

■ **VERSIÓN INGLESA**

## Hando Runnel

### **IN DEFENCE OF THE SAD**

In defence of the sad someday I'll found a city.  
In defence of the sad I'll build them brick houses.  
In defence of the sad I'll grate windows and doors.  
In defence of the sad I'll station guards.  
In defence of the sad I'll forbid sad thoughts.  
In defence of the sad I'll demand that everyone laugh.  
In defence of the sad I'll waste years and care.  
In defence of the sad I'll found a city of the sad.

(1972) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

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### **HOMELAND, HOMELAND**

Homeland, homeland,  
when I die,  
a parish will be poorer,  
a farm emptier.  
Homeland, homeland,  
it is beautiful to live here,  
where everyone knows everyone,  
everyone curses everyone.

(1976) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

## SICK OF EVERYTHING

Sick of everything, sick of love and fear,  
sick of potholes, the hair on your own head,  
sick of ideas, big stacks of books,  
sick of seeing nowhere a glimmer of escape.

Sick of industry, sick of boats and rafts,  
sick of cars, sick of nuclear power,  
sick of the whistle blowing of peace and friendship,  
sick of foolishness, sick of the advice of the wise.

You are because you must be, without appetite you roam and breathe,  
even that to your mind is only empty routine,  
but a shudder, the smell of flowers – these you still appreciate,  
though you cannot tell why you lick your lips here.

Once life surprised you, you sought a meaning for life,  
but as your life fades, no meaning remains,  
emerges and fades, no meaning remains,  
what one discovers, for another disappears.

(1976) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

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I HAVE NEVER SEEN MY FATHER,  
his whole life he spent at work,  
leaving early in the morning  
and returning long after dark.

Since we children all were sleeping  
we never saw him at home,  
although his gigantic image  
I did see once in a dream.

(1982) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

HERE IN ESTONIA LIVED AN ENGLISHMAN,  
I knew indirectly.  
He was born in England,  
had finished his schools *c u m l a u d e* .  
Then he taught Estonians in Estonia,  
gained admirers for his virile mind,  
and rode a bike as in a dark time,  
with a flashlight in his hand.

(1982) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

THE FATHER WAS A DRUNK

the mother a tight-ass,  
the children turned out  
merely middle-class.

The daughter is a parvenu,  
the son splits hairs –  
the tv commentator  
of foreign affairs.

The father cheated the people,  
the mother cheated him,  
the children prudently  
are suspicious all the time.

(1982) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

**FROM THE CYCLE A BEAUTIFUL LAND**

I

WE MOVE WINDING TOWARD THE SUNSET,  
by day we measure a vast stretch of road,  
we move winding toward the sunset,  
our heart is satisfied, we are glad  
that in the footsteps of the sunset a rejuvenating morning follows,  
that from the morning a new sunny road starts,  
our faces are turned toward the sunset,  
our heart is satisfied, we are glad  
that dawn follows neck and neck in the footsteps of the sunset  
even before it has time to die,  
that the dawn will flame in the footsteps of the sunset  
even before it has time to die.

Beautiful, beautiful is the land,  
beautiful is the land  
I love.

II

GET UP AND LET'S GO AWAY,  
dew falls and the ground grows damper,  
get up and let's go away,  
we can stay here no longer;  
you may still want to hold my neck,  
hold my fingers, hold my arm,  
but the jewelry I removed from your neck,  
one day you will still ask me to return;

get up and let's go away,  
we can stay here no longer,  
the night is short — whether it is late or early,  
we can tell no more.

Beautiful, beautiful is the land,  
beautiful is the land  
I love.

### III

BEAUTIFUL IS THE SUMMER AND THE EVENING,  
colours of the sunset  
fall on us.

Beautiful is the night,  
the stars' belt,  
powerful wishes radiate on us.

Stars that rise in the evening,  
wander back in the morning  
to the land of fathers.

Evenings that row through the night,  
roam, search, arrive at  
the land of the morning.

Beautiful, beautiful is the land,  
beautiful is the land  
I love.

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### V

I DON'T WANT BACK OTHER GOLDEN TIMES,  
I only want to be happy here and right now  
and indeed as happy as it is possible to be,  
I want to be happy or simply not to be!

(I don't want back those distant golden times,  
I want to be myself right here and right now,  
right now here as myself I want to be happy,  
as myself here, right now here, yes, to love, to be!)

Beautiful, beautiful is the land,  
beautiful is the land  
I love.

VI

THE LAND MUST BE FILLED WITH CHILDREN

and filled with grandchildren  
and great-grandchildren  
the land must be filled with children  
and songs and children  
and one must fight against  
everything strange or hostile  
everything hostile or false  
and fight wherever possible  
wherever possible and necessary  
because all life is fleeting  
and for the children the future remains  
and the land and all the past  
the land must be filled with children  
and great-grandchildren  
if the present asks for existence  
and for the future's arrival  
the land must be filled with children  
with the land's own children  
and songs and children  
the land must be filled with children

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Beautiful, beautiful is the land,  
beautiful is the land  
I love.

VIII

ADORN YOURSELF, DARLING,

adorn yourself for me,  
look how the sunset  
before us adorns itself. —  
Why does the sunset adorn itself?  
Don't you think  
a party is on the way  
there in the heavens' back room?

Adorn yourself, darling,  
you are dear to me —  
you are a more beautiful  
world than that one!  
Hip to hip  
along the gravel road  
let's go singing there —  
to the party!

Beautiful, beautiful is the land,  
beautiful is the land  
I love.

X

WE MOVE WINDING TOWARD THE SUNSET,  
by day we measure a vast stretch of road,  
we move winding toward the sunset,  
our heart is satisfied, we are glad  
that in the footsteps of the sunset a rejuvenating morning follows,  
that from the morning a new sunny road starts,  
that from the morning a sunny new road starts,  
that dawn follows across the sky in the footsteps of the sunset  
even before it has time to die.

Beautiful, beautiful is the land,  
beautiful is the land  
I love.

(1982) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

## Andres Ehin

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### INFINITUDE

*About F. García Lorca, on his own motives*

The elm understands you and a clod understands you.  
The sorrel knows to tell everything about you.  
Even a spider understands you.  
You, you will never close your eyes.

Mud listens to you, the sun listens to you.  
You speak with shoots and speak with a stump.  
Fish come to you and snow comes  
to you, you will never close your eyes.

A cat knows you and light knows you.  
In your ventricles are a whale and a squirrel.  
Your hair longs to be yarrow.  
Rocks crow of you like cocks.  
Of you, you will never close your eyes.

Of you, you will never close your eyes.  
The ship of your voice avoids all reefs.  
Daggers of scented words will flash forever.  
You will wrap the horizon around your little finger.  
And feel on your neck your own distant stare.

