

# Collected Poems

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# Chapter I

1934

## I.I Consciousness (*Eszmélet*)

### I

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

### French

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

## Original Hungarian

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

Chiastic structure:

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

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

<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*

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

<sup>4</sup> 'dawn'

<sup>5</sup> poetic abbrv. *es* 'and' (does not count as a syllable)

<sup>6</sup> adj. 'bright'

<sup>7</sup> adj. 'soft'

<sup>8</sup> *szó* 'voice', 'word' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a* → *szava* + subl. *-ra* 'by' → *szavára*

<sup>9</sup> *bogár* 'beetle' + pl. *-(a)k* → *bogarak*

<sup>10</sup> vb. *kipörög* 'to spin' + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-nek*

<sup>11</sup> *nap* 'sun/day' + *világ* 'world' + subl. *-ra* 'onto'

<sup>12</sup> *levegő* 'air' + innes. *-ben* 'in'

<sup>13</sup> 'moisture/mist'

<sup>14</sup> vb. *csillog* 'to glitter' + adj.-forming *-o* → *csilló*; usually *csillogó*

<sup>15</sup> *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> *éj* 'night' + instr. *-vel* 'with' → *éjjel*

<sup>18</sup> 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' → *fákra*

<sup>20</sup> 'like'

<sup>21</sup> 'small'

<sup>22</sup> *lepké* 'butterfly' + pl. *-k* → *lepkék*

<sup>23</sup> *level* 'leaf' + pl. *-(e)k*

## II

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

**Cursory remark**

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

**French**

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

## Original Hungarian

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

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

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

<sup>26</sup> 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’ → *álmaimban*

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

<sup>29</sup> ‘order’

<sup>30</sup> vb. *száll* ‘to fly’ + pres. part. -*ó*

<sup>31</sup> ‘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. *hobbant* ‘to become imbalanced’, arch. + past part. -*t*

<sup>34</sup> *homály* ‘blur’ + essive formal -*ként* ‘as’

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

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

<sup>37</sup> ‘iron’

<sup>38</sup> *nap* ‘day’ + instr. -*val* ‘with’ → *nappal*

<sup>39</sup> ‘moon’

<sup>40</sup> 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*

<sup>42</sup> ‘when’

<sup>43</sup> ‘outside’

<sup>44</sup> ‘night’

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

<sup>46</sup> adv. *ide* ‘here’ + *bent* ‘within’

## III

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

**Cursory remark**

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

**French**

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

## Original Hungarian

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

<sup>47</sup> 'slim/thin', fig. 'poor'

<sup>48</sup> *kenyér* 'bread' + acc. *-(e)t* → *kenyeret*

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

<sup>50</sup> adv. 'sometimes'

<sup>51</sup> poetic abbrv. *eme/ez* 'this'

<sup>52</sup> 'improvident/idler'

<sup>53</sup> adj. 'blethering'

<sup>54</sup> *lélek* 'soul' + pl. *-(e)k* → *lelkek*

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

<sup>56</sup> fig. arch. 'in vain'; usually 'free of charge'

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

<sup>58</sup> adj. *bizonyos* 'certain' + comp. *-abb* 'more' + acc. *-t*

<sup>59</sup> 'like'

<sup>60</sup> 'a die'

<sup>61</sup> vb. 'to press against', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>62</sup> vb. *süül* '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* → *szám* + allat. *-hoz* 'towards' → *számhoz*

<sup>65</sup> *szívem* 'heart' + allat. *-hez* 'towards'

<sup>66</sup> *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>69</sup> 'cat'

<sup>70</sup> adv. *egyszer* 'at once' + abl. *-re* 'onto'

<sup>71</sup> adv. 'outside'

<sup>72</sup> adv. 'inside'

<sup>73</sup> *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 relève de l’arbuste,	6
seul cela sera cette fleur ;	7
ce qui est tombera en pièces.	8

## Original Hungarian

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

<sup>74</sup> conj. literary 'just like'

<sup>75</sup> 'pile/heap'

<sup>76</sup> vb. *hasít* 'to cleave/split' + past. part. *-ott*

<sup>77</sup> 'tree'

<sup>78</sup> vb. 'to lie', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>79</sup> pron. *egymás* 'each other/one another' + super. *-on* 'on'

