

# PILVAX

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**György Faludy**, perhaps the most important Hungarian poet of the later 20th century, lived through most of the century and witnessed many of its major events. Fleeing war, prison, and Stalinism, he lived his life in England, North Africa, the US, and Canada, among other places, until the collapse of Communism in 1989 when he could finally return to Hungary. He continued to write and give public readings until his death in September 2006.

## Poems

by György Faludy

(translated from the Hungarian by Paul Sohar)

### The Cabbage Moth

My eyes are on the tiny terrace garden  
under a forebodingly dark sky.  
From the left a white cabbage moth  
comes flying in between the high

supporting walls. Most likely this  
morning gave him these carefree wings,  
but he should know this evening will  
see the end of his happy flutterings.

And soon he exits to the right,  
his visit to earth a hurried one,  
just like ours, his schedule tight.

The clouds are heavy with rain to pour.  
Two drops, and the moth will be gone.  
Funny, I think. For me, it'll take no more.

(Budapest, 2005)

## **The Seventy-Sixth**

Aladdin's lamps, the stars above  
the city have long lost their sheen.  
The field has turned into a highway,  
and the forest a magazine.

Oil is consumed by marshes,  
and oxygen by industry,  
the lakes are spawning rotting fish,  
sulfur spices up the sea.

But the placid public mood  
can't see the knife not so far off,  
our son will starve tomorrow,  
for us plenty is not enough.

We've conquered nature all right,  
but it's our nature we should rise above.  
( Toronto, 1972)

## **Jewish Saying**

A Hassidic rebbe was heard to say:  
Good thing God doesn't live  
on earth. He'd get his windows  
smashed every day.  
(London, 1958-1963)

## **The United States**

Collecting trash is our life.  
The cities are falling apart.  
The more electricity we burn,  
the more noticeable the dark.

“Quantitative changes lead  
to qualitative transformations.”

The more cars are made,  
and the more cars are sold,  
the trashier they become.  
(Ditto the customers, the makers,  
and the mechanics, young and old.)  
(London, 1958-1963)

*More of György Faludy's poems can be found in the WINTER 2007 issue of PILVAX.  
Locally available in Budapest.*