

# The Knives of Jerusalem

by Thomas Ország-Land (April 2016)

1.

## WAR WOUND

Do your best, mate.

I'll survive anything

vile – save death.

And that can wait.

2.

## APRIL WINDS

Ephemeral lives, and... immortal words. A poet once sang  
before his murder: *A barefooted blast of wind sprints past  
but treads on broken glass and screaming hops away –*

*Oh, April, with yearning buds beneath a bursting sky!...\**

The singer is gone with the past. The words have taken root.

And every year, as his song for spring returns, such bloodied,

small April winds hop along the dusty roads across

our fleeting, our only time and space – the first and the last.

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\*Miklós Radnóti, *Calendar* (1941)

3.

**WEATHER REPORT**

I know the icy gale that blows  
its kiss inside my warmest clothes  
beneath a howling moon.  
But this wind whistles my tune.

4.

**CITY OF KINGS**

While there's still time to sing and laugh  
I shall attempt this epitaph.  
*He was a jester and a king,*  
*and at his best he was much more:*  
*a child, enjoying everything.*

5.

### **THE PRESS CLUB**

You're here to feed your pension and tension.

I'm chasing a soaring bird – the truth.

We are not even friendly rivals.

I covet neither your fancy title  
nor your impressive, official hat.

I am a writer. I couldn't be more  
than that – though I could be, I could be, less.

6.

### **GIANTS**

A Pesach egg, quick, on the treble,  
rolls down the lawn pursued by trouble:

all teeth, all paws, all fur – a reckless  
pack of puppies for a peck.

They nearly knock down as they pass

two tiny giants in the grass.

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✘ **THOMAS ORSZÁG-LAND** is a poet and award-winning foreign correspondent who writes for *New English Review* from Europe and the Middle East. His last book was *Survivors: Hungarian Jewish Poets of the Holocaust* (Smokestack/England, 2014), and his last E-chapbook, [here](#).

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