(1968) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

WET ASPHALT UNDER THE WHEEL  
still sprays mud's bravery  
which loiters with mists and low-pressure

there is instead a broomstick in the mind  
and an apple from the top of a tree lies  
half rotten on the garage floor

there is no desire to hold anything  
but rather to touch everything lightly  
there is no belief in a definite doctrine  
but in the non-existence that floats everywhere

o potato prophets  
o jesus of the sugar beet  
beware beware  
I have on my hand a tattered diamond glove  
on the slope of a hill I gnaw slalom skis  
once in viljandi  
I was even a platinum oarsman  
and looked down from munamägi to the valley

now I am myself a lake and munamägi  
I gnaw oars that push the mountain  
I am a tank truck  
a laughing slaughter-house

I am the next olympic games  
they build hotels in my honor  
a huge basement hole is always dear to me

my tentacles grip moscow and tallinn  
I am marsalkka and mohammed ali  
my fist follows the mannerheim line  
there is no belief in a definite doctrine  
but in the non-existence that floats everywhere

I am a chlorinated swimming pool  
so that after you swim your eyes sting  
I am a shopping basket and a crammed trolley

wet asphalt under the wheel  
still sprays mud's bravery  
which loiters with mists and low-pressure

(1995)

[1979] *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

## PELLET LIPS

Baltic herrings groan like the eclipse of a whip-moon in ladle-peace or canned in tomato  
sauce  
a foaming ghost-nail falls tenderly on a neck  
ask the skeleton for a cigarette and pellet lips for the wind  
let slime crunch like a potato-campground  
pressed in the cranny are bumpy mammoths

and bubonic mammoths  
with an all-union coral reef sporting a lenin order medal

cream butter does not know why its kiss  
does not excite a but or a maybe  
even though cream butter is wholly in that kiss  
a pornographer schizogonized like a paramecium  
cannot guess  
which is female

above all the whole society is troubled  
because on the waterfall crossroad the third strike is still out  
a babesiotic blusher pisses on a crossroad in the crossfire  
and is tapped to be a general  
so that his thigh greys

sneakers in contrast dream of  
the happiness of a global amputation  
where nobody carries them  
and where nobody wears them

lazily an ataman winds over the tangled paris  
over a stock exchange ankle adorned with switches  
false london frightens trench mortars  
with its sinister westminster

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mines fissure armpits  
and the big ones tick with mouths full of sugar  
mortars run  
into the sea following a flock of ducks  
before reaching the water  
under the mites a marsh starts to throb

the whip-moon beats groaning herrings to death  
into the cranny a skeleton makes  
some spit and also the all-union pellet lips fly

(2000)

[1980] *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

I CAN'T JOIN ANY TEACHINGS  
but the teachings (not to mention the teachers)  
join passionately with me  
over and over again I find  
that some of them  
have sucked themselves  
onto my ankle with their jaws  
in the muddy bottom of time's river  
overwhelming pluralism fixes itself

to my instep  
I realise that kind of thing's inevitable  
but every now and then  
I lift my foot and brush them off  
because in spite of everything I want to belong  
to my own self

(1990) *Translated by the author and R.Caddel\**

THE FATE OF THE BALTIC COUNTRIES WILL BE DETERMINED BY RUSSIA  
the fate of russia will be determined by japan  
the fate of japan will be determined by the pacific ocean  
the abyss of tuscarora

fate rises from east  
like a deceitful sun

(1995) *Translated by J.Talvet and H.L.Hix*

## **A VEGETATED DIRECTOR**

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with his head thrust into a vase among flowers  
and feet almost to the ceiling  
the general director had to spend  
half of his workday  
after a while  
an exaggerated fear haunted him  
that someone might take advantage  
of his helpless state  
loosen the strings  
of his crocodile shoes  
and take them

then a much graver worry  
developed in his mind  
my head has been under water for several hours  
why don't I get choked  
have I really grown gills

a quarter of an hour before the end of the workday  
the secretary who had left under mysterious circumstances  
returned

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\* Os editores deixan constancia do seu agradecemento a Andres Ehin e a Richard Caddel por permitírenlles incluír na antoloxía esta tradución ao inglés, publicada xa con anterioridade.

seeing her superior in such a position  
she was very frightened  
and called for help  
together they pulled the director's head  
from the vase  
as he was being pulled out  
the director saw himself  
mirrored in the window

he saw that his hair and beard  
had turned into thin roots  
on the leg hairs  
that could be seen between a sock and a cuff  
flowers were blooming

I am vegetated thought the director  
this didn't prevent him  
from flying to Brussels next morning

(1995) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

## Jaan Kaplinski

ALL THAT WAS AND COULD HAVE BEEN IS STILL SOMEWHERE  
earth keeps the memory of seas snail shells are stored in limestone and sandstone  
watches the sleep of former corals  
can one ever walk quietly enough somewhere some spores awaken take flight and  
needles fall from firs  
pines stand silently at noon and the white indifference of birches startles you in the  
middle of the road  
unnamed stones and wordless sand could hardly rest anywhere else  
splinters of skylarks high in the sky beads in their palms  
and the pure and distant descriptive geometry of swallows on the clean pages of the sky  
things no longer stay with names even stones wander and old palm trees wander from  
one archipelago to another  
everything as if torn from a children's picture book nothing moves everything is new  
and strangely complete  
a bumblebee and a sandy road distant churches and the strings of the four points of  
the compass on an old home violin  
palms eyes and mouth full of the white sand of silence and the earth itself that old  
drummer in deep meadows  
one sky one world one earth  
nettles celebrate their wedding and barbed wire blooms  
what remains has simple names vastness forests and the sun and hot stones near the  
path in the village green  
honeybees an endless swarm of honeybees shooting up fast near one's head lime trees  
rejoice in the rain and the rainbow drinks at the spring behind the cottage

(1976)

[1966] *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

HERE I AM AGAIN  
on Olevimägi<sup>1</sup> bound  
by the sensation of unreality — the city

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<sup>1</sup> The Hill of St. Olaf in Tallinn whose name in Estonian (*olev*) could be associated with “being” or “present”.

only sleeps that big space  
we call the city and we  
with our offices shops warehouses our evening arguments  
are phantoms in convoluted landscapes  
dead-end streets between walls in its dozing brain  
its real face is revealed  
in the foundation and limestone where  
beings and things prove true  
and speak in a familiar tongue  
with me the South-Estonian for whom  
history is too brief who  
does not go to cafés and who falls asleep reading  
in a barn on hay C.G. Jung's "Psychologische Typen"

(1976)

[1967] *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

THE WRITER FROM THE SCHOOL OF POETICS TELL ME

what will remain of verses if accents syllables  
are not counted tell me what remains  
what has remained of that yellow  
leaf of the elm tree in Kambja on the gravel  
of a path overgrown with weeds why  
I put it in my mind together with a bullfinch  
on the bank of the Emajõgi on a snow-snowy lilac

(1972) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

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I SAW YUNICHIRO TO TALLINN.

