



SANDOR WEÖRES
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Sándor Weöres

(1913–1989)

The son of a gentry family from western Hungary, Weöres was the intellectual and artistic heir to everything that Babits, Kosztolányi, and Milán Füst (qq.v.) knew and stood for. He burst on the Hungarian literary scene fully formed and possessing a talent which enabled him to write in all possible forms of Hungarian poetry including sonnets, Alcaics, Sapphics, blank verse, and free verse. He won the Baumgarten Prize in 1936. He studied law, then Hungarian language and literature at the University of Pécs; his doctoral dissertation (1939) bears the title The Birth of the Poem [A vers születése], which is significant both as a theoretical treatise and as the meditation of a truly great poet. His first volume It Is Cold [Hideg van] appeared in 1934 and was followed by other highly successful ones such as The Praise of Creation [A teremtés dicsérete], 1938; The Portico of Teeth [A fogak tornáca], 1947; and The Tower of Silence [A hallgatás tornya], 1956. Weöres was unable and unwilling to go along with the dictates of “socialist realism,” as he was drawn to a spiritualist world-view encompassing ancient China and Japan, along with the Epic of Gilgamesh from ancient Mesopotamia. He survived during the Rákosi era mostly as a translator and a writer of children’s verses which were, however, eagerly read by grown-ups as well. Like Babits and Kosztolányi, Weöres also became a master translator, who particularly excelled in rendering Chinese and Japanese poems. He travelled to the Far East, including Malaya. He had an uncanny ability to wear any mask he chose to. He published a collection entitled Psyche, in which he reproduces the poetry of an imaginary poetess from the nineteenth century, called ‘Erzsébet Lónyai.’ “The best feminine poetry in Hungary was written by a man”—one woman poet wryly remarked. He was a poet of extraordinary inventiveness, earthy eroticism, and insatiable curiosity. His search for meaning constantly led him into the area of metaphysics. His collected translations were published in the volume The Conjuring of the Soul [A lélek idézése], published in 1958. In Weöres’s poetry the “urbanist-populist” distinction disappears forever from Hungarian poetry and yields its place to a community-minded spiritualism. Weöres handled Hungarian folk rhythms with as much ease and elegance as any Latin or Greek meter or other western European verse form. He left a legacy which, in terms of formal virtuosity, is very hard to surpass. An English selection of his poems entitled Eternal Moment appeared in London in 1989, edited by Miklós Vajda.

THE BRAMBLEBERRY

Eves of autumn
 Gleam with the brambleberry's
 Gleam with the brambleberry's
 Shimm'ring dress.
 Thorns a-rustling,
 Winds scurry hither-thither,
 Trembles the brambleberry
 Comfortless.
 Should but the moon let lower her veil,
 Bush turns maiden, starts to wail...
 Eves of autumn
 Gleam with the brambleberry's
 Gleam with the brambleberry's
 Shimm'ring dress.

Adam Makkai and Valerie Becker Makkai

THE FOUR ELEMENTS

Embers of wood in fire I'd be—
 Soft moss on stones in ponds I'd be—
 Swaying poplar in wind I'd be—
 On Earth my father's son I'd be—

Donald E. Morse and Adam Makkai

THE DRAGON-STEED

I dashed around on a Dragon-Steed
 I bathed a bird with diamond feet
 I kept chasing the sky's Great Bear
 and married a girl with moonlight-hair

Donald E. Morse and Adam Makkai

SHEEP SCHOOL

Once there occurred a miracle:
 a 'sheep school'—what a spectacle!
 only bleaters got the praise
 talkers weren't allowed to graze.

Those who never showed up there
 got medals sewn into their hair—
 therefore, not one sheep attended
 and the 'sheep school' was suspended.

Donald E. Morse and Adam Makkai

TIME'S COME UP PEARLS...

Time's come up pearls—let us wander,
 we've got no cart, so let's saunter;
 where the lazy river billows
 let us walk in groves of willows.

Tired feet wear out by evening;
 we make our cots in the clearing—
 dreams come on grasshoppers' ankles,
 worlds soar on butterflies' mantles.

Donald E. Morse and Adam Makkai

WINGLESS

When I was dropped out of my mother
 who dared rob me of my flying?
 No more 'human rebirth'—ever!
 life without wings ain't worth living.

