POLISH POETS IN CANADA
A COMPARATIVE STUDY
by
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis has been to examine the place of Polish émigré, English and French Canadian poetry in "Canadian literature". The study has involved an examination of the problems that confront each of the three literatures, separately and on a comparative level.

The work of the three groups of poets has been placed in an historical perspective: the "colonial mind" of the English Canadian poet, the "separatist" state of the French Canadian poet, and the dépaysé situation of the Polish émigré. These have been compared and contrasted.

The main themes followed throughout the thesis have been those concerned with the problems of isolation and communication as expressed in Polish, French and English poetry.

The further aim of this analysis has been to stress the need for communication between ethnic groups in Canada, to further the mutual understanding of their language and their poetry. In addition it was necessary to examine the role of critics and writers in bringing to Canadian literature the meaning of the social content of this country as expressed in the poetry of all cultural groups.

To make the discussion of the work of the Polish émigré
poets possible, comments of Polish critics and an anthology of poems were translated into English.

The examination of the three cultures has shown the need for the recognition of a cultural identity for "Canadian" poets in order that both Canadian literature and its component ethnic literatures should survive. Ethnic groups, through their interpretation of a new environment, bring richness to Canadian culture, and conversely into their own literature, both in the émigré literature and that still being written in the mother country.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Introductory Remarks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of Polish emigré poetry</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Aspects of Polish emigré poetry in the context of English and French Canadian poetry</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthology</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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GENERAL INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
"Canada has developed with the bewilderment of a neglected child, preoccupied with trying to define its own identity."

The various peoples now settled in Canada came from countries with a well developed culture of their own. They came for many different reasons, bringing with them diverse cultural backgrounds, hoping to retain links with their native countries, all having to survive in a new environment. They did not all consider themselves exiles, however they can still be described as having been originally dépaysé. Having brought the richness of their cultures into Canadian life, they at the same time had a tendency to keep their respective groups in isolation in order to maintain their identity in the Canadian mosaic.

A lack of cultural communication must result from such a situation. If an identifiable Canadian culture is to exist, then it should reflect the mosaic of cultures that have contributed to it. A study of Canadian literature should therefore reveal the extent to which intercommunication has taken place. Books on bi- and multi-culturalism from socio-economic, and historical points of view have been published. However, the presence and identity of the ethnic groups in Canada have still largely been ignored by Canadian poets and literary critics. Neither the poets nor the critics have really discovered, through the social content
of this country, the colour and variety within. This may be partially due to the lack of communication between various ethnic groups, and one would hope that it is not due to a lack of interest. Communication can be achieved by means of published translations from various languages into the English or the French, and for a long time there has been a shortage of such publications. It is therefore the official languages of Canada that can help to bridge the gap between the ethnic groups.

The art of translation is very much like marriage—it works best when there is a high degree of compatibility, understanding and shared interests. And like marriage, despite many pitfalls and imperfections, translation is something we will probably have to live with for a long time to come.²

This view expressed by Sutherland was made in connection with the lack of translation of French into English and vice versa. French is the largest language group, after English, and yet French Canadian poetry remained unrecognised for a long time by the English Canadians because of a lack of translation. A similar situation exists in regard to the other ethnic groups in Canada. Fortunately some progress is being made through periodicals published by Canadian universities such as Prism International, Tamarack Review and the Malahat Review. These periodicals now include translations of the different language groups. In addition, the Canada Council has recently recognised the need to support such publications. However in the field of literature, isolation still exists largely due to a lack of cultural interchange. The importance of ethnic literary contributions should be recognised as a part of the mainstream of Canadian literature.
The problems discussed in the pages which follow juxtapose three groups, English and French Canadian, and the Polish émigré poets in Canada. In order to make a wider selection of Polish poetry in English translation available to the reader, an anthology representing seven Polish poets is included.

They chained me while I was still a child.  
And later in little chains released me into the world.  
I am here.  
I was born there . . .  
Language is my leash  
Words are my collar.  

Bogdan Czaykowski "Rebellion in Verse"

This fragment describes the dilemma of either an exile or of a dépaysé, torn between two cultural environments, the native and the adopted. Such a problem can be found not only in the Polish émigré poetry. It can also be traced in the English and French Canadian poetry, through the operation of the "colonial spirit", and the realization that the cultural origins lie outside Canada even though they may, individually, be by now the product of several generations of Canadians.

To understand the problems of survival facing the literatures of co-existing cultural groups, it is necessary to compare and contrast the problems and attitudes of these individual groups and their literary interactions.
The image of English Canada has up till now been identified by the poets as a vast and lonely landscape in which man, terror stricken by his country's natural hazards and isolated from other Canadians by a cultural distance, questions his identity.

Here on the rim, cringing under the cracked whip of winter we live in houses of ice, but not because we want to: in order to survive we make what we can and have to with what we have. Margaret Atwood

This is a description of a person living only in order to survive, and resigned to making do with what is at hand. The person is passive, incommunicative, persecuted by nature, and as Margaret Atwood aptly describes him in her book *Survival*, it is the image of a "victim".

It is undeniable that the external physical elements of nature constitute an integral part of what is typically Canadian and greatly influence the substance of poetry. It is also undeniable that this is only a part of what lies at the core of a nation, and that it is the human element which finally shapes the spiritual landscape of the artist.

