

## Radio

Gyula Jenei

Translated from the Hungarian by Diana Senechal

when later i read that in nineteen sixty-three  
he was killed, i fail to grasp it fully, since i was then  
just a year old. still i remember: one fleeting summer  
evening (that is, november must be off), the radio  
announces that kennedy has been shot. the grownups  
chatter up a storm, and with pounding heart i return  
to kicking the dust and pebbles. an important thing  
has occurred: someone has died, and one can be  
shot with a pistol. later i learn that it must be  
the other one instead: robert. he is the first  
whose death announcement i hear from the radio.  
a little man delivers it, who lives there in the device,  
together with the others, and they relate the news,  
and play the tailor family, and sing of course. my father  
in those days works at a rental shop, where you can rent  
all sorts of things: grinders, tableware (we will have our own)  
and radios too. at first we just rent ourselves one,  
or else it might be that my father brings it home only  
on weekends now and then, and i cannot figure out who  
is speaking from the box, and how they fit inside.  
according to my parents: tiny dwarf-people. for this reason  
i start to fear the radio a little, but it attracts me  
all the same. i rotate the search dial to issue commands  
to the little people. later we purchase an orionton model.  
our neighbors, however, have a big electric radio, where  
evidently dwarves of larger stature live. and the radio speaks.  
i mean that it tells long chronicle-chronicles, and plays tunes  
for dinner at noon, but i don't like that, not nearly as much  
as radio novi sad, where a small ship rocks eternally  
on the sea of dreams and some request program or other.  
and childhood passes by while free europe crackles  
in the box too now and then. but i am still small then,  
and take no interest in what they say, but only in who  
is speaking, and how they lead their lives, and what  
they eat, and what clothes they wear, and what kind  
of houses they live in, and whether the sun shines there,  
and which way the faint breeze blows the boy and girl  
on that distant sea, there in that bitch of a box.

*The original poem, “Rádió,” appears on pages 13–14 of Gyula Jenei’s 2018 poetry collection Mindig Más (Szeged: Tiszatáj könyvek).*

*Gyula Jenei (born in 1962 in Abádszalók, Hungary) is a poet, writer, editor, and educator. As founder and editor of the quarterly literary magazine ESŐ (translatable as “Rain” or “Falling”), he has brought literature and literary events to the Szolnok area for over twenty years. His poems and other writings comprise thirteen books; the poems translated here are from his acclaimed 2018 collection Mindig más (“Always Different”).*