

BEYOND THE CORDONS
SELECTED POEMS

Gábor Schein





BEYOND THE CORDONS

SELECTED POEMS

BEYOND THE CORDONS

SELECTED POEMS

Gábor Schein

Translated from the Hungarian
by Otilie Mulzet & Erika Mihálycsa



Contra Mundum Press New York · London · Melbourne

This is a translation of selected poems from *Üveghal* [Glass Fish] (Magvető Kiadó, 2001); *Panaszénekek* [Songs of Complaint] (Jelenkor Kiadó, 2005); *Éjszaka, utazás* [Night, Travel] (Kalligram Kiadó, 2011); and *Üdvözet a kontinens belsejéből* [Greetings from the Interior of the Continent] (Jelenkor Kiadó, 2017). The poems “novemberi,” “a betűk alól is,” “Éjszakai utazás,” “A sziget süllyedése,” and “Ajándék a halálnak” were originally published in *Élet és irodalom*. “Por,” “Harmadnapja egyfolytában,” and “Erdők éjszakája” were originally published in *Jelenkor: irodalmi és művészeti folyóirat*.

All poems © 2024 Gábor Schein. English translations © 2024 Erika Mihálycsa & © 2024 Ottilie Mulzet.

First Contra Mundum Press edition 2024.

All Rights Reserved under International & Pan-American Copyright Conventions.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Library of Congress
Cataloguing-in-Publication
Data

Schein, Gábor, 1969-
Beyond the Cordons /
Gábor Schein

—1st Contra Mundum Press
Edition

188 pp., 5 × 8 in.

ISBN 9781940625713

- I. Schein, Gábor.
- II. Title.
- III. Mihálycsa, Erika,
& Mulzet, Ottilie.
- IV. Translators.

2024944979

Otilie Mulzet would like to extend her profound gratitude to the Hungarian Translators' House in Balatonfüred, Hungary, where some of these poems were first translated, as well as Adéla Procházková and the estate of Emila Medková for the kind permission to use her photograph *Explosion* (1959).

CONTENTS

1	Beyond the Cordons
5	Night Journey
9	Captain Cornelius's Letter ...
13	Note on the Back of a Map
16	Preparation for the Crows' Feast
17	Eyes Turned Inside Out
21	Atropos's Scissors
24	Your Sirens
26	With Silent Flight
28	The Street's Inlet
30	Canvases of Time
32	Above the Gravel Path
34	In Lightning's Flare
38	After the Iron Age
40	Farewell, Russian Style
42	Margin
45	To My Dead
47	Pebble
51	Ghost Homeland
55	Preparations for a City
60	Plunge
64	Diagrams in the River
65	Hungary, Eternal Ellipsis
67	Dawn Light
69	The Taste of Salt
74	Invisible War
76	November
77	Gravel and Reeds

79	Offering to Death
82	From Beneath the Letters
83	Third Day Unceasingly
86	The Star of Time
87	Sinking Island
89	Dust
91	Night of Forests
93	Against Phantoms
95	It Will Shine
97	Amount of Earth
102	Summer Rain, Transparent Borders
109	In the Jewish Cemetery in Worms
111	Double Inundations
113	The Color of Pain
114	The Cardinal Directions
117	Under the Bat's Wing
119	Greetings from the Interior of the Continent
121	Trench
123	Come Back
126	Fear
127	Beyond the Open Window
129	Sheath
131	New Century
133	Near
135	Light of Night-Time
137	Return of the Letters
140	Love, Sail, Time
142	Rending
156	Previous Publications
158	Biographies

GÁBOR SCHEIN · BEYOND THE CORDONS

BEYOND THE CORDONS

There were corners, blockaded squares, where, for days after the routed demonstration,
the biting smell of teargas was palpable. If the burnt-out car wrecks
and ripped-up cobblestones had been removed, still, the missing pavement
let no one forget: the city center was a zone of uncertainty.

Evening belonged to the sirens, arsonists' chants —
the squares were traps, the streets borders, trajectories of escape shut down
in a commander's head: after so many years of peace, finally able to wage war.

