

The recovery of buried poems

by [Steve Wilson](#) in the [July 25, 2006](#) issue

*"Root is what I am, rootpoet
here at home among the worms,
finding here the poem's terms."
—Miklos Radnoti, August 8, 1944*

If, as it seems, art is nothing, nothing at all—
some sleep only that lulls us toward trees,
what to make of these poems, Miklos,
where you ordered a life into lines?
That brutal stumble through the mountains
might have said enough. Or those curses sneered
by villagers, one pausing near the water well
to dust and dust his sleeves. Finally, you with the rest,
worn through, too settled for another step,
were forced to dig and dig your graves, then

kneel at last on the uncalmed earth there.
What is that light against the fields? Why,
after all that had been done? They sought
to sever tongues from thoughts—those soldiers,
certain in their silence, who carved from hurt
this tender fruit words could have grown
and given seed. Miklos, these hidden poems,
found folded in your pocket. . . . Prove, history,
how the world speaks deeper than *decay*:
this murmur pulled from underground,
with its challenge of a purer sound and song.