

Jeno Kosa As A Soldier



My husband Jeno Kosa is on this photo, in the left-sided window, somewhere in Hungary, as a soldier.

And this is a different story. My husband got an employment [Editor's note: after Northern Transylvania was re-annexed, the husband got employment in the noble judge's office], and he was handsome, I must admit that.

Hundred seventy-seven centimeters, not too tall, but tall enough. And there he fell in love with a girl, who was fifteen years younger than him.

He was going back to the office in the after-noon saying that he had to work overtime; he always went here and there.

He was a solo singer at the men's choir [of Sepsiszentgyorgy], and the choir was invited here and there, they even took a trip to the Saint Anna lake, he always went, but alone [without me].

And that's how things were going on. Back then the promenade was fashionable in every town.

I wanted to take a walk on the esplanade, he was busy, so we went the two of us, me and the kid. People knew me already.

In 1943 I was still young, though I had some grey hair, but people told me, 'that's nice'.

Once there was some official holiday, which began with a service, and people went to the church.

I heard these things, his women colleagues told me what mister Kosa was doing, and I thought I would go and see what he was doing.

I stood at the gate of the reformed church, and [I thought I would] watch him.

And I see that one of them comes out, then the other one. And as they arrived next to me, my husband didn't even stop, he walked further, and I grabbed Ilonka, and I said: 'Now we go and ask mister Kosa, which one of us he wants.'

Because I would leave, but I have to find this out.' That's how it happened. Because he walked away, but he didn't leave completely.

We went to the park, and I asked: 'Do you love Ilonka?' He says: 'I do.' 'So, you don't love me.' 'It's not true, I love you too.' I say: 'It won't work, both of us.'

It's not good either for Ilonka, either for me.' 'Well, alright then, we'll see.'

He says: 'I'll come back in a minute.' He leaves. I don't know how long it takes, one hour maybe, he comes back, he says: 'I settled this.' He enrolled as a volunteer soldier.

He reported himself in 1943 for the first time. And I was trembling that I was left alone with the kid in this fascist world, and he left on the front-line.

But luckily I could mend invisibly. Let's say he was honest in this matter, he couldn't help it that he fell in love, but he didn't want to leave me anyway.

That's how I interpreted his first leave. As if he wanted to leave, they would have separated a Hungarian man from a wife of Jewish origin within twenty-four hours, most willingly.

I don't know if I still have the letter he wrote me from there, that I was the only one whom he could always trust.

And I kept that letter. I praise myself again, but I was so firm, it was me who ruled everything in our life, his father gave us only the first, to open a shop, after that everything, everything... believe me, the family life rested upon my shoulders.

He felt that he wouldn't be able to make his living, if he preferred to carry water.

[Editor's note: After his final exams, Jeno Kosa interrupted his university studies, and worked in his father's tannery, he was carrying water.]

His father didn't want him to become a lawyer, he didn't want to study medicine, because he had a dread of it, he hated medicine, and he rather accepted to carry pailfuls of water for the tannery.

He couldn't create anything for himself, but in the evening they went to drink.

They were hard drinkers, because they made a vow, my husband and his friends not to drink water.

He left for the second time in September 1944, he enrolled in the Hungarian army again.

He liked very much to put on his second lieutenant dress, because it suited him well. But this time it was me who sent him.

Because I was afraid that Romanians would qualify him as a 'fascist', because he reported voluntarily [in 1943, in the Hungarian army].

At the beginning everybody fled, only a few persons left, a few women, then they were coming back.

But when Russians came in, and Romanians came in, they left, they were afraid.

Because they were rounding up [Hungarian] men, and they took them near Brasso, there was a place where they gathered women, men, and took them to Russia.

Most of them died, mainly men. I sent away my husband the second time.

I told him: 'You must go away. Listen to me, we have one option here.

You reported yourself voluntarily to the fascists, they won't ask you whether you went there for emotional reasons, because you didn't want to divorce me.

The first thing they would do will be to arrest you - I said -, it won't be of much use for me. It's much worse.

Thus I can hope that we would meet again, but if they take you away, it's sure you won't get home alive.

So it has no reason that you stay. Go away, so that I have hopes!' Oh my dear God, I was so right! I always said that I had a presentiment of evil.

I must make a low bow to myself, because I assumed to send him to the front-line, to the unknown - I have no letters - with one child and a future one, because I was four months pregnant.

And I was left here with nothing, with absolutely nothing, with one and a half child. He didn't resist me, though he knew we would be left without bread and butter.

He was wounded on the Cenk in September 1944. He got wounded by shrapnels, so his back and shoulder was full of splinters. And he had on his head too.

They put him on train wounded, I knew nothing of him until he came home, after one and a half year.

He was wounded here, they transported him with the medical train, he was in a hospital somewhere, and when he recovered, he got to Csempeškopacs.

[Editor's note: It was a small village in Vas county, 20 km far from Szombathely].

My husband was in Csempeškopacs for a while with the army, until they brought him to Germany, I suppose to the front-line, because the Americans captured him.

He was imprisoned in Germany. He had luck there in the sense that the Americans provided him with cigarettes.

And I had made him [previously] quit smoking, because he had woken up in the night, he had been used to smoke a cigarette even in the night.

And he had been so grateful that I had made him quit, and he could have bought so many things [from the price of the cigarettes].

But I knew nothing of all this. I had news of him only a little before [that he got home], a man wrote me a letter from Szekelyudvarhely, saying that 'Don't worry, because Jeno is fine, we were together in captivity, and he [will come home] very soon.'

I got this letter from Szekelyudvarhely in February 1946, and in March my husband came home.

He took home a photo, he is so smiling, it's worth to see it. He always had that photo on him, he was so conceited that he kept on showing the photo.

He brought home one photo, but one would not enter to the photographer to make just one photo, the photographer makes three anyway.

The neighbor was there too, and he told me that my husband was quartered at a young woman. Well, if she was young, then for sure he left one photo there.