*

No matter where one turned, there were bars, cordons. The buildings'
stoic grey arrived from farther away than moonlight; the city spoke
of new wrath in the dead language of ornamental statuary: Poseidon is the chief god here,
in the continent's centre, where in narrow rented rooms people bargain

for stolen love. The naked stone bodies turned towards each other, like computer screens left on by mistake: the thick poppyseed of visual static sprinkled onto them, as down below, far from every sea, wrath gathered up legions of children.

*

You write the story of your body with two hands that do not know each other, two voices summon the unknown within you. Gather up the distinctions. Place the blossoming bouquet of lies, explanations, and objections onto your grave, tend your grave, clear away the beliefs falling onto it like autumn foliage. Do not look at the everyday with everyday eyes. The simplest questions are the ones you don't ask, and if someone screams into your ear, ignore them till you have run out of time.

*

In peacetime, the city centre covers its self-hatred with decorative flagstones, flower-boxes, ordered transportation; decommissioned streetcars, carrying the scent of humans from the ever more terrifying outer districts, are led to its terminal caverns. Life here was

never anything else than the art of the too-slow massacre. Going along the cordons,
now at last the alert mind can play with dreams of public hangings, schizophrenic love
and suchlike, and believe, intoxicated, that it is engaging in politics.

*

Sometimes it is necessary to wage war. After all, deep within, relations were never
peaceful. A single person is too narrow a space for so many wants and desires.
He who has no eyes and ears, always cheerful in others' presence, with owlish eyes,
walking with a millstone around his neck, who, for simplicity's sake, calls himself "I."
None of them inhabit this world. All betray themselves.
Their state is emergency, and yet they may delight in their own defeat.
The one speaking here decrees against them in vain.

*

What is my problem? Someone who shares my birthday, who's known me
at least twenty years, asked: Closing time? Hopelessness? Boredom?

And looked at me, as if explanations meant something. In exchange, I told a story about a grey heron I once saw in a seaside city; it stood every morning on the roof of a red Peugeot in the parking lot, waiting for fish to be thrown from the upper floor of the house opposite. Every morning, this selfsame, unlikely presence exposed to the day. Take this heron as a comparison, I said. For whatever you want.

*

If one day you leave, throw no coins over your shoulder. Grow the ice within yourself, as if sitting, eyes closed, on the other side of the moon; practice the art of slow murder. You were never anything else but the astronaut of your feelings. Your spaceship is a piece of blank paper. Do not pity those below displaying their scars after battle, and who, never conquering hardship, dream of Sundays fragrant with food. Take nothing from here, do not believe the rivers, the oceans. You can escape only upwards. It is not worthwhile to recollect upon the Earth.

NIGHT JOURNEY

You write with two kinds of ink. One dries instantly: you can touch it, read it. The other is invisible, like this city hidden beneath recurring lamplights and smells, where you recklessly return, invisible like the woman who awakens, sleeping unseen by your side. What is invisible bursts abruptly from your senses, flowing everywhere before you finish writing one sentence. What is visible follows blindly the light-filled face. Write with eyes closed, as if you still had time.

The way of passion is dark. It's like the journey on a night train which you do not take to arrive at another city, although this is precisely your goal. Whoever boards a night train is building, unawares, a palace for the moon, is crossing the lake-bottom's salt-lit waste, his own desolate regions, weighing the possible and impossible, and only

the lights flickering through the window, the unread station names
signal that even unstirring, he is on his way somewhere.

In each instant, journeying cuts up space along a different line. Each place
is a station, threshold, entrance. But you are bound somewhere
with no threshold or entrance, where one can't stop, can't rest.
This is all you know for now. It will be the place of your belated birth,
where comparisons perish. You are preparing for another body that travels
along with you, as inseparable from you as the two sides of a leaf,
a mirror's transparent and silvered side.

Do not speak of temptation. The daytime fields have moved
to the mirrors' blind side: nowhere to see your reflection, and a view of faces,
a fiftyish man and a young blond woman, makes you fall briefly asleep.
You sit on a rocky beach, dark basalt columns towering above:
the water and columns arrayed not at your feet but above you,

multi-story, undulating. Nothing to be done: it's about to come crashing down.
Still, you tie your shoelaces and scamper like a madman toward the dark cliff wall.

