

1.3. “Europe, Late” by Dan Pagis

Dan Pagis was born in 1930 and is now living in Israel. He was never incarcerated in Auschwitz, but he was a prisoner early on in a concentration camp in Ukraine. His literary work, however, references the Holocaust, as seen in this poem written after World War II but addressing issues in mid-1939.

*Source: Dan Pagis, “Europe, Late,” in *Points of Departure*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981), p. 23. Used with permission.*

Violins float in the sky,
And a straw hat. I beg your pardon,
What year is it?
Thirty-nine and a half, still awfully early,
You can turn off the radio.
I would like to introduce you to:
The sea breeze, the life of the party,
Terribly mischievous,
whirling in a bell-skirt, slapping down
the worried newspapers: tango! tango!
And the park hums to itself:

I kiss your dainty hand, madame,
your hand as soft and elegant
as a white suede glove. You'll see, madame,
that everything will be all right,
just heavenly - you wait and see.
No it could never happen here,
Don't worry so - you'll see it could