

De Profundis

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My earliest strait-jacket was the womb
and though today I am seemingly free
the Universe is still an oversize
division of a mental ward to me

I banged there on the walls but all in vain
I cried out of the depths although the Lord
is just a chronic gasping of the soul –
that's all there is: this gasping and the ward

I tap-tap but the Morse reply is faint
I try to understand it but I fail
is it a man or angel or an inmate
perhaps a secret warder in this jail

who stuffed these rags of daytime in my mouth
who stops me thundering that nothingness
is all that has remained and that even this:
this nothing is becoming less and less

Translated by Peter Zollman

From **Selected Poems** by István Baka

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