A French Canadian poet Gatien Lapointe in a poem "Your Country" shows this awareness.
If you will open your eyes
And if you will lay your hands
On the snow, the birds, the trees, the beasts,
Patiently, softly,
With all the weight of your heart;

If you will take time by the hand
And look upon the land
Patiently, softly;

If you will recognise your people
And if you recognise the pain
Trembling upon the background of their eyes;

If you will write the words love and loneliness
Patiently, gently,
On every season, every house;

If you will name bread, blood, day, night
And that wild unalterable desire
Burning at the heart of all things;

If you will take every death of your childhood
Patiently, softly, in your arms,
With all the strength of your despair;

Then your country can be born.5

This poem clearly shows that only by recognising, seeing, touching, and experiencing the human and natural environment can one comprehend the individuality of one's country. It would seem that while the French Canadian poet is aware of the necessity for spiritual survival and has obviously found a place for it in his poetry, the English Canadian poet is still searching for it.

There is a distinct element of alienation in English Canadian poetry which asks the question "Who is a Canadian?" English Canadian poetry has so far not recognised its individuality. It lacks human experience, it has not "recognised its people" and therefore a more mature
spiritual poetic expression is missing. The kind of spirituality discussed here is not the over-sentimental or the overly romantic kind, it is the kind of spirituality the presence of which in poetry, however controlled by the artist, gives depth to his poem and a more profound statement on the human condition. The need for the recognition of this identity and search for human experience is recognised by Margaret Atwood:

An other sense tugs at us: we have lost something, some keys to these things which must be writings and are locked against us or perhaps (like a potential mine, unknown vein of metal in the rock) something not lost or hidden but just not found yet that informs, holds together this confusion, this largeness and dissolving:

not above or behind or within it, but one with it: an identity: something too huge and simple for us to see.  

Whether Miss Atwood realised it or not, her poem probably holds the key to the problems of identity already discussed. "Something not lost or hidden, but just not found yet", this something may well be discovered when the indifference to and ignorance of the nature of Canadian society, will be realised and attempts made towards a greater understanding through creating better channels of human
communication.

It is paradoxical that the eclipsed part of the Canadian soul exists, perhaps, in the unity within diversity of Canadian society as well as within the immensity and diversity of its physical nature. John Norris, in a book called *Strangers Entertained* brings into focus the variety of as many as forty-six ethnic groups in British Columbia alone, and stresses their contribution to Canadian life. This condition is by no means confined to British Columbia but exists throughout Canada. He also points out that the problem of identity is caused by the isolation of different groups from one another, and that this contributes to the lack of a national unity:

By reason of our different backgrounds and of our different adjustments of the constantly changing cultural pattern world of British Columbia, we are strangers to one another.7

There are various problems in the development of Canadian culture responsible for the condition of isolationism and lack of identity. W. P. Wilgar in his essay on "Poetry and the Divided Mind of Canada" diagnoses the schizophrenic problem of English Canadian poetry:

The Canadian is sympathetically British; his ancestral background is inextricably tangled with that of the British Isles; his loyalties are unwaveringly to Empire; he is pleased with and grasps at traditionalism. But at the same time he find himself in the curious and awkward position of respecting all that is British, while he has to admit to himself that he has a far more advanced understanding of the American mind than he has of the Old World Mentality. It is not for nothing that he feels at home in New York and a self-conscious stranger in London.8
Here we have a problem of the "colonial mind" in poetry. This is the inferiority complex of a young nation looking back to the great tradition of its mother country, Britain.

**Item: A Sturdy Boy**

In simple cottage, with scant ceremonial, observe the birthday of this young colonial.

Clutching the nearest good as best he can
The helpless mite perceives no social plan.

He grows unhampered in his natural skills
And finds companionship in lakes and hills.

**Item: A Forked Road**

But soon this native freedom meets its end and his fresh mind to ancient rules must bend.

At school he learns the three Canadian things:
Obedience, Loyalty, and Love of Kings.

To serve a country other than his own
Becomes for him the highest duty known,

To keep antiquity alive forever
The proper object of his young endeavour.9

F. R. Scott

Since 1944, when W. P. Wilgar's essay appeared in the Dalhousie Review, and 1945, the year of F. R. Scott's poem "Ode to the Politician", many changes have taken place in English Canadian poetry. Scott, in the poem, sarcastically refutes Canada's dependence on Britain. Modern poetry reveals a withdrawal from the British tradition.
I have not lingered in European monasteries
and discovered among the tall grasses tombs of knights
who fell as beautifully as their ballads tell;
I have not parted the grasses
or purposefully left them thatched.

I have not worshipped wounds and relics
or combs of iron,
or bodies wrapped and burned in scrolls.

I have not been unhappy for ten thousand years
During the day I laugh and during the night I sleep.
My favorite cooks prepare my meals,
my body cleans and repairs itself,
and all my work goes well.10

Leonard Cohen

This detached optimism of Leonard Cohen brings to focus still
another problem evolving from the "colonial or the divided
mind" of an English Canadian poet. While the sarcasm of
Scott retains a respect and concern for culture, Cohen, a
modern poet, not only derides the past and its history but by
this refutation also unfortunately detaches himself from
human contact with other cultures, and sports a typically
North American indifference by coating his detachment with
the physical indulgence of body and ego. Scott was trying
to build a new Canadian culture, through both his literary
and political activities. Therefore his sarcasm is intended
to be constructive; Cohen on the other hand tries to destroy
the colonial roots and detach Canadian culture from the roots
of its historical past.