You live in many bodies at once. Can thread, like pearls, the sequence of minutes
with no past or future, drink the milk of night until you choke,
but even if you travel far, you return: time measures itself
in your left-behind body. Minutes call for hours, hours for days,
days for years, as if you were tearing out basted stitches, arms reaching
into empty space, opening thighs, head turning, all breaking away from the torso:
the nights testify against you, your steps around the house a thief's traces.

If there were a brush to paint your face, it should paint you blind.
For long now you have seen with your body. The eye dwells there and in the eye,
desire calls you to life and death, to appear and vanish at once, splitting apart
your body: in vain women's scents, dew-like, alight on your skin,
you must be born from yourself. Draw your strength from the earth. If no one

can be nourished by two placentas, then let none nourish you, be your own desire,
the earth that lets you in like a long-awaited lover.

The city where you return at dawn does not know the language of desire, of bliss,
of things that change or flee, that shimmer disappearing. And yet
you walk into the broad, palace-lined square like one come to recommence his time.
How many dogged lies! For decades, attempts to tame imperial grandeur
have failed here. Let not the triumphal arch erected for the lunatic procession
admonish you to peace. Your war is only just beginning.
May your existence be pure trust and longing: in readiness, persevere!

CAPTAIN CORNELIUS'S LETTER FROM PANNONIA TO BURRUS,
TO THE COLONIAL OFFICE IN ROME

For you, a gently sloping, friendly country; to me, a land
of sluggish, nondescript winters, its climate unwholesome.
Only the thick wines offer consolation to the one who,
fed up with the ill-humored nepotism of governance
and, past his prime, realizes the odd pasquinade
is all his talent can yield.

And yet he goes on, hoping yet for autumn love, a bankruptcy
trusteeship, finding the pointlessness, here,
of making any change ever harder to bear.
Even though dying here in peacetime is no easier
than in any other province, and a reliable technique
of drainage was implemented over the centuries,

still, this frosty bog fringe was only livable
after the forgotten wars when they let
everything rot for a while, and the hyperactive ignoramuses
weren't bringing charges of mass murder,
imprisonment. Of course, all the wars were lost.
But not because they were unlucky.

They lost deliberately, and so they hoped
to cobble eternal forgiveness for themselves:
even today, they are entranced by funeral
marches and the ponderous fantasies of reburials,
their style, a mere parody, grows truly alarming.
So we took back this province. I find the fertile

heritage of local customs enchanting. I like
the colors of the houses, it reminds one of the closeness

of earth: dull browns and yellows succeed each
other, now and again a patch of mauve,
but the demands of grey are never resisted. No
attempt is made to fix the damages of time.

And yet, my good Burrus, what is this but deceit, ominous
deceit, for the land is theirs, it is their gods who lie
buried in the ground and whose names they no longer fear
to invoke. We should resign ourselves; we cannot correct
the course of time! All our spoils, apart from a few flocks
of sheep, is yet another unintelligible tongue, into which

it was a waste of time to translate Plato. Luckily
they are always the first to be scared off by blood.
And although after yesterday's assault, we may
expect more, for the moment all is quiet in this redundant

province. Let us hope the fatal infection will not spread from here. I am tormented by sinister premonitions.

Translated by Erika Mihálycsa

NOTE ON THE BACK OF A MAP

In memoriam Gizella Hervay

The house search lasted until dawn. Osip was arrested,
the warrant signed by Yagoda. Less than four years later,
Yagoda himself will be an NKVD prisoner, murdered first. Osip resided
in the Butyrka prison then. At night, when they transferred him
to the labor camp near Vladivostok, he was freezing,
he died there in December in unknown circumstances.
From there he will write: "In vain is poetry esteemed only in Russia.
There is no other country in the world where a person is murdered
because of it." In 1934, proceedings were halted against him,
thanks to his friends' interventions, but still not declared innocent,
he was sent into exile to Cherdyn. On the first night
he threw himself out of the too-low hospital window,
only breaking his collarbone, bruising his face.