We spoke of East and West, log cabins and wells.  
On the way we passed budding trees,  
solitary white anemones, spring fog  
and yellow-green mist above the forest:  
birches had begun to bloom.  
Sometimes we grew silent; I think, in truth  
we were of such like mind  
that speaking became superfluous.  
I asked if SATORI in Japanese  
was the usual word for UNDERSTANDING.  
"No," he answered, "that word  
conveys a solemnity." The Pedja river  
was back in its banks, but in Kärevere  
the bottoms were still under water.  
An hour was left before the bus to Tartu. We sat in "Viru".  
In the lobby I was told that —

without being asked — I should have shown my passport.  
I said next time I would.  
I returned. On my left the full moon  
shone between clouds, and in its glimmer the spruces  
stood, as if they were joyous, joyous.  
I cannot describe them in any other way.  
How the bottoms of the Emajõgi looked  
in the moonlight I don't know, since I was sleeping.

(1985) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

PEOPLE WERE COMING FROM THE MARKET CARRYING PLUM TREES;  
white lines were being drawn on the asphalt.  
Going home, I saw once more  
the white tortured trunks of birches  
and their foliage breaking out in leaves  
and the clouded sky reflected in floodwater pools,  
I suddenly felt that this beauty  
was becoming almost unsupportable —  
it's better to look on ground where charming  
tiny burdocks, nettles and mugworts are coming up  
or go indoors and find in the dictionaries  
what, after all, are the meanings of Japanese words,  
*yūgen*, *sabi*, and *mono-no-aware*:  
obscurity, mystery,  
and charm or sadness for what is.

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(1985) *Translated by the author with S. Hamill and R. Tamm\**

ONCE I GOT A POSTCARD FROM THE FIJI ISLANDS  
with a picture of sugar cane harvest. Then I realized  
that nothing at all is exotic in itself.  
There is no difference between digging potatoes in our Mutiku garden  
and sugar cane harvesting in Viti Levu.  
Everything that is very ordinary  
or, rather, neither ordinary nor strange.  
Far-off lands and foreign peoples are a dream,  
a dreaming with open eyes  
somebody does not wake from.

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\* Os editores deixan constancia do seu agradecemento a Jaan Kaplinski, a Sam Hamill e a Riina Tamm por permitírenlles incluír na antoloxía esta tradución ao inglés e a do poema seguinte, publicadas xa con anterioridade.

It's the same with poetry — seen from afar  
it's something special, mysterious, festive.  
No, poetry is even less  
special than a sugar cane plantation or potato field.  
Poetry is like sawdust coming from under the saw  
or soft yellowish shavings from a plane.  
Poetry is washing hands in the evening  
or a clean handkerchief that my late aunt  
never forgot to put in my pocket.

(1985) *Translated by the author with S. Hamill and R. Tamm*

#### AGAIN SOMEONE SOMEWHERE IS SPEAKING

about the generation of the sixties,  
the seventies, or the eighties.  
But I don't like sadism or masochism;  
I don't consider the old wiser than the young  
or the young wiser than the old;  
my ancestor, too, was Utnapishtim,  
who lives on Dilmun island, with its fountain of youth;  
my children piss in their pants and play in the sandbox;  
my brother is the northwest wind in the branches of the willow;  
my sister is the sunlight edging a white cloud;  
I myself am a blind stone frog in an empty room,  
with a scar on my knee from the time  
I fell from my bike on a highway near Kärevere,  
when bottoms were still flooded and in the forests of Tiksoja  
violets bloomed and on the banks of the ditches and in thickets  
there were still patches of snow.

(1985) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

#### THE SPEAKER TELLS HOW ESTONIAN POETRY

has portrayed the homeland. Outside  
wet snow falls onto wet earth. An elm,  
a big old elm blooms already. Grass  
is green, the sky is gray, in the still air  
there is something strange and solemn.  
I am invited to tea — I politely refuse.  
I am on the way. On the way home, as always.

(1998) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

## Paul-Eerik Rummo

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### HAMLET'S SONGS

1

*The sea withdraws into itself. It is ebb tide.  
On the dunes a streak of storm-foam fades.*

*Listen...what is the breeze rustling,  
ominous and lurking?*

*Saw grass, oh friend, saw grass.  
And gathering before us a cloud-mass.*

*There is a sudden fear. Look, in a vision,  
a child in the saw grass wounds its hand,*

*a couple of lovers who run, fearless,  
along the beach, barefooted,*

*barefooted and in their veins the windwine — — —  
Saw grass, oh friend, saw grass.*

*Let it, let it, stop to complain,  
there is not a single child on the beach,*

*none of us is barefooted.  
Why does pain still not leave?*

*Saw grass rustles stiffly.  
All those who wish to remain children*

*hoping that the cloud, the large black one,  
never touches their love, —*

*all those who for a moment met in me,  
for a moment I saw their dangers,*

*for a moment heaven got mixed up with earth,  
for a moment I understood: no longer*

*can I stand hesitating and silent where one should  
simply cry the bad into the good — — —*

*Saw grass, oh friend, saw grass.  
And gathering before us a cloud-mass.*

*On the dunes a streak of storm-foam fades.  
The sea withdraws into itself. It is ebb tide.*

2

*Yes, to be, to be, certainly to be  
(Ah, only one lap, only one lap on which to rest my head!)*

*and from the scabbard of doubts and boredom  
(Ah, only one lap, only one lap on which to rest my head!)*

*to draw the sword, when meanness and stupidity  
(Ah, only one lap, only one lap on which to rest my head!)*

*threaten to drown my childish childhood dreams  
(Ah, only one lap, only one lap on which to rest my head!)*

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*in the mud of deceptions.*

Thus to be, and at the same time to know  
that life is not our struggle, to know  
that what is coming is greater than me  
and also greater than my enemy. Thus to be, and at the same time  
to think of the children yet unborn whose laughter  
destroys the swords of both of us.  
Thus to be, to be, to be, and at the same time to think  
of those whose name no one yet knows.