The problem of the "colonial mind" did slow down the
development of originality in poetic expression. But English
Canadian poetry, still has its roots in the literary heritage
of the "old world" and need not completely cut itself off from
it. At the same time English Canada is influenced by the United States, a country with a more developed culture. Some of the problems stemming from this influence are of a technical, industrial and materialistic nature.

The confusion is one between commerce and art, an error which a society such as ours has some difficulty in escaping. A small population engaged in subduing its environment and in exploiting the resources of a large new country may very easily develop an exaggerated opinion of the value of material things, and has some quite understandable doubts as to the necessity of artists.

Although this was stated by A. J. M. Smith as early as 1928, it shows where more of the problems of contemporary English Canadian poetry have their roots.

Culture is born in leisure and an awareness of standards, and pioneer conditions tend to make energetic and uncritical work an end in itself, to preach a gospel of social unconsciousness, which lingers long after the pioneer conditions have disappeared. The impressive achievements of such a society are likely to be technological.

The early Canadian poetry dealt almost exclusively with man's struggle with nature. In the works of such major poets as E. J. Pratt, D. C. Scott, and A. J. M. Smith, there is a stress mostly on the physical and psychological side of man's struggle with and conquest of his natural environment. Nature, in all its changeability, has been described; terror, isolation and death are the themes which have laid a foundation for contemporary poets, in whose work a general tone of grayness and disillusion prevails.
But these dead thoughts
Hang like burned forests
By a Northern Lake
Whose waters take
The bone-grey skeletons
And mirror the grey bones,
Both dead, the trees and the reflections.\textsuperscript{13}

D. C. Scott

The Canadian "single unifying symbol", as delineated by Margaret Atwood, is "survival". Miss Atwood traces various literary themes occurring through English Canadian literature.

A preoccupation with one's survival is necessarily also a preoccupation with the obstacles to that survival. In earlier writers, these obstacles are external—the land, the climate, and so forth. In later writers, the obstacles tend to become both harder to identify and more internal; they are no longer obstacles to physical survival, but obstacles to what we may call spiritual survival, to life as anything more than a minimally human being. Sometimes fear of these obstacles becomes itself an obstacle, and a character is paralyzed by terror (either of what he thinks is threatening him from the outside, or of elements in his own nature that threaten him from within). It may even be life itself that he fears; and when life becomes a threat to life you have a moderately vicious circle.\textsuperscript{14}

To become more than a "minimally human being" and to find that he is not alone in his predicament, a man would have to extend himself beyond himself and reach out of his fear and isolation to his fellow men in order to communicate with them and understand them. It is in this sphere that the spiritual survival of English Canadian poetry is threatened. Isolation and lack of communication between people will continue to prevail as long as the "pre-occupation with one's survival" persists, and the spirit of man remains paralyzed by fear. Here again Margaret Atwood makes an interesting comment,
"Canada is like a pond, where the geese sail in continual circles and never get out". She bases this on James Reaney's poem, "The Upper Canadian".

The speaker is afflicted with both claustrophobia and fear of the "outside".

There is no viable cultural life in this pond; the speaker can have contact with other writers, but they are all dead and English: he sits "by an empty stone" reading Shakespeare, which he will never see acted. "Culture" is not something being created around him: it is something great and dead, entombed in books, inaccessible.

The "Canadian" poet is culturally isolated. He lacks an interested audience, and he suffers from spiritual immobility. If this is strongly present and motivation is absent, what hope is there for the survival of Canadian poetry or its emergence as an integral part of world poetry? How can it flourish without communication between people, which is the essential first step towards conquering the spiritual landscape of the isolated "Canadian" poet?

The Canadian poet, however is in exile, condemned to live in his own country he has no public, commands no following, stirs up less interest than last year's licence plate.

Northrop Frye's answer to Atwood's and Layton's "poet in isolation" appears to find a solution in the following quotation:

A great work of literature is also a place in which the whole cultural history of the nation that produced it comes into focus.

In the Canadian experience, if multi-culturalism is to mean anything, then "these great works of literature" should include not only the English and American classics, but also
the literature of other ethnic groups who are a part of Canadian society.

The constructs of the imagination tell us things about human life that we don't get in any other way. That's why it's important for Canadians to pay particular attention to Canadian literature, even when the imported brands are better seasoned.¹⁸

The above statement is very ambiguous with regard to the meaning of the term "Canadian literature". Frye, by his use of the history of English and American literature to illustrate the problems of English Canadian literature, appears to exclude any serious consideration of other literatures, particularly French Canadian.

The historical separation of English and French-Canadian writing has been aggravated by the practice of literary historians. Anthologies and literary histories have usually presented these two literatures in separate language compartments and have treated one or the other in isolation. English Canadian scholars and writers have found themselves reluctant or ill-equipped to write about French Canadian literature, and vice versa. Attempts to integrate the two literatures under the umbrella of a common literary history of Canada have been extremely modest and rare.¹⁹

It is a small wonder that this historical separation exists and will continue to do so. If Northrop Frye's comment in the above quotation is to influence Canadian thought, then why does he contradict it with statements which create prejudice and therefore separatism?