He was obsessed by the idea they would come for him
at the designated time, carry out the secret
judgement. You were born the next day,
this too was a judgement. What a shame we cannot remember
tomorrow! “Here I lie, my face buried in death,
and I don’t know why the death of tomorrow would be any different
than the death of today” — you wrote, and you were not wrong, because
when Osip lay beneath the hospital window, face bleeding,
collarbone broken, at the bottom of a freezing pit, like someone
who could count to three or four before the explosion, and
time became creased within him. So what street is this? —
he asked later, pointing at the map. It’s your street,
answered a woman’s voice. You see, there’s nothing straight within it,
the whole thing is crooked. And Osip laughed as loudly
as he could. We should exchange heads, he said,
and you laughed too, you laughed until the Bucharest earthquake
that killed Kobak in 1977. But until then, the rains of eastern Europe

soaked many a poor soul through and through. Filth fell
from their mouths, rusty nails from their hair, brass buttons
of interchangeable faiths snapped off; the lipstick stains
of evenings past their warranty can never be erased.
History made its bed for underground love-making.
On that day when you stood in the draught of death, I became a man
according to the laws. Osip lives here with me now,
in a celestial sublet, you whispered. You both sit on the ladder's steps,
dangling your legs, look to see what you can see, listen to the silence
grazing below, steal the cowbells, giggle at everything
like schoolchildren. I saw how the ladder nearly broke
under Osip. The brew of the sky rumbled.
Since then, I walk the unknown streets like a thief. My brain
grinds out a line of poetry; you and Osip hang before me
from the last rooftops, like bats on the tips of eyelashes.

PREPARATION FOR THE CROWS' FEAST

We die here in a row, like little billy-goats.
Who praise the claw, hard labor, lying words,
happy to embrace the rosy flesh
beneath the spider-woven blanket. We are not silent

about the great secret. We don't glide for too long on time's crest.
After forty, a person's already a graveyard.
Gazing into the heavy rain, umbrella-covered faces,
we fancy grabbing some meat.

So we, like idiots, prepare for the crows' feast.
There will be weeping, cawing. If the victor marches by,
body bound to the cart, we might even laugh.
The great scam has been successful. We just don't know for whom.

EYES TURNED INSIDE OUT

Bigoted revenge cobbled together its Cæsar once more. Indeed, nothing new under the sun. Instead of the seven deadly sins, the silent demonstrators held onto gloom the longest, and putting down their signs demanding a state of rights, sneaked off, defeated, not daring to stir in the hostile crowd. They never did regain their good companion, anger. Still, as of old, they keep laughing at themselves when among friends. The one with the loudest whinny is an actor, recently diagnosed with lung cancer.

17

Open a book, point at a word! Try to combine its letters into meaningful units. Consensus dictates what is meaningful. Come to terms with yourself. Negotiate. Or gaze at the trams in the September sun. The city has its moving mirrors carried around, the statues' eyes, the same after two hundred years, don't grow old: life in the mirror is youth's disease. But you want to be cured. Cured of the age, unwilling to see how private and political pathologies overlap.

You carry two worlds within. Take long walks at night. You are like a ghost ship that keeps out of ports, though longing to berth, for one can only drop anchor in another's failings. Inside, you sail dark waters beneath dark skies. But your outward motivations are all the more shining. You're ready to fight where wars are merely suspended and where symbols, raving metaphors, murder without cease. Do so — be upright on the outside, at least. But don't think this is a way to your self.

One turns against one's self in shame and violent self-hatred when inner expectations cannot be fulfilled; self-respect vanishes. Words spoken at a tram stop by a poet gone silent for the past twenty years, the answer a comradely nod. Still, let's see what remains. It's raining, soon autumn will be here. Could our password be thumos? So that, shedding all wet things, halfway between anger and calm, we could at last become masters of ourselves, not begging for bravery's alms?

Your moods change with the moon. You experience but don't comprehend yourself.
Or comprehend too many things at once, watch yourself with too many eyes while you
should gaze like the Buddha: blindly, fixed on the brim-filled void.
And still you set off? You don't know where to. How could anyone trust
you? How could you trust yourself? Your very first step betrays you. You're like
the midday moon. You walk unknown paths beyond your own self, where no one
can follow. Prepare for the night! Look upon the Earth, eyes turned inside out!