<sup>80</sup> 'world'

<sup>81</sup> vb. *szorít* 'to press/constrict', inf. *szorítani* + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

<sup>82</sup> 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*

<sup>84</sup> *egy* 'one' + 3rd pers. pl. mult. poss. *-ik* 'of'

<sup>85</sup> 'thing'

<sup>86</sup> adj. *más* 'other' + noun-forming *-ik* → 'another' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a* + acc. *-t* → *-át*

<sup>87</sup> 'just so'

<sup>88</sup> adv. *minden* 'everyone/everything'

<sup>89</sup> Latin *determinare* + vb.-forming *-ál* 'to determine' + past part. *-t*

<sup>90</sup> adv. 'only'

<sup>91</sup> rel. pron. 'which/that'

<sup>92</sup> art. *az* 'that' + attr. poss. *-nak* → *annak*

<sup>93</sup> *bokor* 'shrub/bush' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a*

<sup>94</sup> adv. 'only'

<sup>95</sup> vb. 'to become', 3rd pers. sg. ind. fut. indef.

<sup>96</sup> vb. 'to fall apart', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>97</sup> 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.

**French**

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

## Original Hungarian

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

<sup>98</sup> *teber* 'freight' + *pálya* 'track' + *udvar* 'courtyard' + super. *-on* 'on'

<sup>99</sup> adv. 'so (in this/that manner)'

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

<sup>101</sup> 'tree'

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

*tövéhez*

<sup>103</sup> 'like'

<sup>104</sup> 'piece'

<sup>105</sup> 'silence', alt. *csend*

<sup>106</sup> adj. 'grey'

<sup>107</sup> '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* → *szám* + allat. 'towards' *-hoz* → *számhoz*

<sup>110</sup> adj. 'raw'

<sup>111</sup> *holt* 'dead' + adv.-forming *-an*

<sup>112</sup> vb. *les* 'to spy' + 1st pers. sg. past indef. *-tem*

<sup>113</sup> *őr* 'guard' + acc. *-t*

<sup>114</sup> inter. 'what'

<sup>115</sup> vb. 'to feel/smell/taste', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>116</sup> vb. *hallgat* 'to remain silent/to listen' + adj.-forming *-ag*

<sup>117</sup> *vagón* 'wagon' + pl. *-ok* + super. *-on* 'on'

<sup>118</sup> *árny* 'shadow/ghost' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-a* + acc. *-t* → *-át*

<sup>119</sup> literary, 'which/that'

<sup>120</sup> pointed action *ra-* 'at' + vb. *ugrik* 'to leap/jump' + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past. indef. *-ott* → *ugrott*

<sup>121</sup> *fény* 'light/glitter' + adj.-forming *-es* → 'bright'

<sup>122</sup> adj. 'dewy'

<sup>123</sup> *szén* 'coal' + subl. *-re* 'onto'

<sup>124</sup> 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 <i>you</i> feel your soul, the fever.	4
You are captive as long as your heart rebels —	5
then you are free if it indulges	6
not building for yourself a house	7
where a landlord settles in.	8

**Cursory remark**

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

**French**

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

## Original Hungarian

<i>Im</i> <sup>125</sup> <i>itt a szenvedés</i> <sup>126</sup> <i>belül</i> , <sup>127</sup>	1
<i>ám</i> <sup>128</sup> <i>ott kívül</i> <sup>129</sup> <i>a magyarázat</i> . <sup>130</sup>	2
<i>Sebed</i> <sup>131</sup> <i>a világ — ég</i> , <sup>132</sup> <i>bevül</i> <sup>133</sup>	3
<i>s te lelkedet</i> <sup>134</sup> <i>érezed</i> , <sup>135</sup> <i>a lázat</i> . <sup>136</sup>	4
<i>Rab</i> <sup>137</sup> <i>vagy, amíg</i> <sup>138</sup> <i>a szíved</i> <sup>139</sup> <i>lázad</i> <sup>140</sup> —	5
<i>úgy</i> <sup>141</sup> <i>szabadulsz</i> , <sup>142</sup> <i>ha</i> <sup>143</sup> <i>kényedül</i> <sup>144</sup>	6
<i>nem raksz</i> <sup>145</sup> <i>magadnak</i> <sup>146</sup> <i>olyan</i> <sup>147</sup> <i>házat</i> , <sup>148</sup>	7
<i>melybe</i> <sup>149</sup> <i>háziúr</i> <sup>150</sup> <i>települ</i> . <sup>151</sup>	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)