Donald E. Morse and Adam Makkai

STORM FROM THE FAR HEIGHTS

When storms swoop down from the far heights
 don't you shun me, little brother—
 when the moon stirs in the foliage
 you protect me, little sister!

Our shack sits near the clearing
 through the shrubs you'd never notice;
 but the Angel, when alighting
 eats her supper where our door is.

Donald E. Morse and Adam Makkai

A DISSOLVING PRESENCE

I'm of no interest to myself
 only the certainty of my death
 can save me from the uninvited clown,
 although if a mask is trampled on, it hurts.
 Is it the Great Nothing I will reach through my death?
 I'll have no more longing or trouble.
 Will I continue after death?
 I endure it now—I'll endure it then.
 Neither life nor death interests me,
 all I need is that harmony
 which matter cannot carry
 and of which reason knows nothing.

Donald E. Morse and Adam Makkai

ANOTHER WORLD

Sent by another world, I wonder
 what it was like, but can't remember,
 although it's broken, boding glimpses
 shine on a veil that lost its color.

And as across these earthly visions
 my erstwhile home offers a view,
 I'll catch sight of joy and suffering
 harkening back from over there too.

Donald E. Morse and Adam Makkai

RAYFLOWER

Rayflower	In front of the chest
About the head	Lace-foam flying
So flickery	Already the fire there
Then fled	Fading dying

Above the shoulders	In the swelling
Below the chin	Of the belly
A lonely night-light	A shadow spreads
Is carried in	Enormously

In a dark sea
 No foot lingers
 Fearing to leave
 The Lucifer fingers

Edwin Morgan

MOON AND FARMSTEAD

Full moon slip swim	Moon swim flame
Wind fog foam chord hum	Grass chord twang
The house empty	Cloud fling
Rampant	The house empty
Thorn fence	Door window
Eye blaze	Fly up

Chimney run
 Fog swirl
 Full moon circle

The house empty

Edwin Morgan

TO DIE

Eyes of mother-of-pearl, smell of quince,
 voice like a bell, and far-off violins
 and hesitant steps hesitating, thickening,
 heavy-horned twins of emptiness snickering,
 sinking, cold brimming, blue, wide over all!
 Wide magnet blue, ploughs flashing on,
 and burning thorns in naked storm,
 earth-wrinkles, dropped on pitted soil,
 shaking the wild sweet nest, the bright
 dish flying in its steady-spread light.

Edwin Morgan

WHISPER IN THE DARK

From a well you mount up, dear child. Your head a pyre.
 Your arm a stream, your trunk air, your feet mud. I shall
 bind you, but don't be afraid: I love you and my bonds are
 your freedom.

On your head I write: "I am strong, devoted, secure, and
 home-loving: I have eternity."

On your trunk I write: "I am poured into everything and
 everything pours into me: I am not fastidious, but who is
 there who could defile me?"

On your feet I write: "I have measured the darkness and
 my hand troubles its depths; nothing could sink so deep that
 I should not be deeper."

You have turned into gold, dear child. Change yourself
 into bread for the blind and swords for those who can see.

Edwin Morgan

INSECT

Soft murmur in the walnut leaf:
 six legs, four wings, light *leitmotif*,
 two pearl-tipped feelers probe the veins
 for pathways on the leafy plains.

Peter Zollman

VALSE TRISTE

The evening's getting cold and old,
 vine-branches tremble and infold.
 Songs of the vintage-days subside,
 inside their corners old men hide.

The steeple starts to flare
 the church's foggy lair;
 across the meadows, stark
 showers are running dark.

The summer songs subside,
 old men retire to hide.

The evening's shade is cold
 as thickets clatter bold.

The hearts of people wear and smother,
 each summer looks like any other.

It does not matter, old or new,
 our memories are frozen, too.

Red fever on the trees,
 inside, a maiden weeps;
 her lips need lipstick, too,
 the evening's pinched them blue.

Whether it's old or new,
 our memories are few;
 the hearts of people smother,
 one summer's like the other.

The thickets' hair dress clatters well
 as autumn rings the autumn-bell.

Upon the sloe, frost lays its hold—
 the evening's getting cold and old.