This colonial tendency has been sharpened by the French English split. The English having tended to specialize in the imperial and the French in the regional aspects of it. The French are on the whole worse off by this arrangement, which has made Quebec into a cute tourist resort full of ye quainte junke, made by real peasants all of whom go to church and say their prayers like the children they are, and love their land, and tell folk tales, and sing ballads just as the fashionable novelists in the cities say they do.²⁰
It remains to be seen whether in fact the French are worse off, especially when it comes to their poetry.
Canadian literature thus branches into two main streams. So far only the English Canadian point of view has been given. The French Canadians have obviously acquired a separate identity but although they have a different cultural heritage, they do contribute to Canadian literature, and their point of view must be equally considered. As we have already mentioned, French Canadian poetry is still little understood by the English-speaking audience, partly through a lack of translation:

The history of serious translation of French Canadian poetry is short, covering little more than a dozen years.\(^1\) and partly through a lack of interest of the English Canadian audience in the literatures of other cultures in Canada. The tendency of French Canadians towards isolationism has its roots in the historical and political conflicts which occurred in the French minority struggle with the English for survival in Canada. Therefore they have developed a very strong national identity and a separate culture. In John Glassco's introduction to *Poetry of French Canada in Translation*, he states:

> It will be seen that the poetry of French Canada is a poetry of exile—from France and North America alike—and that a note of desertion, of nostalgia, of the \(\text{dépayssé}\) recurs constantly, forming a kind of ground—bass to themes of avoidance, retreat and escape.\(^2\)

The word "exile" is not used here in the conventional sense of someone who has been exiled from his country, but probably denotes an isolation and lack of contact between the French Canadians and France and the English Canadians, and thus a
fee-ling of non-acceptance.

I am rooted in a people that has lost its roots,
And fields that would smile in the sun are shrinking
under so many dry seasons, so many ungarnered sheaves.

I am part of an exhausted cry, weary of beating,
banging, hammering against these walls,
these masks that spit disdain.

I walk with the ghost of a race brushed off
like an uncomplaining whore. Yves Préfontaine "Country to Let"

Gérard Tougas considers Yves Préfontaine a poet who truly
represents the collective thoughts of the Quebecois.

Saint-Denys-Garneau (1912-43) was a poet whose work
changed the shape of French Canadian poetry from the tradi-
tional form of its predecessors. Tougas comments that
Saint-Denys-Garneau revealed through his Journal a uniquely
disciplined style in Canadian literature which evoked respect
from the poets who followed his new direction in poetry.

Garneau in his Journal - Notes on Nationalism - writes:

A people forms itself by acting, by creating—that
is, by communicating. It finds itself through the
act of communication.

He states further in regard to French Canadian culture that:

The problem facing us is fundamentally human. By
searching for what is human, human values and human
justice, we shall contribute something to its solu-
tion. We must consider the human state of the
nation.

Culture, then, has a sense of human improvement. It
is essentially humanist. It wishes to form men, not
French Canadians. There is no contradiction here,
only a distinction as to priority of values, as to
direction. To make men out of French Canadians and
not French Canadians out of men.

Garneau does not believe that a psychological retreat to the
self (in order to discover the "self") can result in a cultural contribution, rather than it is the self searching process (by means of human activity) that releases the human spirit and elevates the cultural standard. It is at this point that one ought to consider the nature of the poem by Yves Préfontaine—"Country to Let"—and the fact that he is the contemporary spokesman for French Canadians and as Naim Kattan observes:

The young poets have gone much further than their predecessors. They not only affirm their accord with their people but wish to build a new society and plan a future.[29]

Préfontaine's poem ends on a note of rebellious persistence to continue the struggle for spiritual values,

And so, teeth clenched, I rage against poverty of spirit with words whose brief light flares up only to die.*

At this point one can draw a contrast between the "preoccupation with survival" in English Canadian poetry, which involves mostly "the self", and French Canadian poetry, which is more concerned with "group" survival. The statements of Garneau are equally true when considering the overall Canadian experience. When applied to a community of ethnic groups they may result in communication. However, it would be wrong to assume that the nature of modern French Canadian poetry consists solely of a need to express the collective spirit.

There seems to be an emphasis on the physical and psychological exploration in English Canadian poetry and the

*Yves Préfontaine, "Country to Let" see reference 23
spiritual, philosophical exploration in French Canadian poetry.

This type of analysis has been made by others, for example:

There is a good deal of psychological subtlety in the work of all (these) English Canadian poets of the 40's and 50's, but for spiritual insight we must turn to two of their French compatriots, Saint-Denys-Garneau and his cousin Anne Hébert. 30

Poetic examples from two contemporary women poets on a similar subject (nature), support this analysis:

Snow puts us in a dream on vast plains without track or colour
Beware, my heart, snow puts us in the saddle on steeds of foam
Ring out for a crowned childhood, snow consecrates us on high seas, dreams fulfilled, all sails set
Snow puts us in a trance, a wide spread whiteness, flaring plumes pierced by the red of this bird
My heart; a point of fire under palms of frost flows the marvelling blood. 31

Anne Hébert—"Snow"

Those in the vegetable rain retain an area behind their sprouting eyes held soft and rounded with the dream of snow precious and reminiscent as those globes—souvenir of some never nether land—which hold their snow storms circular, complete, high in a tall and teakwood cabinet.