<sup>125</sup> literary, abbrev. *íme* 'here is/behold'

<sup>126</sup> vb. *szenved* 'to suffer' + noun-forming *-és*

<sup>127</sup> 'inside'

<sup>128</sup> poetic, interj. contrad. 'but'

<sup>129</sup> adv. 'outdoor/outside'

<sup>130</sup> vb. *magyaráz* 'to explain' + noun-forming *-at*

<sup>131</sup> *seb* 'wound' + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-ed*

<sup>132</sup> vb. 'to be on fire', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>133</sup> vb. 'to grow hot', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>134</sup> *lélek* 'soul' + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-ed* → *lelked* + acc. *-(e)t*

<sup>135</sup> vb. *érez* 'to feel', 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. def.

<sup>136</sup> *láz* 'fever' + acc. *-(a)t*

<sup>137</sup> 'captive'

<sup>138</sup> adv. 'as long as'; 'until' if followed by negated verb

<sup>139</sup> *szíved* 'heart' + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-ed*

<sup>140</sup> vb. *to rebel*, 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>141</sup> *úgy ... ha ...* 'then ... if ...'

<sup>142</sup> *szabad* 'free' + vb.-forming *-ul* + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-sz*

<sup>143</sup> 'if'

<sup>144</sup> literary, vb. 'to indulge', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>145</sup> vb. *rak* 'to set up/to build', 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-sz*

<sup>146</sup> *maga* 'oneself' + 2nd pers. sg. single poss. *-d* + dat. *-nak*

<sup>147</sup> pron. 'such/that kind of thing'

<sup>148</sup> *ház* 'house' + acc. *-(a)t*

<sup>149</sup> literary, arch. *mely* 'which' + illative *-be* 'into (the inside of)'

<sup>150</sup> *ház* 'house' + adj.-forming 'of the' *-i* + *úr* 'master'

<sup>151</sup> vb. 'to settle (somewhere)', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

## VII

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

**Cursory remark**

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

**French**

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

## Original Hungarian

<i>Én fölnéztem</i> <sup>152</sup> <i>az est</i> <sup>153</sup> <i>alól</i> <sup>154</sup>	1
<i>az eget</i> <sup>155</sup> <i>fogaskerekére</i> <sup>156</sup> —	2
<i>csilló</i> <sup>157</sup> <i>véletlen</i> <sup>158</sup> <i>szálaiból</i> <sup>159</sup>	3
<i>törvényt</i> <sup>160</sup> <i>szőtt</i> <sup>161</sup> <i>a mult</i> <sup>162</sup> <i>szövőszéke</i> <sup>163</sup>	4
<i>és megint</i> <sup>164</sup> <i>fölnéztem az égre</i> <sup>165</sup>	5
<i>álmaim</i> <sup>166</sup> <i>gőzeit</i> <sup>167</sup> <i>alól</i>	6
<i>s láttam</i> , <sup>168</sup> <i>a törvény szövédéke</i> <sup>169</sup>	7
<i>mindig</i> <sup>170</sup> <i>fölfeslik</i> <sup>171</sup> <i>valahol</i> . <sup>172</sup>	8

Chiastic structure:

1-4: a-ól(8)/é-e(9)/a[i]-ól(9)/é-e(9)

5-8: é-e(9)/[i]a-ól(8)/é-e(9)/a-ol(8)

<sup>152</sup> vb. pref. *föl-* 'upwards' + vb. *néz* 'to look' + 1st pers. sg. past. def. *-tem*

<sup>153</sup> arch. '(in the) evening'

<sup>154</sup> *al* 'lower part' + abl. *-l* 'from'

<sup>155</sup> *ég* 'sky' + acc. *-(e)t*

<sup>156</sup> *fogas* 'tooth' + *kerék* 'wheel': 'cogwheel' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e* + subl. *-re* 'towards'

<sup>157</sup> vb. *csillog* 'to glitter' + adj.-forming *-o* → *csilló*; usually *csillogó*

<sup>158</sup> 'chance'

<sup>159</sup> *szál* 'thread' + 3rd pers. sg. poss. *-a* + poss. pl. *-i* + elative *-ból* 'from/out of'

<sup>160</sup> *törvény* 'law/principle' + acc. *-t*

<sup>161</sup> vb. *sző* 'to weave', past part.