*Ah, only one lap, only one lap on which to rest my head!  
Only one lap, only one lap on which to rest my head!!*

(1964) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

TO BE A LANDSCAPE, TO BE A MAJESTIC LANDSCAPE  
on the drumlin topped with firs that froth with cones;  
a snow-white landscape, with veins like the wind's footsteps,  
to be a landscape, a noble landscape crossed  
by a river that carries a cluster of children on its ice,

circusing, spinning,  
but also falls, green, over a driftpile,  
like water-cloth skirts, water-scarves;  
to be a landscape on which an old wool mill  
quietly turns its axletree, itself silently  
staggering ...world without end;  
a landscape where hungry crows can cry;  
a wolf-nighted landscape, a pre-sun landscape,  
a landscape for whirling a carouselshaft,  
for holding an observatory, for holding a glassy arch,  
to be a landscape, to be a majestic landscape

lying on the museum wall of a village  
a radiant landscape, framed by fading boundaries;  
coins and bones are bleaching in an array of showcases,  
tiring tourists are yawning;  
to be being, knowing that no word  
will be found to name you; knowing  
that it can never be found;  
to be a landscape, to shed snow-light;  
to be a landscape, keep the peace after a snowstorm  
until someone whose heart does not have  
enough room in his chest runs across the room  
and stabs a knife into the canvas.

(1966) *Translated by J. Tälvet and H. L. Hix*

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## WHY I DON'T ESCAPE ABROAD

1.

To love (I mean: to be able  
to be weak and wholly wholly  
indifferent, whatever comes),  
in this way, one can love and write poems  
anywhere after all and after all  
one cannot live on it anywhere.

2.

One cannot always be weak  
and be dragged along by the animal in oneself  
that writes poems, and sometimes  
it also takes a long rest and sometimes love slips from one's hands,  
and you are in situations that make you clever, bold,  
cruel, boringly clever, boringly bold —  
like perhaps anywhere else? I don't know.

3.

A half-breed stands,  
from one side a Swede, from the other a gipsy,  
a bit of Finno-Ugrian and Ingrian, Danish and the Polish blue,  
a bit of the Low German nobleness, and in the last annual rings, Russian,  
mixed with limping generations from remote corners, incests, after all, fallen  
to the earth to the very last, only  
the tongue still bleeding slightly, only the tongue still  
more or less safe and old, only the tongue still moving, the man  
stands, the man stands, a half-breed stands,  
the questionable, quite questionable  
follower of tree-planters and navigators  
("hide liberty!", hide it, take it to the forest and wrap it in moss,  
take it along to the sea) — yet  
from whom has come this, from whom has remained,  
from whom has remained this one who stands here,  
Kalevipoeg, the lost one, his arms and his legs wounded  
because of his own foolishness, airplanes above his head  
crashing, he tries to meditate in his finno-ugrian manner,  
the forest rare, the sea closed, the border closed, he stands  
and occasionally jokes to spectators in a foreign language, he stands  
among his junipers and gothic towers that no other place in the world has,  
among junipers that grow exactly as high as the throat, and gothic towers  
with which he has no more to do than with some minarets.

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4.

What after all does it mean "to escape"?  
By God, indeed, why not,  
if one cannot live normally  
and if no one needs you here?  
Fear and estrangement, fear and estrangement,  
the fear of hunger, and estrangement  
from managing it, whatever comes,  
where ever one happens to be.

5.

And one can love and write poems  
anywhere after all and after all  
one cannot live on it anywhere.

(1989)

[1968-1972]

*Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

## STILL THINKING ABOUT LIIV

1

Or — maybe he never existed at all?!  
Maybe there was only  
    snowfall  
    into a lake  
    and the melting  
    of snowflakes  
    into a lake  
    and their merging  
    as ice?...

Cold. A crack  
    behind gray stands of aspen  
    in the forest. Something was broken  
under the frosty sky.

2

Yes, did he exist at all?

Still, still he lived! — Oh how a chick pecks  
the heart, like an eggshell, from the inside.  
Already it sticks out its chest:  
yes, we had, we had such a man,  
a broadcasting tower in the swamp,  
a man standing on a hill surrounded by lowlands!

No, no, by no means that!  
In the name of the most common Thursday —  
not that myth, that pompous and great one.  
He is ours, and let us not make of ourselves  
that myth, that pompous and great one.

He is ours — a small rippling lake.  
He is ours — snow into a rippling lake.  
A small lake that tries not to freeze,  
keep itself and keep the forest around it,  
keep the world in its only mirror.

We are one. A lake is in the forest and the forest is in a lake.  
We are one. A lake rises into snow and snow falls into a lake.

Nothing more.  
And only a crack.  
In the forest or in the lake? A wooden heart? An icy cover?

Only not that myth, that pompous and great one  
here under the silent, grieving white  
frozen sky.

(1966) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

## Juhan Viiding

(Jüri Üdi)

THAT BOY HAD A GRAVE BLOOD-DISEASE  
and he lived on Sunflower Street  
there the windows were barely transparent  
and day after day he took his father's pills  
THAT BOY HAD A GRAVE BLOOD-DISEASE  
and death was bloodthirsty  
taking shots through the day the boy knew well  
that life didn't differ much from death  
THEN ONE DAY THERE WAS IN THE SCHOOL GYM  
to the left of parallel bars near the door  
a coffin with children passing by it  
the whole school was present except those who were ill  
AND FROM THE PODIUM A TEACHER WAS TALKING  
he was not telling where Bonn or Pakistan are  
near the door I heard weeping  
when somebody shouted that I slowed the walking  
THE DIRECTOR THEN STOOD WITH ONE SHEET IN HIS HAND  
and said: Helmut we know your last will  
(the air grew even more intolerably stuffy)  
was to graduate from the school  
AND THEN INTO THE COFFIN WAS PLACED THE DIPLOMA  
in which in all subjects by the spring there were A's  
I felt seeing that last offering  
that my back slowly started to sweat

(1971) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

### A FOREIGN VISITOR

a foreign actor with an umbrella on his arm  
came to visit me at my home  
by the way that evening I wanted to be alone  
because my home is my cathedral

the gentleman muddied my carpet  
and the cigar in his mouth  
sourled the air  
he was interested in what firm I worked for  
and for instance how much I made each month

the talk dragged like a bull's saliva  
then I bellowed out  
Ich liebe Dich  
frightened he rose and stepped to the door  
the lift was free and took him downstairs

(1973) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

SO. I HAVE THE FEELING I AM BECOMING WISER.  
I have been taught lessons by life itself.  
but what is my first drama going to speak about?  
not about a fox? not about a rabbit?

no. enough of them! the difficulty of human life  
that is a problem that deserves hard work.  
I carry a thick notebook in my pocket  
and don't go to bed until late at night.

