

Lajos Tamasi: Blood runs red on the streets of Pest

We march, and feel our hearts draw on
An invisible source of power,
The songs are only hesitant
But the streets of Pest are ours.

We have no choice; this is all there is
Our only mode of recourse,
Something is waking, it soars and it burns,
A blazing, unstoppable force.

Our flags stretch proud against the sky
Like billowing silken flowers,
They spill out onto three streets of Pest
Once more these streets are ours.

Brave songs of the heart are ours once more,
We're driven not by orders, but duty,
But the barrels of guns stare us in the face:
Minister, who are you shooting?

Blood runs red on the streets of Pest,
Its origin frightful, sinister.
This is the blood of our workers and sons,
Who are you shooting, minister?

Who are you shooting at, huddled together?
Ministers, your time is through!
Not the AVH, not the tanks -
None of these will save you.

In the name of the nation! Where are you running?
You've long had blood on your hands -
With a gun to our hearts, Mr Gerő,
Is it only killing you understand?

...Blood runs red on the streets of Pest.
It is beaten by falling rain.
But though water courses across the cobbles
It cannot remove the stains.

Blood runs red on the streets of Pest,
The blood of workers and boys,
So raise the flags of red, white and green
But make sure a black one you hoist.

Hoist up on high the tricolour flags,
But raise next to them these oaths three:
Firstly, to weep only tears that are clean,
Second, to loathe tyranny.

And take too this pledge, little country of ours,
To remember with each living breath
That the price of freedom was paid with blood,
Blood on the streets of Pest.

Translation: Borbala Cser
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