<sup>162</sup> *múlt*? rare, past part. 'past', inf. *múlik*

<sup>163</sup> *szövő* 'weaver' + *szék* 'chair': 'loom' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e*

<sup>164</sup> *meg* 'again' (short action) + adv.-forming *-int*

<sup>165</sup> *ég* 'sky' + subl. sg. *-re* 'onto'

<sup>166</sup> *álom* 'dream' + 1st pers. sg. poss. *-a* + poss. pl. *-i* + 1st pers. sg. pers. *-m*

<sup>167</sup> *gőz* 'steam, vapour' + 3rd pers. sg. poss. *-e* + pl. poss. *-i*

<sup>168</sup> vb. *lát* 'to see' + short base *-t*, 1st pers. sg. past def. *-tam*

<sup>169</sup> *szövédék* 'fabric/cloth/web' + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e*

<sup>170</sup> *mind* 'always' (repetition) + term. 'until' *-ig*

<sup>171</sup> vb. pref. *föl-* 'upwards' + arch., poetic, vb. *feslik* 'to come unstitched', 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. indef.

<sup>172</sup> '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.

<i>Fülett</i> <sup>173</sup> <i>a csend</i> <sup>174</sup> — <i>egy</i> <sup>175</sup> <i>ütött</i> <sup>176</sup>	1
<i>Fölkereshetnéd</i> <sup>177</sup> <i>ifjúságod</i> <sup>178</sup>	2
<i>nyirkos</i> <sup>179</sup> <i>cementfalak</i> <sup>180</sup> <i>között</i> <sup>181</sup>	3
<i>képzelhetsz</i> <sup>182</sup> <i>egy kis szabadságot</i> <sup>183</sup> —	4
<i>gondoltam</i> . <sup>184</sup> <i>S hát</i> <sup>185</sup> <i>amint</i> <sup>186</sup> <i>fölállok</i> <sup>187</sup>	5
<i>a csillagok</i> , <sup>188</sup> <i>a Göncölök</i> <sup>189</sup>	6
<i>úgy fénylenek</i> <sup>190</sup> <i>fönt</i> , <sup>191</sup> <i>mint a rácsok</i> <sup>192</sup>	7
<i>a hallgatat</i> <sup>193</sup> <i>cella</i> <sup>194</sup> <i>fölött</i> . <sup>195</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>173</sup> *fül* ‘ear’ + vb.-forming *-el*: ‘to listen (intently)’ + 3rd pers. ind. past indef. *-t*

<sup>174</sup> ‘silence’. alt. *csönd*

<sup>175</sup> *egy* + acc. *-t*

<sup>176</sup> vb. *üt* ‘to strike’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past indef. *-(ö)tt*

<sup>177</sup> *föl-* ‘upwards’ + *keres* ‘to seek’: ‘to visit’ + pot. ‘may/might’ *-het* + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. cond. *-ned*, alt. *felkeres*

<sup>178</sup> adj. *ifjú* ‘young’ + noun-forming *-ság* (state of being): ‘youth’ + 2nd pers. informal sg. poss. single poss. *-od*: ‘your childhood’ (informal)

<sup>179</sup> adj. ‘humid/damp’

<sup>180</sup> *cement* ‘cement’ + *fal* ‘wall’ + pl. *-ak*

<sup>181</sup> post. ‘between/amid’, *köz* ‘interval’ + loc. *-ött*

<sup>182</sup> *kép* ‘image’ + vb.-forming *-(z)el*: ‘to imagine’ + pot. *-het* + 2nd pers. sg. ind. pres. *-sz*

<sup>183</sup> *szabad* ‘free’ + *-ság* (state of being): ‘freedom’ + acc. *-(a)t*

<sup>184</sup> vb. *gondol* ‘to think/plan/guess/worry’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. past *-tam*

