Deported Women by András Mezei

Translated from the Hungarian & edited by

Thomas Ország-Land (October 2017)

Köszegi Brewery, Hungary

András Mezei (1930-2008), a major Jewish-Hungarian poet, was a child survivor of the Holocaust and a dominant force in the post-Communist reconstruction of his country following the collapse of Soviet domination a quarter century ago. His work is conspicuously being ignored by the servile Hungarian literary establishment to suit the taste of the current Hungarian government. It is, however, attracting great interest in English translation. His last, posthumous collection was *Christmas in Auschwitz* (Trans. Thomas Land, Smokestack Books, England, 2010).

Deported Women

Her sagging, loosened, soiled, body,

repellent odour and confusions

describe her journey of abuse . . .

The air is foul. I breathe through the mouth.

I am a slave at the ramp of the brewery,

assigned with my crew to unload this train

of brutalized, semi-conscious women,

survivors of a trek to the Reich,

returned at last to the land of their birth,

back home to Hungary in sealed cattle-trucks

past grieving, fear and even awareness . . .

So slight a person might have been lighter.

I've grabbed her legs beneath the knees while

my partner holds her by the armpits.

Her skin is damp with diarrhea.

Her body slipping from our grip.

Discreetly, even the Arrow-Cross thugs

retreat on the ramp that serves the brewery . . .

Remember that brewery? Right here, in Köszeg.

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THOMAS ORSZÁG-LAND is a poet and award-winning foreign correspondent who writes for *New English Review* on Europe and the Middle East. His last book was *[Reading for Rush Hour: A Pamphlet in Praise of Passion](#)* (Snakeskin, 2016), both in England. His work appears also in current issues of *Acumen, Standpoint* and *The Transnational.*

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