W. Arthur Boggs

CLOUDS

In the mirror of the open window the mirror-cloud drifts facing the cloud. Cupids melt off at its edge, the heavy centre writhes with the lumbering bodies of monsters, a satiny blueness retracts and spreads bitten between gaping rows of beast-fangs. A violet coach flakes off, hurries away into the blue and quickly vanishes: yet it is easy to imagine it galloping there out of sight. Gods are sitting in it, or the no-beings of non-being, or the dead we have heard the earth-thudding down on and know nothing about any more.

The clouds drift and the mirror-clouds face them; and for anyone watching, nature drifts face to face with thought in the depths of the skull.

Edwin Morgan

ETERNITY

The Earth that creates all that lives,
the tomb that swallows what it gives,
the plains, the seas, the mountain-pass
appear eternal—but will pass.

The cosmos and the firmament
gyrating, celestial cement,
legion of fire-balls' hot mass
appear eternal—but will pass.

What's buried by forgetfulness
the lizard's leap, bird-wings' caress,
tremors which trickled long ago
appear to pass—but never go.

For some things that had taken place
no order can change or erase—
neither God nor the Ancient Foe:
they seem to pass—but never go.

Donald E. Morse and Adam Makkai

ETERNAL MOMENT

What you don't trust to stone
and decay, shape out of the air.
A moment leaning out of time
arrives here and there,

As a bather's thigh is brushed
by skimming fish—so
there are times when God
is in you, and you know:

guards what time squanders, keeps
the treasure tight in its grasp—
eternity itself, held
between the future and the past.

half-remembered now
and later, like a dream.
And with a taste of eternity
this side of the tomb.

Edwin Morgan

TWENTIETH CENTURY FRESCO

Cuckoo-bird-castle-in-the-clouds—
it's been filling for three thousand years with garbage and ornaments,
huge boxes full of it, their inscriptions: "I!"
"Mine!" "Me!" "For me!"—its walls have been pushed out
everywhere by "my treasure," "my fever," "my salvation,"
at last it tipped over and fell into the dung collected underneath.

Its inhabitants
jostle and bustle in the filth below,
they don't understand what has happened to them, they cannot see in
the night, moaning they writhe on top of the trash-heap, or running
around and treading on one another they drag their creaking,
broken belongings, or they want to build something, pillaging the rubble.
But there is One among them who can see,
and rolling in the tar he sets himself aflame so that the others, too,
may see: desperation-light, live torch!

A few are pointing at him: "Behold the fool,
he has dipped himself in tar and he'll turn into ashes
instead of trying to help us in our rescue work."
Others shout: "By his light we can see!"
and they push and drag the broken trash even faster.

What could they see? What would the live torch show them?
 the rubble, the dung,
 and above it the black nothingness
 whence cuckoo-bird-castle-in-the-clouds is already gone
 with all the Angels having disappeared,
 the Angel of Security, the Angel of Freedom, the Angel of Justice, and
 the others, even the Angel of War
 (for what's "war" for these is but an endless quarrel of those
 who bump into each other in the dark;
 where are the times when free decision would start a real war?)
 and gone is the Angel of Hatred as well
 (for everyone bites the ankle he can catch;
 but where is real "hatred" now?)

There's but one left in the sky, the idle, indifferent soul,
 the Angel of Disgust. For it is only Disgust that has a soul left.

If they should see by the light of the Live Torch
 they would see him, the Angel of Disgust,
 as he dangles his legs for the dogs
 or pisses on the ruins while he whistles,
 and they would not believe that he is an Angel,
 that he is love, transformed, which would rather smile than be angry,
 and if they were to see him near at hand: they would not believe
 that he is the Angel of Disgust
 because of his beauty comparable only to the woman carried in
 the depths of our dreams,
 the murderer would get drunk if he saw him, sobbing with desire
 he would fall on his fists,
 taking vows and making promises,
 and even the pure would be astonished in front of him: what is beauty
 that its drift is so strong ?

And the screaming, flaming torch, and this final sweetness: Are
 one and the same.

If they ask the Angel, he answers:
 "Quit meddling!"—pouting, it says: "Don't meddle." And for the
 third time: "Don't meddle!"—and falls silent.
 The live torch dashes around and screams:
 "Have you heard it? Quit meddling!
 These two words are the Great Book,
 The Word flung into your faces, this short commandment is the one
 that would relieve the convulsions
 of the world!
 Quit meddling! Quit the flag-waving,
 stop waving agitatedly with constructive-destructive and rescuing
 motions, forget the slogans, officious principles and jerking ideologies
 tearing at you!

