

Double Bed

Like a blacksmith
who can strike no more

finding our way from separate distances
we hear in a heartbeat the long day's journey

and a message of stone congealed even more passionate
than our brief encounter in that green place

which reached to the northland station
half-way around the globe we fire

the mass with each other until it melts to a new horizon
though we both are travelers different in nature

Translated by the author with Stephen Hogan and Daniel Webb

OSADA HIROSHI / JAPAN

What the Young Canadian Indian Said

We aren't the children of the golden age.
We cannot live chasing buffalo.

Wild berries, horses and shadows disappeared.
No maps show our country.

The world was simple a long time ago.
The River Saskatchewan, Lake Winnipeg—that was all.

It was the time of good youths.
One day it all turned to dust, as did the prairies.

Do not say you miss what's lost.

It is coming to crush me with its unseen weight.

If there's a train bound for Heaven
on the Canadian National Railway I'll take it sometime.

Now I hold my knees and sit in the doorway.
It's a long time from morning till night. Life is short.

Fear is my enemy.
I don't see reconciliation as wisdom.

Alcohol can't remove stains on the soul.

Not a prayer, but fire; give me instead a cold fire.

Translated by Takako Uthino Lento

AGNES GERGELY / HUNGARY

The Biographer

And I had no shoes.

My father was a porter and he had no shoes;
my father's father had been herding the baron's
sheep from barnyard to barnyard,
in his dreams, and he had none either;
my love was a tubercular chorus girl,
oh, *chant macabre!* the war;
the reconstruction; sure, I made mistakes;
however, on a certain October morning
I had seen it all; ever since
I've kept on telling myself "I had no shoes"

besides, I gave some Jews a hiding place
and Attila József the poet was my friend