<sup>185</sup> ‘back body’, ‘well...’, ‘then/and/but’ (questioning back), ‘surely’

<sup>186</sup> *az* + *mint* ‘like’: ‘as soon as’, literary ‘as’

<sup>187</sup> *föl-* ‘upwards’ + vb. *láll* ‘to stand’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. *-ok*, alt. *felállok*

<sup>188</sup> *csillag* ‘star’ + pl. *-ak*

<sup>189</sup> *Göncöl* + pl. *-ök*: ‘the Great Bear’ (constellation)

<sup>190</sup> *fény* ‘light’ + freq. vb.-forming *-lik*: ‘to glitter’ + 3rd pers. pl. ind. pres. indef. *-ek*

<sup>191</sup> adv. ‘above/up/awake/upstairs’, alt. *fent*

<sup>192</sup> *rács* ‘grid/grille’ + pl. *-ok*

<sup>193</sup> vb. *hallgat* ‘to remain silent/to listen’ + adj.-forming *-ag*

<sup>194</sup> ‘cell’

<sup>195</sup> *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 would I also need to forge a weapon	7
out of you, golden self-awareness!	8

**Cursory remark**

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

<i>Hallottam</i> <sup>196</sup> <i>sírni</i> <sup>197</sup> <i>a vasat</i> , <sup>198</sup>	1
<i>hallottam az esőt</i> <sup>199</sup> <i>nevetni</i> . <sup>200</sup>	2
<i>Láttam</i> , <sup>201</sup> <i>hogy</i> <sup>202</sup> <i>a múlt</i> <sup>203</sup> <i>meghasadt</i> <sup>204</sup>	3
<i>s csak</i> <sup>205</sup> <i>képzetet</i> <sup>206</sup> <i>lehet</i> <sup>207</sup> <i>feledni</i> , <sup>208</sup>	4
<i>s hogy</i> <sup>209</sup> <i>nem tudok</i> <sup>210</sup> <i>mást</i> , <sup>211</sup> <i>mint</i> <sup>212</sup> <i>szeretni</i> , <sup>213</sup>	5
<i>görnyedve</i> <sup>214</sup> <i>terheim</i> <sup>215</sup> <i>alatt</i> <sup>216</sup> —	6
<i>minek</i> <sup>217</sup> <i>is</i> <sup>218</sup> <i>kell</i> <sup>219</sup> <i>fegyvert</i> <sup>220</sup> <i>veretni</i> <sup>221</sup>	7
<i>belőled</i> , <sup>222</sup> <i>arany</i> <sup>223</sup> <i>öntudat!</i> <sup>224</sup>	8

Chiastic structure:

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

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

<sup>196</sup> vb. *hall* ‘to hear’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. past def. -*ottam*

<sup>197</sup> vb. *sír* ‘to cry/weep’ + inf. -*ni*

<sup>198</sup> *vas* ‘iron’ + acc. -(a)t

<sup>199</sup> vb. *es*, inf. *esik* + pres. part. -*ő* + acc. -*t*

<sup>200</sup> vb. *nevet* ‘to laugh’, inf. *nevetni*

<sup>201</sup> vb. *lát* ‘to see’ + short base -*t*, 1st pers. sg. past def. -*tam*

<sup>202</sup> adv. ‘how’

<sup>203</sup> *múlt*? rare, past part. ‘past’, inf. *múlik*

<sup>204</sup> perfective *meg-* + vb. *hasad* ‘to crack/split apart’ + past part. -*t*

<sup>205</sup> adv. ‘only’

<sup>206</sup> *képzet* ‘idea/image/notion’ + acc. -*t*

<sup>207</sup> pot. vb. *van/lesz*: ‘may be/may become’, 3rd pers. sg. ind.

