

Trauermarsch

[Trauermarsch](#)

In memoriam Gustav Mahler

Ratatatam, ratatatam, ratatatam...

From faraway the bugles blow,
brass crickets chirp, by the sound of it.

The meadows of the Monarchy
drown in the bugles' cuckoo-spit

Ratatatam, ratatatam, ratatatam...

Onward the funeral march proceeds,
the ladies' faces are dark with dread
and solar eclipse-like funeral weeds.
Lust creeps between their funeral thighs,
in funeral knickers hot dampness swells,
the men come in their funeral tails,
tail-coats of midnight, - while the moon
is dangling on the stars' watch-chain -
and in the space between their legs
funeral phalluses toll the bells.

Ratatatam, ratatatam, ratatatam...

Out in front the general trots
upon a funeral mare, his ears
are cotton-wooled - even a loudest
thunder would reach him just as a tinkling
of silver spoons and china cups.

The filling in the general's tooth
is high explosive in a rock,
his funeral pocket holds a pack
of cards in his reveries
the court cards, every bloody jack,
lie head to toe stacked in a heap,

like fallen soldiers three-four deep.
Ratatatam, ratatatam, ratatatam...
And so the funeral march proceeds,
the braiding on the pall-bearers' coats
meanders like barbed-wire lines.
They march along a sunless field
in old, below-stairs-Monarchy,
among the haystacks - stuffy hot
eiderdowns of young servant maids.
Ratatatam, ratatatam, ratatatam...
The bugles sound like brass crickets
and so the funeral march proceeds,
roulette-ball-Moon circles the sky,
star-counter clusters sparkle on
the gaming table of the Lord,
the funeral hearse floats slowly by,
the Pole Star is the lantern aboard,
so passes Charles's funeral Wain,
as night swirls in the deep, below
the water's broken window pane.
Ratatatam, ratatatam, ratatatam...
And so the funeral march proceeds,
as if some brass crickets were chirping
the funeral wheels creak in the sand.
The moon is a circular saw. It hits
a star - a gnarl - and screams in pain,
the timber-night, dark ebony, splits,
the axe-blade crashes - who will here
erect a scaffold or a bier?
Meadows in bugles' cuckoo-spit,
onward the funeral march proceeds,
the general on his funeral mare,
trots right in front, the ladies wear
their solar eclipse-like funeral weeds
The braiding on the pall-bearers' coats
is heavy barbed wire furred with frost,
the bugle sounds - a brass cricket,

a funeral angel softly flies
above the mourners, in the night,
an ocean-liner-tongue crashes
into the icebergs of the teeth,
servant-eiderdown-haystacks lie
in silvery bugle-cuckoo-spit,
roulette-ball-moon circles the sky,
star-counters sparkle before the Lord
who rakes them in, pile after pile.
And by the sound of brass crickets chirping,
with its Pole Star-lantern on board
there cruises Charles's funeral Wain.
Like an exploded champagne bottled
night smashes the window of the lake
and swirls beneath the broken pane.

Translated by Peter Zollman

From ***Selected Poems*** by István Baka

[←](#) [Previous page](#) [Next page](#) [→](#)