

Fate

The will to life is remorselessly exploding
all eternity

There is no death

We must acquiesce

There is now and then the yes

yes we want it so

we can't chose the absolute nothing.

Ivan Blatný (1919-1990)

Osud

Vůle k životu nemilosrdně vybuchuje
celou věčnost

Není žádná smrt

Přijmout to musíme

Je teď a pak „ano“

ano, tak to chceme

nemůžeme zvolit absolutní nicotu.

*translated into the Czech
by **Matthew Sweney**.*

In 1948, soon after he left his native Czechoslovakia, Ivan Blatný was declared dead by the Communist authorities and forgotten as a poet. He lived the last forty years of his life in the UK, the majority as a psychiatric in-patient. It is only since his real death in 1991 that his work is being read and his stature recognised. His later poems often combine several languages, playfully, sometimes with intentional dislocations and meaningful "mistakes." He composed the poem above wholly in English. From "Modern Poetry in Translation", number 17, edited by Daniel Weissbort and Stephen Watts, published by King's College London 2001. Reprinted by permission.

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