And of the swan in death these dreamers tell of its last flight and how it falls, a plummet, pierced by the freezing bullet and how three feathers, loosened by the shot, descend like snow upon it. While hunters plunge their fingers in its down deep as a drift, and dive their hands up to the neck of the wrist in that warm metamorphosis of snow as gentle as the sort that woodsmen know who, lost in the white circle, fall at last and dream their way to death. 31a

from "Stories of Snow" by P. K. Page

While both poems deal with snow, the treatment of each is different. In Anne Hébert's poem, "Snow" symbolises a dream world philosophically set apart from the external
reality. It acquires a supernatural quality of the power "to consecrate" and bring back innocence into the world by re-emergence of "a crowned childhood". It also bears a spiritual longing for purity expressed in such metaphors as "steeds of foam", "a widespread whiteness". This poem is filled with energy—a positive movement of revival, a triumph of life over the monotony of "vast plains" where the heart becomes "a point of fire under palms of frost". The poet appears to be the very center of her experience.

In juxtaposition, "Stories of Snow" by P. K. Page, differs in tone, mood, and imagery.

While in both poems "snow" takes on the mood of a dream and evokes images of childhood, Anne Hébert's images free and elevate the spirit. Her poem rises like a chant, beyond earthly limits, and has an ecstatic tone. With P. K. Page we drift into a dream which makes us feel locked in.

We see that the innocent world of the child's glass globe has taken on a new, beautiful but sinister significance. We find ourselves inside the "globes", "which hold their snow storms circular, complete, high in a tall and teakwood closet". Then snow assumes the image of a "swan in death", and a place where the woodsmen "who, lost in the white circle, fall at last and dream their way to death".

These two poems show the contrast between the spiritual element which transcends mortality, and a poetic expression which is psychological and cerebral, and which, although highly imaginative, creates a mood of claustrophobic gloom.
A strongly religious influence lies behind the development of the spiritual element in French Canadian poetry, as well as the experience of a mass transplant of a people who fought for survival by carefully cultivating their roots in a new environment where hostile elements of nature and people prevailed. This produced strong feelings of nationalism in the older poets who laid the foundations of identity for the new ones, who have now been able to synthesize in their art the external and internal complexity of their French and Canadian existence.

In his introduction to the Oxford book of Canadian verse, A. J. M. Smith describes this situation as:

The study of the heroic past in the work of a national historian Francois Xavier Garneau and the national poet Octave Crémazie, gave an impetus to the French Canadian patriotism at the very moment it became essential to survival. The national pride of the defeated and as they felt, abandoned colonists of New France was stimulated and their wounds to some extent salved by the glowing pages of Garneau and impassioned verse of Crémazie.

The poetry of Crémazie also illustrates the religious aspects of French Canadian nature and makes its isolation more emphatic.

Pray for the exile, who far away from his country
Will die without hearing a friendly word;
Isolated in his life, isolated in his death,
No one will come to offer a prayer,
The alms of a tear onto a strange tomb!
Who thinks of the unknown asleep in the earth?

Since the time of Crémazie, as was demonstrated in previous comments and examples, French Canadian poetry has undergone many changes and from the simple, passionate and patriotic
verse emerged a new poetry expressing a more inward spiritual attitude as well as a greater note of optimism, although the feelings of isolation are still present. This change has been described by Naim Kattan:

At last, though in an ambiguous manner, the French Canadian writer has conquered his spiritual territory. Divided between a Europe whose circumference is in process of redrawing and an America he accepts only half-way and begrudgingly, he is identical with all the writers who are making their way, cautiously and despite themselves, into the age of technology—an age also of the specific, for one is no longer simple: North America when all the cultures have been melted down in a single crucible. This is a far-sighted statement which indeed grasps a more immediate problem deeply rooted inside Canada and stretches even beyond bi-culture to multi-culture. But the problem of the French Canadian poet is clearly stated, in spite of the fact that at last he has to some extent learned to cope with it.

We have thus seen how history, politics and inherited attitudes have affected French and English Canadian poetry and caused a split of Canadian literature into two main streams. We should now consider the poetry of a smaller ethnic group in Canada—the Polish émigré poets. They are also subject to problems similar to those of English and French Canadians. How have they dealt with them and do they have problems peculiar to their own ethnic group? Does their existence in Canada enrich both Canadian and Polish literature? It is at least clear that through Polish eyes, Canadian literature brings both French and English poetry into focus.
DISCUSSION OF POLISH ÉMIGRÉ POETRY
In order to better understand the work of contemporary Polish émigré poets in Canada, it is necessary to discuss briefly the history of the two Polish political emigrations. Both these emigrations from Poland were a result of war. The first emigration occurred almost a hundred and fifty years ago as a consequence of the war between Poland and Russia, which took place in 1831. The poets of the 'Romantic' era: Mickiewicz, Krasiński, Słowacki, and Norwid wrote most of their great works outside of Poland, making Paris the 'center of Polish cultural and political life'. It is in their poetry that the great national tragedy of Poland is vividly and passionately depicted in themes of glorification, messianism, nationalism, heroism, and martyrdom.

Mickiewicz and the other émigrés of the Romantic era were able to mold their poetry in the style of the romantics using spiritual and lyrical verse. However they were also politically motivated. Their displacement from Poland which must have been emotionally confusing did not result in a cultural shock, because their culture was already rooted in the long tradition of involvement with European literature. They were therefore able to continue creating in the Polish tradition, started in Poland by Rey and Kochanowski. Their message was essentially a cry for a more humanitarian leadership, and to throw off the Russian yoke.

These poets, although they belonged to a single group defined as 'Romantic', approached the conflicts of Poland in different ways and often appeared to be in competition with
each other. There is no doubt that their émigré works not only survived as an integral part of Polish literature but formed a unique tradition in the history of Polish art. However, it was Cyprian Norwid (1821-1883), a poet ignored during his lifetime but reappraised twenty years after his death, who became "the precursor of modern Polish poetry."\(^{37}\)

Norwid, whose poetry was concerned with the fate of the Polish people, was not as politically-minded as the other Polish Romantics and had a philosophy that differed from his contemporaries.