<sup>208</sup> lit. vb. *feled* ‘to forget’, alt. *felejt*

<sup>209</sup> adv. ‘how’

<sup>210</sup> vb. *tud* ‘to know’/aux. ‘can + inf.’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. indef. -*ok*

<sup>211</sup> adj. *más* ‘other/different’ + acc. -*t*

<sup>212</sup> comp. different degrees ‘than’

<sup>213</sup> inf. vb. *szeret* ‘to love’

<sup>214</sup> vb. *görnyed* ‘to bend (under a burden)’ + adv.-forming -*ve*

<sup>215</sup> *teher* ‘freight/burden’ + 1st pers. sg. poss. mult. poss. -*eim* → *terheim*

<sup>216</sup> post. *al-* ‘lower part’ + loc. -(a)tt

<sup>217</sup> *mi* + dat. -*nek*: ‘for what’

<sup>218</sup> doublet of *és* ‘and’, adv. ‘also’

<sup>219</sup> aux. vb. ‘must/need to/have to + inf.’

<sup>220</sup> *fegyver* ‘weapon’ + acc. -*t*

<sup>221</sup> inf. vb. ‘to hammer’, alt. *veretés*

<sup>222</sup> pron. *belőle* ‘out of him/her/it’ + 2nd pers. sg. -*d*

<sup>223</sup> ‘gold/golden’

<sup>224</sup> ‘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 so much life	3
that it will kill him, 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.

<i>Az meglett<sup>225</sup> ember<sup>226</sup>, akinek<sup>227</sup></i>	1
<i>szívében<sup>228</sup> nincs se anyja,<sup>229</sup> apja,<sup>230</sup></i>	2
<i>ki<sup>231</sup> tudja,<sup>232</sup> hogy<sup>233</sup> az életet<sup>234</sup></i>	3
<i>halálra<sup>235</sup> ráadásul<sup>236</sup> kapja<sup>237</sup></i>	4
<i>s mint<sup>238</sup> talált<sup>239</sup> tárgyat<sup>240</sup> visszaadja<sup>241</sup></i>	5
<i>bármikor<sup>242</sup> — ezért<sup>243</sup> őrizi<sup>244</sup> meg,<sup>245</sup></i>	6
<i>ki<sup>246</sup> nem istene<sup>247</sup> és nem papja<sup>248</sup></i>	7
<i>se<sup>249</sup> magának,<sup>250</sup> sem senkinek.<sup>251</sup></i>	8

Chiastic structure:

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

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

<sup>225</sup> obs. ‘adult’

<sup>226</sup> ‘person’

<sup>227</sup> pron. *aki* ‘who’ + attr. poss. *-nek*

<sup>228</sup> *szív* ‘heart’ + poss. ‘his’ *-e* + innes. ‘in’ *-ben*

<sup>229</sup> *anya* ‘mother’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-(j)a*

<sup>230</sup> *apa* ‘father’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-(j)a*

<sup>231</sup> pron. rel. arch. ‘he who’, alt. *aki*

<sup>232</sup> vb. *tud* ‘to know’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

<sup>233</sup> conj. ‘so that’

<sup>234</sup> *élet* ‘life’ + acc. *-(e)t*

<sup>235</sup> vb. *hal* ‘to die’ + arch. noun-forming *-ál* → ‘death’ + subl. ‘on/for’ *-ra* → ‘to death (by excess)’

<sup>236</sup> *ráadás* ‘addition/extra’ + essive ‘as/with the intention of’ *-ul*

<sup>237</sup> vb. *kap* ‘to receive’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pers. def. *-ja*

<sup>238</sup> ‘like’

<sup>239</sup> vb. *talált* ‘to find’ + past part.

<sup>240</sup> *tárgy* ‘object/thing/subject’ + acc. *-(a)t*

<sup>241</sup> vb. *visszaad* ‘to give back’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-ja*

<sup>242</sup> *bár* ‘any’ + adv. *mikor* ‘when’ → ‘any time’

<sup>243</sup> conj. ‘therefore’

<sup>244</sup> vb. *őriz* ‘to guard’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. pres. def. *-i*

<sup>245</sup> arch. emph.

<sup>246</sup> ‘he who’

<sup>247</sup> *isten* ‘god’ + 3rd pers. sg. sing. poss. *-e*

<sup>248</sup> *pap* ‘priest’ + 3rd pers. sg. sing. poss. *-(j)a*

<sup>249</sup> alt. *sem, sem ..., sem ...* ‘neither ... nor ...’

<sup>250</sup> pron. refl. 3rd pers. ‘himself’

<sup>251</sup> 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 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'.