There are no safe calculations. No path to the goal. When the amalgam
of despair, wrath, and conceit is poisonous, the one who puts all his eggs in one
basket may win. His victory brings a new set of rules. Those
who speak his lingo like their native tongue are coming now. Keep clear
of them! Walk in your sleeping city as if in a graveyard, so that time can
befriend you. Draw courage from this: the city neither remembers nor
forgets but its houses mold time, and it devours all its inhabitants in the end.

PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

“Canvases of Time,” “Margin,” “From beneath the Letters,” and “Sinking Island” translated by Otilie Mulzet, were published in *Metamorphoses* (Spring/Summer 2022).

“To My Dead” and “Third Day Unceasingly,” translated by Otilie Mulzet, were published in *Two Lines* (2022).

“Dust,” translated by Otilie Mulzet, was read by the author at the Literature Live Around the World 2022 Bergen Literary Festival.

“Diagrams in the River” is an epigraph to Gábor Schein’s *Autobiographies of an Angel*, translated by Otilie Mulzet (Yale University Press, Margellos World Republic of Letters, June 2022).

“Preparations for a City,” “Beyond the Cordons,” “Come Back,” translated by Otilie Mulzet; and “Invisible War,” translated by Erika Mihálycsa, were published on *lyrikline.de* (2020).

“Captain Cornelius’s Letter from Pannonia to Burrus in the Colonial Office in Rome” and “The Taste of Salt,” translated by Erika Mihálycsa, were published in *Asymptote Journal* (2018).

“Invisible War,” translated by Erika Mihálycsa, was published in *World Literature Today* (Jan. 2017).

“Farewell, Russian Style,” “Beyond the Cordons,” “Note on the Back of a Map,” “Atropos’s Scissors,” “Dawn Light,” and “Above the Gravel Path,” translated by Otilie Mulzet, were published in *almostisland.com* (Spring 2015).

“With Eyes Turned Inside Out” translated by Erika Mihálycsa, was published by *Trafika Europe* 5 (2015).

“After the Iron Age,” translated by Erika Mihálycsa, was published in *The Missing Slate* (2015).

“Preparation for the Crows’ Feast,” translated by Otilie Mulzet, was published in *The Missing Slate* (2015).

“Come Back” and “Gravel and Reeds,” translated by Otilie Mulzet, were published in *Two Lines* 23 (Fall 2015).

“Ghost Homeland,” originally entitled “The Day after Christmas,” translated by Otilie Mulzet, was published on *Hungarian Literature Online* (hlo.hu) in 2012.

“The Builders of the Garden,” translated by Otilie Mulzet, was originally published on *Hungarian Literature Online* (hlo.hu) in 2009.

“Return of the Letters” and “Margin,” translated by Otilie Mulzet, were originally published on *Hungarian Literature Online* (hlo.hu) in 2009.

BIOGRAPHIES

Gábor Schein is the highly acclaimed author of over nine volumes of poetry and five novels. He has been awarded the Attila József Prize, the Artisjus Prize, and the Prize of the Society of Hungarian Authors, among many other distinctions. His work has been translated into eight European languages. His other works in English include the short novels *The Book of Mordechai* (tr. Adam Z. Levy) and *Lazarus* (tr. Otilie Mulzet; Seagull Books, 2017), and his novel *Autobiographies of an Angel* (tr. Otilie Mulzet, Yale University Press, 2022).

Otilie Mulzet has translated over fifteen volumes of Hungarian poetry & prose, including works by Szilárd Borbély, László Krasznahorkai, Gábor Schein, György Dragomán, László Földényi, Krisztina Tóth, Edina Szvoren, and others. Her translation of Krasznahorkai's *Baron Wenckheim's Homecoming* was awarded the 2019 National Book Award in Translated Literature. An anthology of modern poetry by Hungarian women (with other translators), *Under a Pannonian Sky: Ten Women Poets from Hungary*, is forthcoming from Seagull Books in 2025.

Erika Mihálycsa teaches modern and contemporary English literature at Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj, Romania. She is the author of the monograph *'A wretchedness to defend': Reading Beckett's Letters* (2022), co-editor of *Re-translating Joyce for the 21st Century* (2020), and editor of Rareș Moldovan's new, annotated Romanian translation of Joyce's *Ulysses* (2023). She has translated fiction by Beckett, Flann O'Brien, Patrick McCabe and others into Hungarian as well as translating Hungarian authors into English, most importantly, two novels by the experimental modernist Miklós Szentkuthy, published by Contra Mundum Press.