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so. in this life one has to taste a lot.  
so much to laugh to weep to guess  
and to defend one's true convictions  
when someone stupid tries to slander them.

so. I also wish that the theatre  
were worth watching like life itself  
and could make one forget one's life  
in a life

full of the love of life

(1973) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

"I WOULD NEVER PERMIT MYSELF  
a slow suicide."

What I said let it be  
to my life  
a pledge  
of fidelity.

(1975) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

EVERYONE IS ALONE, POETS SAY.  
Still there's a small difference.  
I have tried to see that difference;  
to make it bigger and also smaller.  
In winter in Estonia there is seldom hail.  
Pure pain cannot be reduced.

(1975) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

(Juhan Viiding)

1954

Once a young woman walked in a park,  
dressed top to toe.  
She had on black underwear.  
And a black overcoat.  
The collar of the coat was foxfur.  
She had on a blue velvet dress.  
Her lips were painted.  
She had polished her fingernails with red polish,  
and carried a green purse.  
She had on hose and high-heeled shoes.  
That woman had a man.  
Dressed top to toe, too.  
He had on a jacket and slacks and an overcoat and a necktie.  
He had on a hat. He had on shoes.  
They had a nice apartment: 3 rooms and 1 kitchen.  
They kept their rooms nicely furnished. They had sofas  
and armchairs, a cupboard, a TV set, a radio, a piano.  
They had a vacuum cleaner and their own car.  
Their maid was a waitress in a café. Once a week  
they ate a dish of pork. Their maid didn't smoke or drink. They were  
very nice. They had a WC and a bathroom.  
On Friday they took a bath.  
On September 16 the maid put on some perfume. The man was afraid of dogs.  
Their maid went to the theater and got a run in her hose  
and gave a yell. In a word, they enjoyed a good life.

(1975) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

**I HAVE BEEN TOLD:**

Make verses; it is no concern of yours  
how the machine lubricates its bolt,

how the machine finds its nut.  
Is the human being your only interest  
And liberty the only flame that burns?  
Other things are more important: delicate  
lampshades and jack-o'-lanterns, hearth, doorbell.  
Is that weakmindedness, the life you study  
really worth burdening the heart?

When the newspaper appears, you will know who you were,  
try to withstand some twenty winters more.  
Try to withstand some twenty years more!  
When the newspaper appear, you will read who you were.

Try to withstand some twenty winters more  
without letting the soul's scraps be deadened.  
And when for the last time you have risen,  
not to worry, we will have forgotten  
your only, your lifelong prayer.

(1978) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

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AND ALL THAT. THE LIMITS OF TOLERANCE  
differ from person to person.  
What's the matter with you? Even beautiful souls  
have asked that, looking at me strangely.  
And shaken their heads as if with pity.  
I know no other limits than the horizon.  
It's not wide, it's widening.  
That movement eases my mind  
and the nerve-knot in my neck, on the left.  
A mute hope of life, an eternal spell.  
There are no words, but there is something.

(1998)

[1980] *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

### **A COLD DAY**

The walls already have mouse-ears,  
and every door a secret eye.  
My ears are bad, I creep  
on tiptoe. But the day is cold.

Words: truth, justice, diligence,  
are broadcast and they boom.

Eyes spying, bodies stooping  
buying the evening paper  
yesterday morning's young people —  
today appear already senile.  
I have taken notes.  
I haven't barked.

(1998)

[1987] *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

## Ene Mihkelson

### ROUNDS

#### I

Like someone who is a stranger to herself I have thought all day  
what the meaning of life might be  
that would make it amenable to everyone not too gloomy  
too hopeless for the reader  
optimistic suggestions bright solutions  
I think but cannot decide  
already it is midnight beyond the window the last bus passes  
red lights flashing  
I have not gotten past the beginning

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#### II

The heavens console themselves with us  
or is it fate or character  
that has determined the way  
A thousand chances to step aside and  
I choose one a chance to betray  
a chance to love or simply to let days pass  
I choose one  
I am ready and now I meet myself

#### III

From year to year perhaps understanding better what keeps you locked  
in yourself  
that can really be simple and one  
but carefully covered transparent only when keenly observed  
palpable at its core when misfortune uncoils  
life turns itself around and  
starts to flow backward here is the beginning  
that the end holds in its hands like a result

(1978) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

MEMORY CRUMBLING SCATTERS

dust full of light and  
chiming

(1982) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

YES OF ESTONIA I WOULD STILL

testify but how could I speak  
of her if I am of the same  
matter the same tongue in my mouth  
the only one this tiny people  
has had for centuries Probably  
I have not existed and there was no land  
distinct from the people  
So I won't be reciting  
the popular anthem I am  
only a particle in this blood union

(1982) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

I NO LONGER RECOGNIZE THOSE I KNOW

and any stranger seems long  
familiar so often I am prepared  
to greet her but my anxious  
glance turns her away  
I remain wondering at her  
There she goes and unknown  
to me is a life  
I wanted to touch

(1982) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

A FROG JUMPED THROUGH THE SCYTHE

and screamed It was as if  
it were the voice of the scythe itself  
touching the living

(1989) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

OUR OLD GOOD GRANDMOTHER HAS DIED

singing voices have fallen silent

We turned what could be turned  
reversed what could be reversed  
Now grandmother has died  
If you have a memory write it down  
If you have a memory of a memory  
write it too

We want to preserve grandmother's experience  
through the later generations  
Grandmother's handrail favorite bench  
Brittle and colorful autumn leaves  
So familiar from life and poetry but  
even dearer now because grandmother  
is gone The ash-heap of her existence  
glows Even makes snow melt when  
autumn is over In spring it rises  
as grass a flower the sun  
the sweet ache of swelling  
when the earth moves bones and you  
sing with a mocking mouth: grandmother  
has died into life

(1989) *Translated by J. Takvet and H. L. Hix*

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I AM CONCRETE LIKE A COMB'S TOOTH THAT KILLS

lice I am merciful and I take everything  
together to a stove where fire glows  
One needs to reserve firewood like death  
In the stable I assure a horse it will not be taken  
to a fox ranch I feed it hay from my hand  
It must be winter I infer it from rosy feet as  
I run glowing through snow to the house

Where is eternity Where love While it is necessary  
to kill lice and horses every last one

(1993) *Translated by J. Takvet and H. L. Hix*

THE SOUL SOMETIMES GASPS IN THE BREAST

It does not want to fly to the air in these  
explosive times It grips the ribs like bars  
But then it comes murmuring Houses tremble  
in fear Because everything happens inside  
not outside

(1993) *Translated by J. Takvet and H. L. Hix*

THE LAST WORD THE LAST THE LAST THE ONLY  
possible I will be pushed to the stove on a cabbage  
leaf like a scone The eyes of the coals  
glow Soon the protective crust will taste good  
I will be broken and not feel pain  
I will be eaten and it is bread  
I dream of marigolds and the spring from which  
I drank in childhood