Hear this: Desire no advantage,
 set no store by the value of advantage,
 and you'll shed the hundreds of madresses, all offering advantage,
 and you shall be like the heart-beat:
 its calm its function, and its function its calm..."

So shouts the live torch, then finally collapses,
 soot and flue-ashes pour forth from its mouth,
 even its bones are black.

And the Angel of Disgust
 plays on top of the ruins
 with equanimity.
 Waiting.

Adam Makkai

MONKEYLAND

Oh for far-off monkeyland,
 ripe monkeybread on baobabs,
 and the wind strums out monkeytunes
 from monkeywindow monkeybars.

Monkeyheroes rise and fight
in monkeyfield and monkeysquare,
and monkeysanatoriums
have monkeypatients crying there.

Monkeygirl monkeytaught
masters monkeyalphabet,
evil monkey pounds his thrawn
feet in monkeyprison yet.

Monkeymill is nearly made,
miles of monkeymayonnaise,
winningly unwinnable
winning monkeymind wins praise.

Monkeyking on monkeypole
harangues the crowd in monkeytongue,
monkeyheaven comes to some,
monkeyhell for those undone.

Macaque, gorilla, chimpanzee,
baboon, orangutan, each beast
reads his monkeynewsheet at
the end of each twilight repast.

With monkeysupper memories
the monkeyouthouse rumbles, hums,
monkeyswaddies start to march,
right turn, left turn, shoulder arms—

monkeymilitary fright
reflected in each monkeyface,
with monkeygun in monkeyfist
the monkeys' world the world we face.

Edwin Morgan

ON DEATH

Don't mind if you die. It's just your body's shape,
intelligence, separate beings which are passing.
The rest, the final and the all-embracing
structure receives, and will absorb and keep.

All incidents we live through, forms we see,
particles, mountain-tops, are broken down,
they all are mortal, this condition shows,
but as to substance: timeless majesty.

The soul is that way too: condition dies
away from it—feeling, intelligence,
which help to fish the pieces from the drift

and make it sicken—but, what underlies,
all elements that wait in permanence,
reach the dear house they never really left.

Alan Dixon

COOLIE

Coolie cane chop,
 Coolie go
 go
 only softly-softly
 Rickshaw
 Car
 Dragon-carriage
 Coolie pull rickshaw.
 Coolie pull car,
 Coolie pull dragon-carriage
 only softly-softly
 Coolie go foot.
 Coolie beard white.
 Coolie sleepy
 Coolie hungry.
 Coolie old.
 Coolie bean poppyseed little child
 big wicked man beat little Coolie
 only softly-softly
 Rickshaw
 Car
 Dragon-carriage
 Who pull rickshaw?
 Who pull car?
 Who pull dragon-carriage?
 Suppose Coolie dead.
 Coolie dead.
 Coolie no-o-o-t dead!
 Coolie immortal
 only softly-softly

Edwin Morgan

ARS POETICA

Memory cannot make your song everlasting.
 Glory is not to be hoped from the evanescences:
 how could it glorify you, when its glitterings are not essences?
 Your song may flaunt a few embers from eternal things
 while those who face them take fire as a minute passes.

Sages suggest: only individuals are in their senses.
 All right; but to get more, be more than individual:
 slip off your great-poet-status, your lumbering galoshes,
 serve genius, give it your human decencies
 which are point and infinity: neither big nor small.

Catch the hot words that shine in the soul's estuaries:
 they feed and sustain countless earth-centuries
 and only migrate into your transient song,
 their destiny is eternity as your destiny is,
 they are friends who hug you and hasten soaring on.

Edwin Morgan

IN MEMORIAM GYULA JUHÁSZ¹

Let beasts whine at your grave my father
 whine at your grave
 let the beasts whine
 between the byre and the blade
 between the slaughterhouse and the dunghill
 between the clank of the chain and desolation
 my mother as Hamlet said

1 The poet (q.v.) whom Weöres regarded as one of his role models.

let the old hunchbacked women whine
between the hospital and the glad rags
between the asylum and the lily-of-the-valley
between the cemetery and the frippery
and the wretches with buried ulcers
between stately doctors and strapping priests
all those paralysed by deferred release
on the far side of hope on the near side of confrontation

