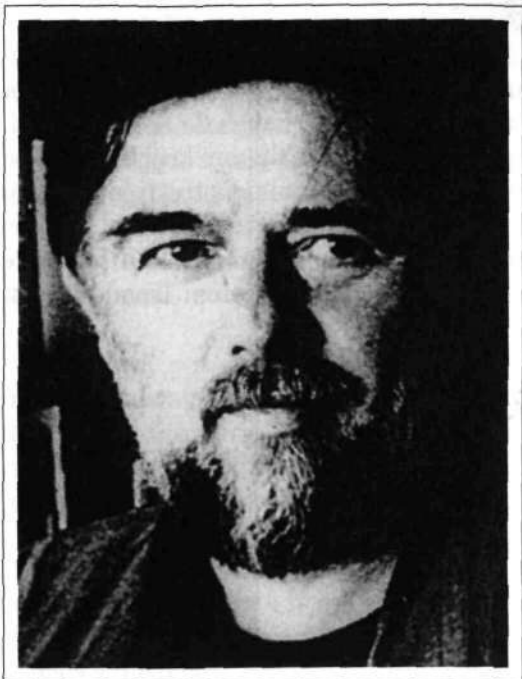


TOLNAI, Ottó



Ottó Tolnai (Kaniža, Vojvodina, 1940) is a poet, prose writer, playwright and translator. He studied at the Faculties of Arts in Novi Sad and in Zagreb. Between 1969 and 1974 he was editor-in-chief of the avant-garde magazine *Új Symposion* in Novi Sad. After the magazine had been banned, he became editor with the local radio. Two years ago, after living in Novi Sad and Palič, he moved to Budapest. He writes in Hungarian, and has published more than 25 collections of poetry, including *Concave verse* (1963), *Really, what will become of us* (1968), *Country Orpheus* (1983), and *Wilhelm's Songs* (1992).

Ottó Tolnai (Kanjiža, Vojvodina, 1940) je pesnik, prozaist, dramatičar i prevoditelj. Studiral je na filozofskim fakultetima u Novom Sadu i Zagrebu. Od 1969. do 1974. godine bio je glavni urednik avangardnog časopisa *Új Symposion* v Novem Sadu. Po ukidanju časopisa bio je urednik tamošnjeg radija. Živio je u Novem Sadu i na Paliću, a prije nekoliko godina preselio je v Budimpešto. Objavio je preko 25 pesničkih zbirki, pored ostalih *Konkavne pjesme* (1963), *Zaista, šta će biti s nama?* (1968), *Orfej sa sela* (1983) in *Wilhelmove pjesme* (1992).

OTTÓ TOLNAI

If it flies away

bring me a blade of grass
from the field mother
bring me a blade of grass
for tomorrow they'll be sawing
bring me a blade of grass
if my soul flies away
may the blade of grass fly with it too
it is spring
lapwings are roaming
in the chestnut treetops candles flutter
tomorrow they'll be sawing, drilling, hewing
in a sack with a wolf
they will sow me back together with myself
bring me a blade of grass
from the field mother
bring me a grass blade
bring it along I will

With chattering purple bodies

with a small stool over the fields
I stride
I like to help with plucking
I like to watch women
how they clutch a goose between their thighs
and start roughly plucking the plumage
sometimes a swan's neck may also get clinched
it rises up to their throats

and is hatched with a yellow beak through the downy
frothy mouth
with the already purple bodies
under my arm
I like to roam
in downy clouds
over the fields I stride
with a small stool
I like to help with plucking
even though I always get the smallest amount of feathers
over the fields I stride
in one barrel collecting tar
in the other feathers

I Stone

when the garden broom
is completely threadbare
when not a bristle of broomcorn is left
nothing
and what is more the bristles in the broomstick are break-
ing too
then I like to sweep with it
then it is my broom
my garden broom
then it can be used for sweeping
it sweeps the garden of nothing with nothing
but now it is completely worn out
each of its strands is frayed
yet I cannot sweep
for now I will die
right now I will die
right now I must die
that is how it turned out
for everyone it turns out differently
for me it turned out so that
I must die now
just when it has worn out
when the garden broom broke down
I can still hear how they're saying he died
what a heavy load off my mother's heart

I like it when they call me stone
they compare me with an enormous stone
I really like that
I stone
enormous stone
I've never thought of it
but I should have
how many times I should've thought of it
but I've always thought only of the garden broom
and of my dad's army mirror
which I smeared with shit
and then yes stone
yes I stone
that I'm an enormous stone
and how wonderful this is
even god can talk like that
stone stone stone
how wonderful this is stone stone stone
an enormous stone that rolls away
simply tumbling down some red hill
down some quietly rumbling bloody hill
to hell with the garden broom army mirror
tumbling like thunder
tumbling like thunder down some quietly rumbling bloody
hill

Translated by Marjan Golobič