COLOPHON



BEYOND THE CORDONS
was handset in InDesign CC.

The text font is *BC Figural*.

The display font is *Antikva Margaret*.

Book design & typesetting: Alessandro Segalini

Cover design: CMP

Front cover image: Brassai, *Graffiti* (1950).
Silver gelatin print, 9.4" × 6.9".

Opening image: Emila Medková, *Explosion* (1959).
Black & white photograph. Artist's estate © Eva Kosáková

BEYOND THE CORDONS
is published by Contra Mundum Press.



Contra Mundum Press New York · London · Melbourne

CONTRA MUNDUM PRESS

Dedicated to the value & the indispensable importance of the individual voice, to works that test the boundaries of thought & experience.

The primary aim of Contra Mundum is to publish translations of writers who in their use of form and style are *à rebours*, or who deviate significantly from more programmatic & spurious forms of experimentation. Such writing attests to the volatile nature of modernism. Our preference is for works that have not yet been translated into English, are out of print, or are poorly translated, for writers whose thinking & aesthetics are in opposition to timely or mainstream currents of thought, value systems, or moralities. We also reprint obscure and out-of-print works we consider significant but which have been forgotten, neglected, or overshadowed.

There are many works of fundamental significance to *Weltliteratur* (& *Weltkultur*) that still remain in relative oblivion, works that alter and disrupt standard circuits of thought — these warrant being encountered by the world at large. It is our aim to render them more visible.

For the complete list of forthcoming publications, please visit our website. To be added to our mailing list, send your name and email address to: info@contramundum.net



Contra Mundum Press
P.O. Box 1326
New York, NY 10276
USA

OTHER CONTRA MUNDUM PRESS TITLES

- 2012 *Gilgamesh*
 Ghérasim Luca, *Self-Shadowing Prey*
 Rainer J. Hanshe, *The Abdication*
 Walter Jackson Bate, *Negative Capability*
 Miklós Szentkuthy, *Marginalia on Casanova*
 Fernando Pessoa, *Philosophical Essays*
- 2013 Elio Petri, *Writings on Cinema & Life*
 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Greek Music Drama*
 Richard Foreman, *Plays with Films*
 Louis-Auguste Blanqui, *Eternity by the Stars*
 Miklós Szentkuthy, *Towards the One & Only Metaphor*
 Josef Winkler, *When the Time Comes*
- 2014 William Wordsworth, *Fragments*
 Josef Winkler, *Natura Morta*
 Fernando Pessoa, *The Transformation Book*
 Emilio Villa, *The Selected Poetry of Emilio Villa*
 Robert Kelly, *A Voice Full of Cities*
 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *The Divine Mimesis*
 Miklós Szentkuthy, *Prae, Vol. 1*
- 2015 Federico Fellini, *Making a Film*
 Robert Musil, *Thought Flights*
 Sándor Tar, *Our Street*
 Lorand Gaspar, *Earth Absolute*
 Josef Winkler, *The Graveyard of Bitter Oranges*
 Ferit Edgü, *Noone*
 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Narcissus*
 Ahmad Shamlu, *Born Upon the Dark Spear*
- 2016 Jean-Luc Godard, *Phrases*
 Otto Dix, *Letters, Vol. 1*
 Maura Del Serra, *Ladder of Oaths*
 Pierre Senges, *The Major Refutation*
 Charles Baudelaire, *My Heart Laid Bare & Other Texts*
- 2017 Joseph Kessel, *Army of Shadows*
 Rainer J. Hanshe & Federico Gori, *Shattering the Muses*
 Gérard Depardieu, *Innocent*
 Claude Mouchard, *Entangled — Papers! — Notes*