Let butterflies twist above the stream
Ophelia who drowned before we were born
the roseless thorn is yours
the profitless pain
the lacklustre ghost in a mourning frame
the falling on knees face in the mud
the humiliation boundless and endless
the dead body without a cross
the unredeemed sacrifice
the hopelessness that is for ever hopelessness
Let rabid dogs howl at your grave
let hollow phantoms hoot
my starry brother my bearded bride
the good is only a moment's presentiment
evil is not eternal malice
in the meantime blood flows
lacerated life cannot die
death is deathless liberty

Edwin Morgan

SATURN SINKING

to the memory of T.S. Eliot

They took my flock—I could care less! No more work for me,
 no worries; an old man has it easy in a nursing home.
 First they trounced the priest, horned, delirious speaker,
 where, from his desk, he'd fly to heaven daily—what a fool!—
 and chose smarter priests; later the king, unarmed, protector,
 and hired kings with swords; then the philosopher (for,
 after all, we have plenty of *them*); finally the poet
 (what does he count his fingers for, mumbling?); in his place
 come purposeful songwriters, to taste, on commission.

So I stand, face to the wall, with my broken shepherd staff.
 My herd swarms the trough (oh, for all the cheerful, brand-new
 attractions floating around in there!); nose-to-nose, nose doing
 nose dirt there—I don't care; it's no longer my trade.
 They'd stab me with a tusk if I saw: what's become of huge
 population booms, of the scratched-out womb, of greedy
 inebriation, of ever-speeding rates of velocity, of murderous rays,
 of the bomb planted in the doorway—
 It's like the train running

on its tracks toward the precipice without an opposite shore
 —what do I care!—; could be, they'll stop it the very last minute;
 else the tracks extend over the chasm; I'm just blind;
 could be: on the drop's edge the train spreads wings, flies up—
 they're supposed to know it, not I. Too bad if they don't.
 What do I care at this point? my staff is broken; it's easy
 to rest on the straw, to rest up from the pain of
 millennia. They can't see me; their heads are in the trough:
 I too see only their rumps and flapping ears.

Emery George

NEVER AGAIN ANOTHER GARDEN...

Never again another garden like
 the seventh one, where the clock among lilies stands
 and has no hands;
 where numbers for time, like shadows, have no place;
 that is hemmed round by foliage like starlight.
 How long will he stay who's beckoned by an angel?
 Perhaps he'll often retrace
 his steps to the sunny haven with a stone bell
 inditing its diary, and the marble columns whereon
 round and round reels gentle oblivion.

Eye to eye even, it's their backs the people
 stand there showing, they're whispering distantly
 in the garden. There won't be
 tomorrows at all if they're not bold enough
 for the flames of dawn, for noon, for the beams of nightfall,
 there'll again be yesterdays if
 our handkerchief by a lucky chance was left there,
 which more than willingly would be torn to pieces,
 impaled and rent on the spears of the brass fences.

A soothing garden—even so, sheer sorrow.
 Although from happiness anyone here would
 weep if tears could
 flow from the dew-drenched statues that we are...
 Let me go on always longing for you,
 who burned me, figure slim as flame; from here,
 home of silence, lead me far
 away so that I can worship you forever,
 clutching onto your green sparks, royal princess,
 like an infant onto the thread of his mother's dress.

Bruce Berlind and Mária Kőrösy

THE SEVENTH SYMPHONY
 THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY
(To my mother's memory)

1

Shadow, stone, linen, lime, the
 pillow under the skull's vault,
 iron padlock, swaddling clothes,
 the knocking sundering clod,
 do not see ascend the dark of the body
 over the final flame, the world pried open
 by the smouldering chaplet of sweat.

Foot protrudes from the brindled shroud,
 its clotted veins coated with wax,
 a violet beam on the nail.

Shins ensheathed are sleeping,
 the tendon straight, the knee relaxed;
 olive trees line the path.

Hail to you, shrivelled womb!
 An armored insect in the wall's fissure
 scratches the lip of the blind abyss,
 flowers its ensigns, its arms.

Hail to you, prayer-locked hands,
 plunging arches of a shrine,
 two rows of casketed tapers,
 ten swans' wings immersed in dew,
 enfolded night-blooming flowers.
 Hail to you, seven-pained heart!
 The scream, from the start its neck weighted with stone,
 falls down a bottomless well, fails of its journey.

