

# PILVAX

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Issue Three Summer 2006

**László Sárközi** (1969) was raised in state orphanages and was educated at the Móricz Zsigmond Gimnázium in Szentendre and the Janus Pannonus University in Pécs. He has won a scholarship from the Soros Foundation and was mentored by György Faludy. His poetry has been widely published and his first collection *Belső Világ* appeared in 2001.

## **from Inner World: A Sonnet Wreath**

by László Sárközi

(translated by Andrew Singer)

### **I. Night**

I walk the valley of green and silent dreams  
and still don't know where I will be tomorrow;  
my moods propel me, they drive me far,  
anticipating night, craving respite.

Nightfall is a scaly wound, and then  
night's well holds the moon - a brave warrior's fate  
in shining armour; recoiling to die again.

Down endless streets, new streets run  
and where this movement ends, I've no idea.  
I straddle the border-stone, gazing at naught.

Cold flash, and a yellow lamp regards me,  
light glints off blue-musted cobblestones:  
with ten thousand solitudes, the night caresses,  
where a black moon renders every shadow brown.

### **II. Beggar's sonnet**

Where a black moon renders every shadow brown,  
from a dirty cardboard box a beggar coughs,  
his dog poking him – “Leave me, it still hurts so...” –  
and eyeing his master in a Faithful Zen Ring.  
The dwarf shifts cannily; no-one cares;

he's crawling now on backward-facing knees;  
now he throws his cup pugnaciously down:  
dawn's anger recoils on marble walls.  
So I wandered by with pocketed hands  
and spat in the beggar's jolting cup –  
may the rest be veiled and then forgotten...  
but neither of us turned lighter from it.  
I'm wretched: good intention has died in me.  
My twenty-nine years are just a giddy game.

### **III. Facing eternity**

My twenty-nine years are just a giddy game;  
one day I am ornate, the next I'm plain,  
an endless whirl of good and bad design.

My life is like a dream – it comes to naught,  
realizing absurdly the weight of the grave –  
nor is the stone's perfume enjoyed in moss.

Whatever I build is in vain, for windmills  
and dusty lips are rumbling from the past,  
for all is fleeting that once was joy:  
the once-shining diamond shall be as ash.

My light fades, morning falls to night –  
once you regaled the evergreen dark  
Pandora: a box forever opened, as  
I go on – shivering, wounded by light.

### **IV. Under the Taigetosz**

I go on – shivering, wounded by light,  
cradling myself like a crying tot,  
bled and extruded on a winter's night  
to the street, seeing afar with hunted eyes,  
and before my eyes the whole future sweeps:  
a stepchild – as if a step of fate,  
fighting to change, and weary, on whom the people trod:  
with a debtor's life I am bundled clodwards.  
In me the years fly with flaming hair.  
What do I seek here? Clumsiness merely;  
I see the world uncomprehending and afraid  
and knock about further after lost shadows

already known; no one ever misses me  
and I invent anew my own small world.

## **V. Outcry**

And I invent anew my own small world  
I hated - yet I can't transcend my blood;  
shame is rotting my heart. Now I proclaim:

my eyes, tear-blackened, shine like a dark moon,  
because I am gypsy, because I am Hungarian,  
because I wear two swords and my mortal steps  
lead to the end, smouldering unto ash.

Anywhere at all waits the other: a problem-sea;  
in secret, under grass, old animal cravings  
offend his virtue, stabbing with pitchfork eyes!

My drops of strength evaporate, only small dreams  
sustain me, and blades cut into flesh;  
my homeland is foreign, it would clip my weak wings:  
free will and desire: to live, like seagulls.....

## **VI. Me**

Free will and desire: to live, like seagulls,  
forever... people don't see! The whirlpool pulls,  
I must adapt, yet my downfall is a given law.  
(Will I manage later to die like a Samurai?)

One morn in the dust of a run-down cement plant  
I found poetry; there above the sky  
little hills sang - every flower became  
my sweet prison, and I grasped Humanity no more.

A new feeling-world circulated in me:  
and like a sword-blade, proud-grey, there shines  
a wine-brown verse on deliquescent walls.

I craved light – I went between the clouds,  
but I was not led by brain, nor by Man;  
rather it is passion which follows me down.

*The remainder of László Sárközi's sonnet wreath can be found in the SUMMER 2006 issue of PILVAX. Locally available in Budapest.*