Norwid was not a politician and he maintained his distance from all the political groupings of the great emigration.

. . . . The goal of history according to Norwid was 'to make martyrdom unnecessary on the earth' and the achievement of this was the only criterion of progress, as he said himself:

'A man is born on this planet to give testimony to the truth. He should therefore know and remember that every civilization should be considered as a means and not as an aim--thus to sell one's soul to a civilization and at the same time to pray in church is to be a pharisee.'\(^{38}\)

For the cause of Poland, Mickiewicz favoured Messianism and martyrdom, exalting the human spirit to godly heights, and called Poland "the Christ of Nations." This attitude distinguished Mickiewicz's poetry from the more realistic and philosophical approach of Norwid. The latter did not mix art and nationalism to the same extent, and although his poetry expressed his moral views, it concerned itself with the nature of art and human issues, on a more universal scale.

The second great emigration, a consequence of the Second World War, was also a great national tragedy. Again
Polish literature split into two wings, the domestic and the émigré. Émigré literature, however, as Czesław Miłosz points out in The History of Polish Literature:

"Cannot be interpreted as the outgrowth of a neat political cleavage, and the picture is much more complex. . . Post-war Poland witnessed departures as well as homecomings: these were motivated sometimes by political, sometimes by purely personal reasons."

As in the first emigration, the poets of the second emigration are searching for freedom of expression which the true poet will always seek. The Romantic poets fought for the political and domestic freedom of Poland. The émigré poets of the modern era are simply fighting for a human cause—the freedom of individual expression on a more universal scale. Such a freedom is limited in modern Poland. Therefore Miłosz's statement concerning "the outgrowth" of the present émigré literature is of a rather general nature, excluding the fact that freedom of speech is a political issue, and although many writers have come and gone for "purely personal reasons" the political reason would seem to be the most important one for them to have remained outside Poland.

For a better definition one must turn to Josef Wittlin, a Polish poet and essayist who states, in his essay on "The Splendor and Squalor of Exile" that:

"Ours is not a voluntary emigration. Writers have been driven to it by bitter necessity, by a catastrophe, a national calamity—or else by the need to act, to oppose defeat in the hope of ultimate victory. In any event, the type of emigration to which we belong was produced by a set of circumstances which threatens a writer's
creativity, if not his physical safety. That is why we have adopted the somewhat melodramatic name of exiles. The word need not connote the grim image of men brutally driven out of their country. There are many among exiled writers who left of their own free will, refusing to submit to conditions they would not endure.  

The contemporary Polish poet in Canada is a transplant into a new environment whose cultural identity is still in the process of development. His condition is therefore that of man in conflict with a different culture and tradition. He did not have the advantage that the Romantic poets did, namely a similar cultural milieu. He has therefore been subjected to a cultural shock.

Modern man begins by being disoriented with respect to himself, dépayssé, he is outside of his own country, thrust into new circumstances which are like an unknown land. Such is always the vital sensation which besets a man in periods of historical crisis.

The new literature that exists in Poland is also in conflict with the restrictions imposed on it by the present regime (the result of a historical crisis) and is subject to the dual influences of Western Democracy and Communism. It has rejected traditionalism and is alienated from the Polish spirit of patriotism.

Since the mood of the majority of Poland's writers is pragmatic, it seems only fair to prognosticate that the Polish experiment in the realm of letters proceeds along constructive lines. . . .

I should like to stress some permanent features of the Polish artistic genius: sensuality, nature verging on pantheism, a keen eye for material detail coupled with the very Slavic propensity for the abstract; above all, a rapt attachment to historic tradition.

Polish poetry in Canada is also undergoing a period of transition, disorientation, a struggle for survival and
recognition in Canada and abroad. There is thus a parallel 'experiment' among the émigré writers which can be compared with that of Poland, the two groups having different problems but the same "permanent features."

Some of these problems have been discussed extensively in a symposium formed by a group of Polish poets in London who at one time were known as "Kontynenty", the name of a Polish periodical with which these poets were associated. Some are now living in Canada and one of them, Andrzej Busza, maintains that émigré poetry:

Contains wider possibilities. Who knows if our being severed from a Polish content and its purely native character, won't force us into a certain "cosmopolitanism" against which there was always opposition, and which made it more difficult for Polish poetry and literature to reach beyond the limits of their own language.43

Abroad, Polish views have become more closely interwoven with the pattern of internationalism. Outside of the now politically restricted Poland, Polish literature through the efforts of the émigré writing has a chance to escape the limitations of artistic expression in the totalitarian states. In contact with other nations it can experience for itself and draw into its own contents literary powers from the reservoirs of other great contemporary works.

The younger generation of émigré writers, who were for the most part educated in Europe (not necessarily in Poland) are now living in Canada, the United States and England, and have continued to write their poetry in Polish. They differ from poets like Zofia Bohdanowiczowa who belonged to the
Skamander tradition of Poland, and from Czesław Miłosz and Wacław Iwaniuk who belonged to the later school called the Avant-garde. These older poets are the 'links' between the Polish 'Romantic' tradition and the modern. Their poetry was crystallised in Poland, where they were educated and experienced Polish pre-war life, and the horrors of the Second World War.