Narrow neck, tilted head, sticky hair,
lead-coin of the final ransom on the pale face,
around the mouthhole and sunken eyes
the senses' cooled-off scatter of wrinkles,
twig-knots of trampled-down acanthus,
spoons of galloped-off steeds.

2

Shadow, night,
silence, cold,
crack, crackle,
clay flies,
beam cleaves,
dust signs—
Two new moons in
the sky culminate,
blazing mesh
descends,
spider-legged
glowing coals race
up, wings hover on
gleaming roof,
flock of lambs,
harps, flutes,
violin screeches,
bell peals,
horn replies—
For faceless,
ashy ancestor,
face of gold,
assembles bones,
leans on an elbow,
rears up,
gives ear—

CHORUS

Wailing, wailing, wailing
 for her own at the edge of dark!
 We saw her with her child in starlight;
 we were grazing our plump sheep,
 with the coming of spring we sheared the fleece,
 when winter came we flayed the hide;
 slowly, cloud-like, we drifted
 on the mirror of water filled with fleecy hills,
 our boat
 came ashore,
 she saw
 who we were,
 brambles tore
 our thin shoes,
 earth
 painted our brows.
 We're shepherds, also sheep.
 Now for the shearing,
 now for the skinning,
 strew it in her path.
 Wailing, wailing, wailing
 for her own at the edge of dark.

3

ALTERNATE CHORUSES

The drone of oars infuses
 the infinite clear stillness,
 the curly breath-hue, faintly purplish,
 churns in the glistening white,
 a maelstrom of mast, a whirlpool of sails
 looms through,
 ferry of flame, bridge of haze, golden ark,
 fever's nether side on a diamond mirror,
 circles, in the distance ripples,
 the rush and scurry of small ones,
 on the rainbow a smiling tear,
 veiny swish of milk-foliage,

the woman's festival alive in the world...

(But we always cried.

We were starving.

What else could we do?

We always cried.)

... her skiff sparkling in the rush of spume,
 on the lusterless yellow sickle of heaven,
 on the giant azure scales of the eye,
 on the red wheel of the war-car,
 on the crest of the green monster,
 on the black mouthhold of cold,
 and at night she turns down your white bed,
 through every inferno she follows you,
 though the nest be razed she summons you back...

(Bottom-up stumps

with our roots upwards,

earth cast us out.

Nobody stoops for us.)

... she kneels within you, my dear, and you become her,
 forsaking your chaplet whence
 color comes to the rose and light to the eye,
 and you feel her as you cover your chalice
 with the vagrant foggy shapes of the chasm
 and the numbered centuries of years
 with frenzied omens on their foreheads,
 impassioned, drank from...

(Flowers crawling with worms,

who wants the tattered petal

while the spring dawn rains down?)

... from the crusty dark ascending
 the distending moon's shimmers,
 aroma that under the rind
 gathers to flame in secret veins,
 under the heart a regal star-crowned dream
 in the shade of a warm bower,
 falling clusters of grapes, red wine,
 the flame of the mother ablaze in the world...

(Whom have I killed? Myself.

Whom does it pain? Me.

Leave me alone in her lap.)
 ... the lovely hands close-clasped in prayer,
 clinging columns of kindness,
 a hazy roof-row of fingers,
 ten mother-wings of live silence,
 naked fingers in a sea of petals,
 the tenfold soundless ringing
 gleams, dispensing its brightness,
 its light, beamlessly, pathless as a kiss...

(The salt of sweat in our bread.

The taste of death in our meat.

Around us the coffin-wall.)

... she who stood under the cross
 unbroken by misery, stares
 with a child's scared blue eyes
 at the frothing world on the cross,
 sobs at the sill of hell;
 in festering dens the dead
 wrapped in closely watched night
 wink at the wounding light...

(Take from our hearts the dripping poison,

take from our hearts the black maggot,

take the ember from our hearts,

take from our hearts the dark.)

... the gleam of the pure blue eyes
 pierces through all the circuits
 mirrored in the curving hoop of space
 and the hundred-tunneled race of time;
 like a sweet drop on the nodding sedge,
 a sparkling bead of mutability,
 it is always replenished, always rolls off,
 the peace of the Virgin flows over the world...

(We shiver, draw close our cloaks,

have mercy on us, Blessed Virgin,

pray for us, have

mercy on us.)

