Ján Smrek
YOU MUST

Reed bed, you must tremble with horror,
you, who swayed beneath the wind
your dust is spurned by your native ground
your destruction unwept by the alder

when you die not a single stream will moan
for you not a single willow grow
so feebly did you stifle all the strength within
when that mad devil hacked down your mountain.

(14. 6. 1950)

YOU WOULDN’T BELIEVE

You wouldn’t believe how thrushes know
how to fall silent in autumn.
Instead in the air only leaves go,
Not a bird anywhere on earth.

Why do I know that things turn?
Because through the window I gaze
With nature I live into it hewn
and separate from mankind.

With nature I live. What salvation,
granted under sword and law.
The barefoot goddess, Beauty,
laughs at the human score.

She just slaps with a hand: harvest done,
rest ordained, gold blazes.
Blessed are all regions
and pity to the evil man.

(25. 10. 1950)

From the Slovak by Viera and James Sutherland-Smith

Ján Smrek
INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL

Bratislava * Trnava * Pezinok
15 – 18 October 2006

Festival’s director: Milan Richter

In cooperation and with support of
Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, Grazer Autorenversammlung,
Austrian Culture Forum in Bratislava, Danish Arts Council, French PEN
Centre, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of
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Slovak Philharmonia

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In cooperation with
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Library in Pezinok, Trnava City Hall, University Library in Bratislava,
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JÁN SMREK (1898–1982) – leading Slovak poet, beloved by the readers and
hated by the Communist regime in the 1950s and in the 1970s. He is most
famous for his love poems but also for the anti-Communist verses, written in
secrecy in 1948–1956 and published as late as 1993.
15 October (Sunday)  Bratislava

10.00  sightseeing walk through Bratislava
17.00  opening of the Festival and reading (Slovak Philharmonia)
S. Clancier, Ch. Hesselholdt, R. Vázquez Diaz, I. Bar-Kohav Berkovski, M. Bátorová, D. Dušek, A. Koltz
19.00  dinner in Bratislava
20.00  discussion with S. Clancier, president of the French PEN Centre
overnight at Kyjev Hotel

16 October (Monday)  Bratislava

12.00  lunch at the Writers Club in Bratislava
14.00  seminar „Two Vitalists - Ján Smrek and Artur Lundkvist“
(Seminar Hall, University Library, Klariská 5)
18.00  reading (Mozart Hall, Austrian Embassy) F. Mayröcker,
M. Haugová, Ch. Greller, E. Ström, T. Eltayeb, M. Richter
19.30  Ján Smrek Prize 2006 ceremony (prize awarded
to Friederike Mayröcker, Austria)
20.00  dinner at the Writers Club
overnight at Kyjev Hotel

17 October (Tuesday)  Trnava

10.00  visit to the Red Stone Castle (30 km from Bratislava)
13.00  lunch in the Writers Castle of Budmerice
15.00  meeting Lord Mayor of Trnava at the City Hall
17.00  reading (Trnava Theatre, Mirror Hall) T. Eltayeb,
I. Bar-Kohav Berkovski, E. Ström, S. Clancier, Ch. Hesselholdt,
R. Vázquez Diaz, A. Koltz
18.30  Ján Smrek Prize 2005 ceremony (prize awarded in 2005
to Anise Koltz, Luxembourg)
20.00  dinner in Budmerice
overnight at Kyjev Hotel

18 October (Wednesday)  Bratislava  Pezinok

12.30  lecture on „Ibsen and the Politics“ by Prof. F. Helland
(Rector Room, Comenius University, Šafarikovo nam. 6)
15.00  meeting students in Modra
17.00  reading (Library of Pezinok) P. Stanislav, Ch. Greller,
J. Kuniak, D. Stefanov, V. Prokešová
presentation of the haiku book by D. Stefanov
18.30  dinner in Pezinok, closing of the Jan Smrek Festival