[1997] *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

YES STILL THE SENSE THAT THOSE RARE  
soulbirds who really hear and know  
touch as well as flight  
must be sheltered from night's harshness  
All souls suffer a body Sadness limits  
them no less than the soulless who  
always distinguish cause from ef-  
fect. They preach fundamentals  
the four compass points while from the soulbirds  
feather after feather falls in flight  
until finally the air cannot carry them

[1998] *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

## Jüri Talvet

### ON LOSING A PASSPORT

202

The passport lost — long live liberty!  
A frown fell from your face,  
the stamp's stern shield suddenly gave way,  
and having shrugged from your shoulders twenty years  
and the border guard's careful watch,  
you plunged into liberty. Liberty!  
No address drew you back,  
no signature, no Ariadnian thread of the future,  
not even the myth with the help of which  
you prudently tried to multiply yourself.  
Rain and sleet chip at you,  
foreign hands crush. Your form  
fragments under trampling feet.  
(Soon you yourself will feel the weight of history's feet.)  
Liberty! Into the airspace where you were  
a fresh snowflake floats, and briefly pauses.

(1990) *Translated by the author and H.L.Hix*

### FULFILMENT

You creep quite close under my chin,  
nest there — *nowhere else is it warmer* —  
there is your Milky Way.  
You have shared yourself,  
have given birth, been torn in labor.  
*Do you remember those small,  
barely discernible paths  
that stretch farther than your own?*  
You have remained. I do not think  
of those blood-colored flowers you lavish on me,  
never refusing, from the garden of your nights and days.

Of course you are always open to error — free —,  
since around us souls hover in the wind of abjection.  
The gold of beginnings is released inside you  
and fulfilled under my chin, on your Milky Way.

(1990) *Translated by the author and H.L.Hix*

## 21st BALTIC ELEGY

To Ivar Ivask, cherished friend, who was born 17 December 1927 in Riga, grew up and studied in Riga, Rõngu, and Marburg, where he met his faithful lifelong partner the Latvian poetess Astrid Hartmanis (whose name means “asters” in Estonian), was professor of literature in the USA and for 24 years Editor of *Books Abroad/World Literature Today* at the University of Oklahoma, founded the international Neustadt Literary Prize and the Puterbaugh series of symposia celebrating modern literature in Spanish and French, brought Baltic literatures for the first time into world evaluation, published eight books of poetry in Estonian, drew pictures and travelled tirelessly, wrote in English, in Ballycotton, Ireland, the major part of his *Baltic Elegies*, a cycle of poems (now translated into numerous languages) about the history, destiny, and aspirations to freedom of the Baltic countries, and on 23 September 1992, having recently moved from Oklahoma to Fountainstown, Ireland, left the living world.

Oklahoma fell silent, the Baltic froze.  
From Kafka's offices came glassy gentlemen.  
The narrowing lappets of your Irish coat closed around you.

You blue-eyed childlike festinator to the future,  
Ivar.

Now you are yourself the well that draws up pails of clarity,  
expands, timidly draws back, spreads out its shoots,  
nourishes sensitive branches, beams of light.

Then absorbing emptiness. Then the shattered veranda.  
The dazzling light of the shroud, the only voice  
your aunt's clock ticking into the present, the bloodstone ring  
of your mother who died young, the unnamed island of your father.

You blue-eyed childlike festinator to the future,  
Ivar.

What islands had you not visited?  
Islands of poetry in the nervous swirls of Aeolus,  
with dangerously heavy word plains behind.  
The island of asters light in the lap of the warm Mediterranean.  
But on Naxos you, archer, were afraid of your animal,  
darkness. The sun enticed you, Icarus,

and banished you finally from the rough forests of Finland.  
You built your pyramids of air rather than blood.

Did you fear blood? Of course you did  
(like that other poet of pain and blood  
whose trembling heart in 1936 under olive trees  
was carried to its death by gloved hands).

You blue-eyed childlike festinator to the future,  
Ivar.

Your element was air, you, *hijo del aire*,  
the fine lines of your pencil started from the annual ring,  
then disappeared on the white sheet  
into imagination's crown, like your home begun on the light veranda,  
carved by your father, the dark chimneyless hut of Rõngu,  
from warm chestnuts on the road to school in Riga, the reticent softness  
of your mother's brown eyes, of woman's fingers, of Latvian asters,  
became unnamed love, transparency risen from the sea,  
Baltic amber through which only the beautiful face  
of the world, God's island, can be seen.

You blue-eyed childlike festinator to the future,  
Ivar.

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There was no time to see you again, to visit  
was impossible, but you were already in me,  
you, double archer, brother beyond the senseless barbed wire between us.  
When my father died, you said now, only now  
you have yourself become father  
(having left, in some sense, once again).

But truly your children were poems,  
drawings, paper children that now must confirm  
their father after the manner of poetry,  
as holders of blood, bone, and light  
before the face of the highest Father, but you  
brush off the dust of time, the coat of impatience  
and naked, pure, bold, recede already  
into our common earth.

You blue-eyed childlike festinator to the future,  
Ivar.

You waited until the cockcrow of liberty  
that you, too, had grown in your heart's homeland.  
But in vain you tried to return to Liberty Square,  
when strangers took your poems written in a language  
strange to them, and Tallinn tilted its towers toward you.

By then you had already returned, been crowned with a wreath,  
according to good song festival custom, been lifted awhile  
onto shoulders when you, Icarus of free flight,  
archer unknowingly sending your arrows,  
stealthily slipped from the fingers.

Too indefinable suddenly was your amber honey,  
Mediterranean salt, Irish coat tasted by knobby mannequins  
that on the borders eagerly lifted posts out of stones  
only to drive them home again, while you, boundlessly foreign to boundaries,  
planted aster and tulip  
and forgave, as you always had forgiven.  
Your fate was to bewitch amalgams  
from a flying island unattainable to Munch's fibrous palpi.

You blue-eyed childlike festinator to the future,  
Ivar.

When they expected from you a sharp biting whistle  
you answered with homely birch whisks  
that healed scars. When they expected piles of wise paper  
you sent them off generously, distributed kindly,  
to make that much freer your heart's departure.  
You hastened from one continent to another, hurried  
from one island to another, formed a bridge to homelands  
waiting in the distant future.  
The burden grew greater. When you reached the bottom,  
the focus of your sharp glance grew double.  
(The double Vienna, the two-branched day.)  
The single-story homes were unprepared for your visits.

Finally you grew tired, and without warning  
simply stepped aside, went to rest in the Irish fog.

You blue-eyed childlike festinator to the future,  
Ivar.