- 2018 Miklós Szentkuthy, *Black Renaissance*
Adonis & Pierre Joris, *Conversations in the Pyrenees*
- 2019 Charles Baudelaire, *Belgium Stripped Bare*
Robert Musil, *Unions*
Iceberg Slim, *Night Train to Sugar Hill*
Marquis de Sade, *Aline & Valcour*
- 2020 *A City Full of Voices: Essays on the Work of Robert Kelly*
Rédoine Faïd, *Outlaw*
Carmelo Bene, *I Appeared to the Madonna*
Paul Celan, *Microliths They Are, Little Stones*
Zsuzsa Selyem, *It's Raining in Moscow*
Bérengère Viennot, *Trumpfpeak*
Robert Musil, *Theater Symptoms*
Miklós Szentkuthy, *Chapter on Love*
- 2021 Charles Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen*
Marguerite Duras, *The Darkroom*
Andrew Dickos, *Honor Among Thieves*
Pierre Senges, *Ahab (Sequels)*
Carmelo Bene, *Our Lady of the Turks*
- 2022 Fernando Pessoa, *Writings on Art & Poetical Theory*
Miklós Szentkuthy, *Prae, Vol. 2*
Blixa Bargeld, *Europe Crosswise: A Litany*
Pierre Joris, *Always the Many, Never the One*
Robert Musil, *Literature & Politics*
- 2023 Pierre Joris, *Interglacial Narrows*
Gabriele Tinti, *Bleedings — Incipit Tragædia*
Évelyne Grossman, *The Creativity of the Crisis*
Rainer J. Hanshe, *Closing Melodies*
Kari Hukkila, *One Thousand & One*
- 2024 Antonin Artaud, *Journey to Mexico*
Rainer J. Hanshe, *Dionysos Speed*
Amina Saïd, *Walking the Earth*

SOME FORTHCOMING TITLES

- Nuriá Perpinyà, *And, Suddenly, Paradise*
Marquis de Sade, *Stories, Tales, & Fables*

AGRODOLCE SERIES *AD*



- 2020 Dejan Lukić, *The Oyster*
2022 Ugo Tognazzi, *The Injester*

HYPERION

On the Future of Aesthetics

2006–PRESENT

To read samples and order current & back issues of *Hyperion*,
visit contramundumpress.com/hyperion

Edited by Rainer J. Hanshe & Erika Mihálycsa (2014 ~)



CONTRA MUNDUM PRESS

is published by Rainer J. Hanshe

Typography & Design: Alessandro Segalini

Publicity & Marketing: Alexandra Gold

Fundraising & Grant Writing: Madeline Hausmann

Ebook Design: Carlie R. Houser

THE FUTURE OF KULCHUR

THE PROJECT

From major museums like the MoMA to art house cinemas such as Film Forum, cultural organizations do not sustain themselves from sales alone, but from subscriptions, donations, benefactors, and grants.

Since benefactors of Peggy Guggenheim's stature are rare to come by, and receiving large grants from major funding bodies is an infrequent and unreliable source of capital, we seek to further our venture through a form of modest support that is within everyone's reach.

Although esteemed, *Contra Mundum* is an independent boutique press with modest profit margins. In not having university, state, or institutional backing, other forms of sustenance are required to move us into the future.

Additionally, in the past decade, the reduction of the purchasing budgets across the nation of both public and private libraries has had a severe impact upon publishers, leading to significant decreases in sales, thereby necessitating the creation of alternative means of subsistence.

Because many of our books are translations, our desire for proper remuneration is a persistent point of concern. Even when translators receive grants for book projects, the amount is often insufficient to compensate for their efforts, and royalties, which trickle in slowly over years, are not a reliable source of compensation.

WHAT WILL BE DONE

With your participation we seek to offer writers and translators greater compensation for their work, and in a more expeditious manner.

Additionally, funds will be used to pay for translation rights, basic operating expenses of the press, and to represent our writers and translators at book fairs.

If the means exist, we will also create a translation residency, providing opportunities to both junior and more established translators, thereby furthering our cultural efforts.

Through a greater collective and the cultural commons of the world, we can band together to create this constellation and together function as a patron for the writers and artists published by CMP. We hope you will join us in this partnership.

Your patronage is an expression of your confidence and belief in visionary literary work that would otherwise be exiled from the Anglophone world. With bookstores and presses around the world struggling to survive, and many even closing, joining the Future of Kulchur allows you to be a part of an active force that forms a continuous & stable foundation which safeguards the longevity of Contra Mundum Press.