4

Over the spring
 down spins off
 from fanning wings;
 light snow falls;
 young wine makes
 in big basins;
 on a thousand balconies
 a thousand armies;
 the shackled rage of
 the earth is still,
 everything fills
 with the clamor of wings:

CHORUS

Through flame, through light
 wings the dark earth's virgin,
 never are shadow and night
 more violently flung open,
 valley and peak, by the looking-dance,
 assault-waves of mazes of flowers
 setting the greyness ablaze.

Vein of rose, blood of dove,
 brimming chalice of wine,
 where the mountain-shadow plunges
 faith harvested the vines;
 blood-pearls of chamois in snow
 calls the hunter, where he climbs
 the trail is narrow, the space wide.

Dear mother, bashful bride,
 our blushing tender maid,
 our wings billow toward you,
 their thick combs quake like the sea;
 are you flying toward us, do you see us?
 we are rugs laid in your path,
 dear mother, be our spring.

MARY

I glorify him I conceived in my womb
 who raised to the sky my sickle of moon
 and set on my forehead a string of stars
 who made my cloak to be borne on the milky path
 who made my veil to be blown by the storm of sweetness
 who made my triumphant car to be flown by the living
 fires

who peoples with armies my victorious progress
 who raises around me towers of endless song,
 as it pleases him; and it cannot be explained
 by the fiery armies, the misty generations
 turning under the furrows where I walk.
 My father from the beginning, I brought him forth
 who towers, three-headed pillar,
 with his triple forehead's glory
 over the far-flung void, above
 the glistening crystal silence
 surfacing from the wake of creations,
 like a roof of lightning he covers me.

CHORUS

Queen of flowerbells,
 assembled before you, welded around you,
 bell-hearts beat in a thousand bodies,
 a cupola of rays wavering,
 a tower of haze quavering,
 they peal for you, appeal to you:
 when our bell-metal chips,
 silence it out of your power.

MARY

It is not mine to judge; the scales, the sword
 are someone else's; I never learned to strike,
 only to stroke; nor to starve, only to feed;
 to be hurt, but not to hurt; nor to take, only to ask.
 In the resonant silence, the anonymous silence,
 larvae and wedding-gowns blossom alike on me,
 the lion lies down with the lamb in my bosom.

The babe defiles me, no stain is left,
 he scratches my breast, a necklace of blood flows out,
 the heaving sea has more and will not miss it.
 The killer spatters me with blood, I wipe it off;
 revile me, I do not turn away my face.
 I am no stone wall returning caresses and blows
 measure for measure;
 I am no clay road returning steps and turnings
 measure for measure;
 I am no fountain of fire that exposes body and space
 as they manifest before it;
 I am only a nest that sheds what warmth there is.
 You who see me shining forth in glory,
 think for a moment: it does not come from me;
 a tear is my only treasure; so with you;
 my son's wound my immeasurable possession
 and the agony of this world my gateless garden.
 The luxuriant tree of life lies in my lap,
 and if, torn off, you fall down under it,
 your powerful fist clutches my apron, you fell
 your head's log on my knee. Do not fear:
 you are watched over by silence, tears, and me.

CHORUS

There where there is no light,
 my heart is born among thorns,
 down where the nightingale nests,
 in the jungle of numberless moans;
 new threats buffet the planets,
 but the blest sleep on in peace,
 nectar-drops on their lips.
 Down there a rose-tree blooms,
 dawn spreads out on the hill,
 fingers—weak and strong—
 proffer a feast; debris
 of ashes litters the hearth,
 but a purple flood in the depth
 proclaims eternal dawn.

Fields of roses swaying
 wisps of flame in the wind,
 bewitched by her bright eyes;
 she comes, turns slowly again,
 a rose-sea of waving babes
 clutches, clutches at her hem;
 death and time stand still.

Mutability, wire-like
 grows taut;
 cooled-off ancestral coal
 glows hot;
 patriarch
 from tomb's dark
 hums to himself
 fulfilled words;
 the clod is quiet,
 lips stuck together;
 the sound of wings
 outspread forever.

CODA

Lady of orbits, Mary,
 protect Mary my mother,
 lest, torn from my sight,
 sorrow befall her.

You who have heard this song,
 a fragment only of the song
 that wrung the world's heart:
 you who have heard this song:
 wake up from your sluggish dragons.

Bruce Berlind and Mária Kőrösy