Asters burning tirelessly accompanied you along the road.  
Invisibly, asters will continue to cast light on your amber grave.

(1997) *Translated by the author and H.L.Hix*

## **BELIEVE WHAT SIGNS YOU LIKE**

No matter that your ancestors  
spoke another tongue,  
a tongue that now no one knows.  
A shield wrought with words  
defends only during peacetime.  
In wartime, the time of love,

you spoke to me in the oldest tongue,  
darker than your dark hair,  
deeper than the stammering words  
of your ancestors, more alive  
than the blood of your red lips,  
defying with your tongue  
the dividing lines of the word,  
fearlessly smuggling onto my tongue  
a taste greener than grass,  
more like the sea  
than the sea itself.

(1997) *Translated by the author and H.L.Hix*

## MEMORIES FROM LEIDEN

### 1. A Lowland Meditation

Did I have to visit the softly lapping  
canal water of Herengracht  
to learn that the Dutch are all cut out  
of cheese that is called Dutch Bread?

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Did I have to err (so that it was not  
an error), to lose you, to sleep dreamlessly  
like a dutiful corpse, in order  
to recognize you again, to love you?

Yesterday I heard:  
*women's language is a simultaneous  
translation between the language  
and the body*

Oh, who fooled them, who invented  
such an awful lie!  
Dutch bread would not dash past  
on bikes like swift silent gusts  
(even if it were to become genuine rye bread),  
and long ago my flesh would have become tame black earth,  
defeated, under somebody's — anyone's — feet,  
and I would not have written this poem,  
had not the simultaneous translation of which you speak,  
Ms. rational professor, proceeded not, as you claim,  
from body to language, language to body, body to language,  
but (to translate into a simpler,  
more lowland, earthier language),  
from body to body, body to body, body to body.

(2001) *Translated by the author and H.L.Hix*

## Mari Vallisoo

### **A GRAY ROPE IN OUR HOUSE**

Who knows where it came from,  
it visited several houses,  
entering quite a few backyards.  
It made a tapping sound  
at our door.  
A muted voice like a prayer or a demand.

    We were silent.  
    It was a stranger.  
    Until a child left a door open.  
    It rolled into the room,  
    long like a snake.  
    We cannot get rid of it now.

Sometimes it coils,  
sometimes puts its head  
on the white bedpillow.  
Then we quarrel  
and sulk,  
as if it were the best sin,  
    and move furniture around in the room  
    or bring some new chair  
    completely unknown  
    or familiar.  
    It doesn't care either way.  
It just enjoys itself in the bosom  
and on the floor  
and we stumble over it all the time.  
The children ignore it.  
For now.

(1979) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

## DEAR DOGS

Those who fed me  
and those who sheltered me,  
those who left me without loving care.  
Then I secretly let into the room  
dogs whom I loved.  
Loafing and hairy street mongrels,  
this one has a wounded tail,  
that one a paw.  
None of them were sane,  
half of them scarred,  
half of them rabid.  
They came and gave me their diseases,  
they tore to pieces  
the upholstery,  
marked the walls with their widdle,  
later bit a friend in the leg.

Those who fed me  
and those who sheltered me,  
came home and found:  
our high living all  
broken.

The threshold bloody.  
They took off their warm slippers,  
took in their hands long daggers,  
the dogs were scared, they hid,  
who knows where on earth.

(1979) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

## POTATOES

Where were you? Your clothes  
are sooty, and you know  
the washer is broken!

I came through middle ages,  
there in fires  
I roasted some potatoes.  
Try one. A witch  
sent a letter. Where  
is it now, that letter?  
Maybe I lost it.

Ah how hot they are!  
Let them cool down a little.

(1983) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

## SPRING TIME

Birches smell on the hills.  
One would like to bring them inside.  
Then serious rooms  
would have at last some spring in them.

Let's go together, sisters and brothers,  
out the door and the gate!  
Let's all take along  
a sharp saw, too.

Oh, that brother of mine is still too little.  
I'm a big girl, I'll go without a brother.

We'll let the treetops grow.  
So that birds can fly over them.

(1983) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

## THE INVALID

I felt a draft in my chest  
and stayed in the sickbed.

I was given medicines,  
some sages were brought to cure me.

This one didn't understand, that didn't know,  
the third said: it's too late.

From a deep forest a witch arrived  
at our house late at night.

Grey hair hanging loose,  
she cast her spells as best she could.  
By dawn she had turned  
my sick body into a black bird.  
Now it perches downtown  
on a grey statue.

But my soul wanders through the world  
as a spotted dog.

(1983) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

## GOLDEN

Oh, it's dark. Where's the light?  
Look there it flickers.  
So high my hand cannot reach it.

And where now  
is my son? He doesn't  
exist yet? Sobbing  
already reached my ears,  
his bright sword  
stroke already  
and his leather belt  
tightened.

Come!

Come now.  
Descend to my members, shower of gold.

(1986) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

## WITH THE WIND

210

Pärtel my son lay your head down  
after the hot long day's work  
Grass becomes quiet rye field grows silent  
right now eternity begins and  
we will remain  
You sleep but  
I watch you I will not leave  
Softly a breeze whispers  
gets stronger  
a storm  
rises pushes  
centuries apart  
Grass struggles presses itself against the earth  
you too cling to the earth if you can  
No one counts lives anymore  
They are numberless  
All ages are full  
of my wind-faced sons

(2000) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

## HEAVEN OR EARTH

no human eye  
can tell the difference any more

Hail comes down by gusts  
against the face  
In this way I love vice  
Stormy wind is my favorite  
the weather I would like to live in  
Sometimes  
running girls pass by  
Rahel  
one shouts Come with us  
No  
I don't hear I make a face  
as if not

(2000) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

### **HEROES TO EACH OTHER**

Where have you come from? Where are you going?  
Oh, just hurrying  
to a heroic deed.  
Passing by – a man was there on a rock,  
bound, a bird  
annoyed him.  
I unbound him from the rock.  
And yourself? What's on your mind?

211

With a kid over the sea  
I have to settle accounts.  
On my way I visited some corners  
of the world – ports, an island  
where a girl was ruined.  
No more time to speak.

(2000) *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L.Hix*

### **THE CHILD'S LIFE**

Where's your brother?  
Why're you alone in the yard?  
Where's your sister – her apron and braid?