<i>Láttam</i> <sup>252</sup> <i>a boldogságot</i> <sup>253</sup> <i>én,</i> <sup>254</sup>	1
<i>lány</i> <sup>255</sup> <i>volt,</i> <sup>256</sup> <i>szőke</i> <sup>257</sup> <i>és másfél</i> <sup>258</sup> <i>mázsa.</i> <sup>259</sup>	2
<i>Az udvar</i> <sup>260</sup> <i>szigorú</i> <sup>261</sup> <i>gyöpén</i> <sup>262</sup>	3
<i>imbolygott</i> <sup>263</sup> <i>göndör</i> <sup>264</sup> <i>mosolygása.</i> <sup>265</sup>	4
<i>Ledőlt</i> <sup>266</sup> <i>a puha,</i> <sup>267</sup> <i>langy</i> <sup>268</sup> <i>tócsába,</i> <sup>269</sup>	5
<i>hunyorogott,</i> <sup>270</sup> <i>röffen</i> <sup>271</sup> <i>még</i> <sup>272</sup> <i>felém</i> <sup>273</sup> —	6
<i>ma</i> <sup>274</sup> <i>is</i> <sup>275</sup> <i>látom,</i> <sup>276</sup> <i>mily</i> <sup>277</sup> <i>tétovázva</i> <sup>278</sup>	7
<i>babrált</i> <sup>279</sup> <i>pihé</i> <sup>280</sup> <i>közt</i> <sup>281</sup> <i>a fény.</i> <sup>282</sup>	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)

<sup>252</sup> vb. *lát* ‘to see’ + short base *-t*, 1st pers. sg. past def. *-tam*

<sup>253</sup> adj. *boldog* ‘happy’ + noun-forming *-ság* (state of being) + acc. *-(o)t*

<sup>254</sup> pron. ‘I’

<sup>255</sup> adj. ‘soft’

<sup>256</sup> vb. *van* ‘to be’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past indef.

<sup>257</sup> adj. *sző* ‘blonde’ + dim. *-ke*

<sup>258</sup> *más* ‘other/different’ + *fél* ‘half’ → ‘one and a half’

<sup>259</sup> ‘quintal’

<sup>260</sup> ‘yard’

<sup>261</sup> adj. ‘severe/strict’

<sup>262</sup> *gyep* ‘lawn/grass’ + super. *-én*

<sup>263</sup> vb. *imbolyog* ‘to sway’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e*

<sup>264</sup> adj. ‘curly’

<sup>265</sup> *mosolygása* ‘smile’ + 3rd pers. sg. single poss. *-e*

<sup>266</sup> vb. *ledől* ‘to fall down’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past indef. *-t*

<sup>267</sup> ‘soft/squishy’

<sup>268</sup> arch. poetic *langyos* ‘tepid’

<sup>269</sup> *tócsa* ‘puddle’ + illative *-ba* ‘into’

<sup>270</sup> vb. *hunyorog* ‘to squint’ + 3rd pers. sg. ind. past. indef. *-rgott*

<sup>271</sup> *röffen* ‘to grunt once (of a pig)’

<sup>272</sup> adv. ‘still/moreover’

<sup>273</sup> post. *felé* ‘to/towards’ + 1st pers. sg. poss *-m* → pron. ‘towards me’

<sup>274</sup> adv. ‘today’

<sup>275</sup> doublet of *és* ‘and’, adv. ‘also’

<sup>276</sup> vb. *lát* ‘to see’ + 1st pers. sg. ind. pres. def.

<sup>277</sup> poetic ‘how ...(!)’

<sup>278</sup> vb. *tétova* ‘to hesitate’ (inf. *tétovázik*) → adv. part. ‘doing smth hesitantly’

<sup>279</sup> vb. *babrál* ‘to fiddle’

<sup>280</sup> *pihe* ‘down, fluff’ + adj.-forming *-i*

<sup>281</sup> post. ‘between/amid’ from *között*: *köz* ‘interval’ + loc. *-ött*

<sup>282</sup> ‘light/glitter’, fig. ‘happiness/joy’



## **XII**

<i>Vasútnál lakom. Erre sok</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>vonat jön-megy és el-elnezem,</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>hogy'szállnak fényes ablakok</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>a lengedező szösz-sötétben.</i>	<i>4</i>
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