

Editor's Note

The editor of this book has attempted to compile an anthology that will hopefully provide some idea of the Hungarian experience of the past forty years. The volume is therefore as much an anthology of recent Hungarian history and society as it is of the modern Hungarian short story. This is why autobiographical writings as well as what Hungarians traditionally call "sociography" or reportage written with literary means, and mostly by writers of fiction, appear side by side with traditional short stories, more or less in the same ratio one would find in a Hungarian literary magazine. In Hungary, such sociographical writing is generally classed with the *belles-lettres*.

In short, the selection that follows has clearly been influenced by historical considerations, and though the writings follow each other in more or less chronological order—or at least, with an eye towards successive historical landmarks—the barriers remain indistinct.

Since the aim above all was to introduce Hungary through her literature, when faced with a choice between two equally good pieces of writing, we always chose the one that contained more insight into the above-referred-to experience. In other words, without detriment to literary value, we have tried to select pieces that are interesting in the everyday sense of the word—something that will hopefully be pardoned even if this was done to the exclusion of several major writers.

We cannot claim that this volume contains a representative anthology of Hungarian literature, nor would it fit within the confines of this small book. On the other hand, it represents modern-day Hungary, and especially how this country sees its recent past and immediate present. We have accordingly selected more recent writings wherever we could, and with the same aim in mind, we have given the younger generation, too, a chance to speak up.

We hope that this anthology will prove that writers are the best chroniclers of their age, even better than the historians or sociologists, and that the faces, stories and events narrated herein will provide a faithful picture of Hungary in the Eighties.

The Editor