The brother grew up  
He is gone  
The sister had no room in the world  
You see yourself how small the yard

A friend is  
across the road

What does your mother do?  
Ah mother Oh she  
fights there  
with a nine-headed dragon  
Meanwhile the soup boils

What does your father do?  
I don't know his face  
he works and it's enough  
if once in a while he has time  
to wipe sweat  
from his forehead with his sleeve

[1999] *Translated by J. Talvet and H.L. Hix*

## Hasso Krull

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### JEWS

Well, none of you knows what to do next.  
Beside sunflowers lumpy work boots  
and forms of lying bodies;  
a reflection, a dream, an immortal fragment...  
In the way friendly beauty forgot them at your feet.  
And nights, dark as skin...  
Slowly, slowly,  
barely dragging the coat's tails behind.

You see, then, light is no longer as green as before.  
The way it was in "old manuscripts"...  
What to say, then; the boots' shadows in the shape of the moon,  
their skin alive, everything blooms in a friendly way  
at this graveyard. Drop after drop.  
A thin, thin machine shaft.  
Like a new eye that sees things,  
like those glowing brightly, alive and lost,  
and they cannot return.

(1993) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

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### MODERN DISCOURSE

In old times people had a clear and determined worldview.  
They didn't try to invent bicycles again,  
because Buddha already had spoken.  
And Christ and Mohammed and Aristotle.  
Already Confucius had instructed everyone  
to turn the left cheek.  
Children drank milk, grew like plants,  
a housewife cooked in the kitchen.  
The law of the strong reigned.  
Nobody had to hurry anywhere, there was no rush

or noise of machines,  
there was vodka, there was temperance.  
Already Hegel said.  
Already Goethe said.  
The bigger could not harm the smaller.  
The fight was man against man and woman.  
Everyone must meditate daily,  
let's say five minutes.  
In old times they lived with nature, lived in harmony,  
everything was as it should be.  
Oh times, oh habits, oh universality!  
Oh naturalness!  
Only Christ was ethical.  
If only one could return those times for a while,  
then even to work in a factory would be acceptable.

(1993) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

## **PINE-MATTERS**

*A pine is very beautiful.* (Paavo Haavikko)

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1.

Now you see, this pine has been nicely folded  
and lives above the head.  
It has a translated servant inside.  
It runs exactly towards an average distance between  
my eyes, and something has gone wrong,  
I shall correct it at once.  
Now there are people among us who have different faces than we do.  
For instance old people. And their friends.  
The pine is characterized this time by a very long hair ribbon  
and a lash on its back,  
an English medal on its asshole.

2.

A pine has been built in such a way that beside it  
there cannot be another pine.  
In fact, there is, but farther. Then  
one must take between two fingers one's thinnest hair.  
Horses are thankful to you.  
Their eyes are like a night-blooming cereus.  
It trickles in from the enormous cracks on the head  
lights a cigarette dress attention you short one.  
In this sense a pine is universal, but its

structure isn't any tree-diagram but  
a monastery's library,  
old Jorge Luis Buñuel.

3.

We two came advancing in a long corridor.  
That was a Sumerian schoolteacher.  
In his ears there were lizards.  
We smiled.  
He promised that he would give us a bitter lesson, enlightening  
vestal virgins.  
We paid close attention to it.  
What did he say that we wouldn't say.  
On both sides of the road there are identical bushes.  
Who the devil planted them here, only this pine  
knows.

(1993) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

## Triin Soomets

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### BEHIND THE WINDOW EVERY DAY THE SAME PAINTING:

golden chamomiles in the middle of a lake  
sway while they wait for evening.  
the air is bright with birds' wings.  
in the sky a lone sail flies.  
the air is bright with birds' wings  
and on the earth are tinkling stalks broken as if  
waiting for a resurrection every day the same:  
a forty-year-old teacher of Estonian  
rides in a bus his face to the window  
chamomiles glide past  
the teacher lights a cigarette and crosses his legs,  
beyond the window there is wind.

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(1990) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

### A GYNECOLOGIST IN A NARROW DRESS COMES TAPPING

looks with her green eyes at my flowery veil  
her suntanned cheeks glitter like a metal  
in an endless corridor I recede covering with my hands  
dull white skin green walls  
straight to a dead end at a stool  
she puts her foot victoriously on my chest  
tearing bracelets breaking my hand  
until with a clatter — — —  
well I am I am 25000 times guilty  
write it down finally  
cry it out finally  
into the enduring memory of pioneers.

(1990) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

ON THE WHOLE — ALL THE SAME.

We have wandered, feigning fatigue  
we have groaned in blue grass  
under tall trees,  
the flames of sunset  
have not hurt us, some  
words seem still to have meaning.  
I know more about dreams than  
life, Calderón promised  
to bring blue sugar for our coffee break  
on Tuesday. I will wait for you  
in front of the store in the noon sun,  
the last before the equinox, yes  
only one day is left before the battle,  
it should be visible also from here how burning

— — — —  
whispering someone's soul pledges,  
leaving page 236:  
don't worry about the exam,  
love is never unnatural,  
the souls of both will ascend to the heavens.

(1990) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

OVER THE ROOFS OF TÄHTVERE A CERTAIN

Eduard V fled abroad  
then there was a revolution  
now no one would do the same  
today noses leave one after another  
buses like red tapeworms  
and jolted cross the railway.  
the train has not yet arrived.  
wild chamomile sways its head  
and a railway crossing guard watches buttons.  
the town disappears behind the road  
and diminishes into a pearl in the field.  
I came across it even earlier.  
it is good to arrive when only you yourself  
are guilty of the uneasiness  
of a debtor before the devil knows who  
reading through the night wandering along the river  
you get rid of it you are satisfied  
even without fleeing

(1990) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

I PLAYED WITH YOUR BODY

when other paths had ascended to the heavens  
when the rest of the shadows were naked  
I dressed and made myself up

— — —

winds blew over  
trumpets sounded  
a musician drank in the corner  
of a big house, indeed:  
the definition of a man  
the play as a model

come with me to Toledo

(1999) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

RAIN, RAIN FALLS INTO ME.

All my glasses have flown into pieces.

Stars glitter on my stripped heart,  
a bird makes my glance start.

This is my song:

when I want to be I cease to be,

my balance is a passer-by in a stray thought, in the whim of an adolescent.

My support is empty, the glass reflects stars, but full of hidden meaning.

When I speak, speed and distance smile: agreed.

(1999) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*

I WOULD GIVE YOU MY HEART, BUT I CAN'T FIND

anywhere even the scent of its buttercups,

I have lost it somewhere, where one wanders

under golden trees in dark rain with eyelids damp.

I would give you a night, but I can't find

the star whose rising would declare the end of the day,

in the morning you'll have to keep your lips on mine,

take me in the middle of a sunny day.

I would give you myself, but I can't find

anywhere even a footprint sunk in the sand,

you'll have to catch winds and follow shadows

unheard-lightly.

(1999) *Translated by J. Talvet and H. L. Hix*