Endowed by your support, we can expand our poetics of hospitality by continuing to publish works from many different languages and reflect, welcome, and embrace the riches of other cultures throughout the world. To become a member of any of our Future of Kulchur tiers is to express your support of such cultural work, and to aid us in continuing it. A unified assemblage of individuals can make a modern Mæcenas and deepen access to radical works.

THE OYSTER (\$2/month)

- Three issues (PDFs) of your choice of our art journal, *Hyperion*.
- 15% discount on all purchases (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- Impact: \$2 a month contributes to the cost to convert a title to an ebook and make it accessible to wider audiences.

PARIS SPLEEN (\$5/month)

- Receive \$35 worth of books or your choice from our back catalog.
- Three issues (PDFs) of your choice of our art journal, *Hyperion*.
- 18% discount on all purchases (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- Impact: \$5 a month contributes to the cost purchasing new fonts for expanding the range of our typesetting palette.

GILGAMESH (\$10/month)

- Receive \$70 worth books of your choice from our back catalog.
- 4 PDF issues of our magazine *Hyperion*.
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 20% discount on all merchandise (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- Select images of our books as they are being typeset.
- Impact: \$10 a month contributes to the production and publication of *Hyperion*, encouraging critical engagement with art theory & aesthetics and ensuring we can pay our contributors.

THE GREEK MUSIC DRAMA (\$25/month)

- Receive \$215 worth of books.
- 5 PDF issues of *Hyperion* (\$25 value).
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 25% discount (for orders made directly through our site) on all merchandise during the subscription term (one year).
- Impact: \$25 a month contributes to the cost of designing and formatting a book.

CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION (\$50/month)

- Receive \$525 worth of books.
- 6 PDF issues of *Hyperion* (\$30 value).
- 1 tote.
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 30% discount on all merchandise (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- Select one forthcoming book from our catalog and receive it in advance of release to the general public.
- Impact: \$50 a month contributes to editorial & proofreading fees.

CASANOVA (\$100/month)

- Receive \$1040 worth of books.
- 7 PDF issues of *Hyperion* (\$30 value).
- 1 tote.
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 35% discount on all merchandise (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- A signed typeset spread from two forthcoming books.
- Select two forthcoming books from our catalog and receive them in advance of release to the general public.
- Impact: \$100 a month contributes to the cost of translating a book, therefore supporting a translator in their craft & bringing a new work & perspective to Anglophone audiences.

CYBERNETOGAMIC VAMPIRE (\$200/month)

- Receive \$2020 worth of books.
- 10 PDF issues of *Hyperion* (\$50 value).
- 1 tote.
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 40% discount on all merchandise (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- A signed typeset spread from four of our forthcoming books.
- The listing of your name in the colophon to a forthcoming book of your choice.
- Select four forthcoming books from our catalog and receive them in advance of release to the general public.
- Impact: \$200 a month contributes to general operating expenses of the press, paying for translation rights, and attending book fairs to represent our writers and translators and reach more readers around the world.

To join the Future of Kulchur, visit here:

contramundumpress.com/support-us

GÁBOR SCHEIN is the highly acclaimed author of over nine volumes of poetry & five novels, as well as the recipient of many prizes, including the Attila József Prize, the Artisjus Prize, and the Prize of the Society of Hungarian Authors.

Beyond the Cordons is a selection of his poetic work over the past twenty-five years, but particularly drawing on his seminal collections *Night, Travel* [Éjszaka, utazás, 2011] and *Greetings from the Interior of the Continent* [Üdvözlét a kontinens belsejéből, 2017] both of which serve as poetic time capsules of the decades following Hungary's "regime change" of 1989.

Schein's urban sensibilities are palpably & keenly attuned to the grit and debris of Budapest streets — as well as the ever-present echoes of its sinister past, its buried histories — and yet allegorically, his poetry soars above place and time. He writes with the perspective of an insider navigating not only the immediate present of corruption and cynicism, but with a view to examining its affective residue on the people, and even the buildings.

Translated from the Hungarian
by Otilie Mulzet & Erika Mihálycsa