Iwaniuk's poetry, and possibly the poetry of the younger émigrés, may be influenced by the trends set by Norwid. As Miłosz points out in reference to the poetry of Norwid:

> Today's readers may see in his controlled irony a foreshadowing of the kind of poetry Jules Laforgue or T. S. Elliot were to write.  

For example in *Vade Mecum*, Norwid, using irony, distinguishes between creating lyrics and merely printing:

> ... speaks: 'I started singing a rhyme...'
> Whom are you deceiving?  
> I don't feel strings trembling under your fingertip: You are merely a printer.  
> "Lyrics and Printing" (Liryka i Druk)

It was also Norwid's use of words in an effort to change the language and his attempt at free verse in Polish poetry that directed it towards modernism and the Avant-Garde. Norwid achieved a more realistic form of expression and explored man's true condition through describing his behavior. Especially in the collection of poems *Vade Mecum* he uses "gestures" instead of speech in an effort to reveal this condition. For example in a poem "Sphinx" (*Vade Mecum*, poem XV), in order to illustrate a riddle on the true nature of man, and his confrontation with it, Norwid uses a short dramatic
skit between man and Sphinx. Thus he illustrates the point by economy of dialogue accompanied by action, rather than by way of a long verbose poem as was the poetic tradition of the time. This economy of structure parallels the efforts of the Avant-garde whose aims were to change the language of the Skamander group. The latter were still linked to the 'Romantics' and imposed on their verse the limitations of the traditional rhythm and flowery language of the Romantic school. This often produced in their poetry a false and unrealistic expression of sentiment. The Avant-gardists liberated their verse from these constraints. They were more interested in the originality of the "word" and its usage in the morphological sense than as a tool of ornamentation. They were also more interested in man and his everyday life. In Vade Mecum Norwid says:

Above all your charms,
You, Poetry, and you, Speech!
One--will forever be exalted:
* * * * * * *
To give the thing--its appropriate word.46

It is not possible to do justice in translation to this or his other poems. Norwid rebelled against the rules set for him by his predecessors and, in an attempt to change them, used a different language, the construction of which make both the reading and the translation of his poems rather difficult. Unlike his contemporaries whose language was simple, Norwid's efforts to use words differently resulted in structures the uniqueness of which has fascinated many modern readers, and it is possible that the way he expressed his art may have sown
a seed for future generations of Polish poets.

The younger émigré poets have had to crystallise their poetry in a foreign environment and have been more directly influenced by the English tradition set by poets such as T. S. Elliot. Their Polish language is therefore subject to the environmental influence of English. Adam Czerniawski is of the opinion that:

Many expressions cited now as inherently Polish were really derived from Latin, German, or French. Why then wouldn't the Polish language of the 20th century, besides its "Russifications", become enriched by the influence of English?47

This would be one positive aspect of the language itself, but it could also become a paradoxical factor in the artist's work, since as Florjan Šmieja points out:

It is the English language that contains reality not the Polish, whose full and buoyant life flows far away from us. Often we must use this foreign language not only in work and on the street, much of our artistic experiences are conceived in the adopted language.48

Herein lies the frustration of the émigré poet, it is also his "splendor and squalor", and he becomes a translator of foreign experience into his native tongue. It is at this point that he is an exile, dépayssé, who turns inward to find his particular vehicle through which he can channel his art. Here is the confrontation with "the word" and giving "things" an "appropriate meaning."

Through the absorption of foreign experience and its expression in Polish, the poet enriches his own culture as well as the culture of the country in which he lives. This is providing that he has a means of communicating his art to
the people of other cultures.

Both the younger and older Polish émigré poets rely solely on a small number of Polish publications. These include 'Kultura' in Paris, 'Oficyna Poetów I Malarzy', and 'Wiadomości' in London, England. These periodicals have been for many years the stronghold of free expression for the Polish émigrés.

Will this poetry survive? is the question that haunts all those concerned with Polish culture. Bogdan Czaykowski has described the evolutionary process involved in the survival of émigré poetry as "an experiment the result of which is difficult to predict." Although this statement was made in 1960, Polish émigré poetry is still in a state of crisis. It has not as yet been identified as an independent body of literature bound by a common literary style, other than that of the language, and its freedom from several characteristics such as "sentimentalism" and "propagandism". It also has not flowed into the mainstream of the national Polish literature for obvious reasons. However the scene constantly changes. Some notes of optimism are in order. Firstly, it is in some way a victory that an anthology of Polish poems collected by Andrzej Lam, published as recently as 1972 in Warsaw, Poland, includes poems of some of the émigrés, among them Adam Czerniawski who now lives in London, and Bogdan Czaykowski, who resides in Canada. Secondly, translations are being made of the Polish émigré poetry, into English and other languages, thus making their work accessible to a larger audience.
Canadian periodicals such as 'Prism International', 'Tamarack Review' and anthologies like the 'Volvox' are now publishing translations of poets of different nationalities. Among these are Waclaw Iwaniuk, Bogdan Czaykowski, and Andrzej Busza. Surely the concept of "an experiment" can be applied equally well to the survival of both French and English poetry in Canada, for, as we have seen, these groups are culturally isolated and are still in the process of development. We have already quoted Maria Kuncewicz who has described the state of poetry in Poland as being "an experiment". This runs counter to the argument that Polish émigré poetry is in danger, by being isolated from the mainstream of Polish poetry. Émigré poetry may well stand in a stronger position, being less isolated through having a freer access to other cultures and, in fact, it is the national mainstream that may not survive.

