

**Erik Ondreička**

Translated by John Minahane

**Hand-made Paper**

*Where shall I find a man who has forgotten words,  
so that I would be able to talk to him?*

Čuang-c'

Words are here and they aren't  
just like our own selves  
We are here and at the same time not here

Words unwritten are different  
from words unspoken

For a long time I have not felt  
such happiness and riches  
as today  
when after hours of sitting  
I left the hand-made paper  
wholly empty

Only my face longed to feel rain  
or beams of sun  
among things  
which must die  
so as to *change* their place

## **Keys**

Eternal wandering of waves  
in dreamy transparency  
along the sandy bed

levitation of leaf over forest path

a little bird  
that has ceased to set off from the air

and a tear of emotion  
that one cannot elide  
because none of that is real

But also the dear loved ones  
only a touch away from remembrance

Who knows  
if you too see me  
from the other side  
when the world's gate opens  
always with a different key

## **Nomen omen**

And at this very moment  
many seekers tune their breath  
pronouncing the tetragram  
so that they may discover  
the real name of God

A milliard cicadas on Earth  
all this time tirelessly amplify  
the mutable rhythm of the universe

He too explores all options  
of naming that  
which he is

Were he to try the last option  
he would become nothing

He cannot repeat himself

**Erik Ondrejčka** (1964, Bratislava) is the outstanding exponent in his generation of rhyming poetry (*On the Inside of the Eyelids*, 2004, and especially *Land of Diamonds*, bilingual Slovak-English edition, 2014), increasingly concerned with Buddhist philosophy and the sense or senselessness of things (*Calling*, 2020), he also writes haikus and epigrams.