe que acoge la vida	3
como un suplemento a la muerte, y la devolverá	4
en cualquier momento, como un objeto encontrado	5
— por lo cual la guardará	6
el que no es ni un diós ni un sacerdote,	7
ni para él mismo ni para los demás.	8

Original Hungarian

Az meglett ²²⁸ ember ²²⁹ , akinek ²³⁰	1
szívében ²³¹ nincs se anyja, ²³² apja, ²³³	2
ki ²³⁴ tudja, ²³⁵ hogy ²³⁶ az életet ²³⁷	3
halálra ²³⁸ ráadásul ²³⁹ kapja ²⁴⁰	4
s mint ²⁴¹ talált ²⁴² tárgyat ²⁴³ visszaadja ²⁴⁴	5
bármikor ²⁴⁵ — ezért ²⁴⁶ őrizi ²⁴⁷ meg, ²⁴⁸	6
ki ²⁴⁹ nem istene ²⁵⁰ és nem papja ²⁵¹	7
se ²⁵² magának, ²⁵³ sem senkinek. ²⁵⁴	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: ki-nek(8)/ap-ja(9)/e-e(8)/a[p]-ja(9)

5-8: a[d]-ja(9)/i-e(8)/ap-ja(9)/ki-nek(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. pres. 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 s'affala dans la marre tendre et tiède,	5
plissa les yeux, puis me grogna une fois —	6
Jusqu'à ce jour, je vois avec quelle hésitation	7
la lumière du jour s'amusait avec ses soies.	8

Spanish

Vi la felicidad; era suave, brillante	1
y un quintal y medio.	2
En la maleza del patio de la granja	3
su sonriza curva se balanceaba.	4
Se abatió en el charco blando y tibio,	5
entrecerró los ojos, pues me gruñó una vez —	6
hasta hoy veo con que vacilación	7
la luz del día jugueteaba con sus cerdas.	8

Original Hungarian

Láttam ²⁵⁵ a boldogságot ²⁵⁶ én, ²⁵⁷	1
lágý ²⁵⁸ volt, ²⁵⁹ szőke ²⁶⁰ és másfél ²⁶¹ mázsa. ²⁶²	2
Az udvar ²⁶³ szigorú ²⁶⁴ győpén ²⁶⁵	3
imbolygott ²⁶⁶ göndör ²⁶⁷ mosolygása. ²⁶⁸	4
Ledőlt ²⁶⁹ a puha, ²⁷⁰ langý ²⁷¹ tócsába, ²⁷²	5
hunýorgott, ²⁷³ rőffent ²⁷⁴ még ²⁷⁵ felém ²⁷⁶ —	6
ma ²⁷⁷ is ²⁷⁸ látom, ²⁷⁹ mily ²⁸⁰ tétovázva ²⁸¹	7
babrált ²⁸² pihéi ²⁸³ közt ²⁸⁴ a fény. 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 *mosolygás* 'smile' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a*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. *hunýorg* 'to squint' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past. indef. *-rgott*²⁷⁴ *rőffen* '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. *tétovazik*) → 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 vacillante et peluchée.	5
Ainsi les jours luisants 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

Spanish

Vivo cerca del ferrocarril.	1
Son muchos los trenes	2
que vienen y van, y miro desde lejos	3
cómo las brillantes ventanas vuelan de paso	4
en la oscuridad vacilante y vellosa.	5
Así los días lucientes se apuran en la noche eterna,	6
y me quedo en la luz de los compartimentos,	7
me acodo y guardo silencio.	8

Original Hungarian

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

²⁹⁶ vb. *száll* 'to fly/land/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 *ír* 'movement' + rare instr. vb.-forming *-amlik* (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*

Chapter 3

1936

IV

You will grow old and come to regret	1
how you hurt those you are proud of today.	2
The conscience will come knocking on the door	3
and there will be no memory in which you would allow yourself.	4
	5
Your dog will be old and will settle next to you.	6
You will rest during the day, dozing off on a chair	7
because you will be afraid alone at night.	8
Shadows fall on the trembling old wife.	9
	10

Majd ¹ megöregsze ² l és bánni ³ fogod, ⁴	1
hogy ⁵ bántasz ⁶ — azt, ⁷ amire ⁸ büszke ⁹ vagy ¹⁰ ma. ¹¹	2
A lelkiismeret ¹² majd bekopog ¹³	3
s ¹⁴ nem lesz ¹⁵ emlék, ¹⁶ melyben ¹⁷ magadra ¹⁸ hagyna. ¹⁹	4
Lesz vén ²⁰ ebed ²¹ s az melléd ²² települ. ²³	5
Nappal ²⁴ pihensz ²⁵ majd, ²⁶ széken ²⁷ szunyókálva, ²⁸	6
mert ²⁹ éjjel ³⁰ félni ³¹ fogsz ³² majd ³³ egyedül. ³⁴	7
Árnyak ³⁵ ütnek ³⁶ a rezgő ³⁷ anyókára. ³⁸	8

¹ adv. 'sometime/later'

² perfect. vb. pref. *meg-* + vb. inf. *öregszik* 'to grow/become old' + 2nd pers. sg. inform. pres. indef.

³ vb. *megbán* 'to regret'; perfect. vb. pref. *meg-* + vb. *bán* 'to mind (negatively)/be bothered'

⁴ aux. vb. 'to will' + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. (e.g. *Meg fog bánni.*)

⁵ adv. 'how'

⁶ vb. *bán* 'to mind (negatively)/be bothered' + caus. *-t*: 'to hurt' + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. def.

⁷ *az* 'that' + acc. *-t*

⁸ *ami* 'that/which' + subl. *-re* 'onto'

⁹ 'proud'

¹⁰ vb. *van* 'to be' + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

¹¹ 'today'

¹² arch. dial. *lelki* 'his/her soul' (alt. *lelke*) + arch. dial. *ismereti* 'his/her/its knowledge' (alt. *ismerete*)
→ '(moral) conscience'

¹³ vb. pref. *be-* 'inwardly' + vb. *kopog* 'to knock'

¹⁴ poetic abbrev. *es* 'and' (does not count as a syllable)

¹⁵ vb. *van* 'to be', 3rd pers. sg. ind. fut. indef.

¹⁶ 'memory/souvenir'

¹⁷ lit. *mely* 'which/that' + innes. *-ben* 'in'

¹⁸ *maga* 'oneself' + subl. *-ra* 'into'

¹⁹ vb. *hagy* 'to allow' + 2nd pers. sg. form. cond. pres. indef. *-na*

²⁰ adj. 'old'

²¹ noun. *eb* 'dog' + 2nd pers. sg. single-poss. poss. → 'your dog'

²² post. *mellé* 'next to' + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-d* → pron. 'next to you'

²³ vb. 'to settle somewhere' + 3rd pers. sg. pres. ind. indef.

²⁴ *nap* 'day' + instr. *-val* 'with' → *nappal*

²⁵ vb. 'to rest' + 2nd pers. sg. inform. ind. pres. indef.

²⁶ adv. 'sometime/later'

²⁷ *szék* 'chair' + super. *-en* 'on'

²⁸ (vb. pref. *el-* 'away' +) vb. *szunyókál* 'to take a nap/to doze off' + adv.-part. *-va*

²⁹ conj. 'because'

³⁰ poetic *éj* 'night' + instr. *-vel* 'with' → *éjjel*

³¹ inf. vb. *fél* 'to fear/be afraid of'

³² aux. vb. 'to will' + 2nd pers. sg. inform. ind. pres. def.

³³ adv. 'sometime/later'

³⁴ *egy* 'one' + noun-forming *-ed* + adv.-forming *-ül* → 'alone'

³⁵ *árny* 'shadow/ghost' + non. pl. *-ak*

³⁶ vb. *üt* 'to hit' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-nek*

³⁷ poetic, arch. vb. *rezg* 'to tremble/quiver' (alt. *rezeg*) + pres. part. *-ő*

³⁸ *anyó* 'elderly woman' + dim. *-ka* (term of endearment; rare. term of address to the wife by her)

Az öreg kutya néha majd nyafog,	9
de a szobában csend lesz, csupa rend lesz;	10
hanem valaki hiányozni fog	11
a multból ahhoz a magányos csendhez.	12
Majd tipegsz s ha eleget totyogott	13
rossz lábod, leülsz. Fönn aranykeretben	14
áll ifju képed. Hozzá motyogod:	15
"Nem öleltem meg, hiszen nem szerettem."	16
"Mit is tehettem volna?" - kérdezed,	17
de fogatlan szád már nem válaszolhat;	18
s ki a nap előtt lehunyod szemed,	19
alig várod, hogy feljöjjön, a holdat.	20
Mert ha elalszol, ugrál majd az ágy,	21
mint a csikó, hogy a hámot levesse.	22
S a félelem tűnődik, nem a vágy,	23
a fejedben: Szeress-e, ne szeress-e.	24
Magadban döntöd el. Én fájdalom,	25
hogy nem felelhetek, ha kérded: él-e.	26
Mert elfárad bennem a fájdalom,	27
elalszik, mint a gyermek s én is véle.	28

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