The Polish émigré poets now residing in Canada who have their roots in Polish and British European culture are also influenced by English and French Canadian culture, as well as that of the United States. The Polish poet must therefore either look to the past for nourishment, allow the present to influence him, or drift between the two.

Hence the paradoxical condition essential to our lives that man has no way of orientating himself in the future except to reflect on what the past has been, the past whose form is unequivocally fixed and unchangeable. 50

Ortega y Gasset argues that in order to gain an understanding of the present or even predict the future, man must first examine each segment of history, which he terms "the

-- Quote 42, page 26 --
linear system" stretched across time.

The Polish émigré poet builds his work of the present out of his cultural past, and because of his origin, his condition, whether directly or indirectly, is a consequence of some moment in the history of that culture.

The émigrés find this "moment in time" in a way that reflects their own cultural background. The oldest poet in the anthology that follows is Zofia Bohdanowiczowa who belonged to the Skamander group which formed itself during the years of independent Poland. The following manifesto expresses their views and aims in poetry.

When raising the old claims we are aware that we are a hundred years older, that our words are different though they sound the same, that new times will see and must see in a symbol another meaning. We are aware that owing to a turn of history we have to incarnate what those men of the past announced. ...  

We are not tempted by sermonizing, we do not want to convert anybody. ...  

We believe unshakably in the sanctity of a good rhyme, in the divine origin of rhythm, in revelation through images born in ecstasy and through shapes chiseled by work.51

"Skamander Manifesto"

In alluding to the incarnation of "what those men of the past announce," the manifesto refers to the 'Romantics' and their poetic traditions. The following poem exemplifies the Skamander tradition, except that it was not possible to translate the rhythm and rhyme of the original Polish version, without changing the meaning.
Summer evening, how much sadness in you,
A path weaves among the colored gardens
Like a country road.
A red and white insignia hangs from the barracks.
Today is the anniversary
Of some long-past national triumph.
A two-tone flutter along the squatting walls,
A scent of gilly flowers, a wooden chapel,
Mallows and hop leaves....
And behind the chapel in blackberry bushes,
A star-gazer whistles the kujawiak,
Pushing back his hat.
Evening on the ground and evening in the sky
Evening eyes introverted,
Evening temples and grey hair.
And we on the stage of a dark theater
Under the whirling rose of foreign winds
Continually act our play, "The Native Land". 52
Penrhos—Polish Home
(Penrhos, 1954)

The poem reveals sentiments of nostalgia and patriotism, there
is a reference to Polish folklore (kujawiak*) and romantic
allusions to nature reflecting in its descriptive terms the
Polish countryside. In the second part of the poem the poet
introduces the concept of the dépayssé and puts the emphasis
on the tragedy of the lost homeland.

Bohdanowiczowa also illustrates the concept of the
dépayssé being displaced from his moment in historical time.
The following poem was written in Toronto on the day of her
meeting with Joseph Wittlin:

Today's poem disagrees with me
I seek consolation but find foreboding
Historical nostalgia
Expatriation out of time and space

..........  

Where is man creative man—
Who seeks a link with the world but has none

*National dance of Poland
Modernism draws its strength from attacks on the past.

We are a herd of recluses.53

In the above poem Bohdanowiczowa drops her traditional style and changes to free verse. She also attacks modern society and blames the isolation of man on his break with the past.

Wacław Iwaniuk belongs to the post-Skamander school of the Avant-garde. This school eliminated traditional verse in favour of a freer structure. It advocated the use of metaphors, a simpler statement of everyday life on themes such as the industrial and technological development of the city, and the economical use of the word as a necessary part of the poem. This school was also described by the historian and critic Kazimierz Wyka:

... as consisting of symbolist-classicist elaboration (sometimes with a surrealist or expressionist tinge) of themes suggesting and announcing an inevitable historical and moral catastrophe.54

Iwaniuk's poetry concerns itself with a historical perspective and looks to the past, and like Norwid uses this to warn of the future.

For Norwid, history was a continuity, a process tending in a certain direction. ... A given civilization was just a phase between the past and the future, the present could not simply be cast aside, because it was the place where the future was being engendered.55

Edward Dusza, a Polish poet and critic, in an article on émigré poets, says of Iwaniuk:

The author lives in two worlds: in a nightmare world and the world of reality, and nevertheless has no courage to turn away from the past in order to enter the present.56
While Dusza praises Iwaniuk's poetry, he does not see the merit of his "living in the past". Obviously "the world of reality" must be "the present" and the fact that Iwaniuk continues to create in a new environment, is proof enough that he has entered the reality of the present. He is concerned about the importance of the present needs of Polish emigré poetry and its continuation. Also his looking back is a statement that a better future is engendered in the recognition of the mistakes of the past. This is his message to his contemporaries.

While Bohdanowiczowa looked back with nostalgia to the pre-war free Poland, Iwaniuk's "moment in history", to which he constantly returns, is the Poland of World War Two and its aftermath. Iwaniuk uses the concept of a "self-owned cosmos" as described in his poem "My Contemporaries". This "cosmos" is a realm in historical time, through which Iwaniuk reveals, explores, and evokes in vivid images and metaphors—the cruelty of man, the crimes which are committed, forgotten (by the world) and committed again.

Reach out and you will find many forgotten facts inside which a hungry memory claws.....

People can be identified by the chronicle of time.....

How do we identify a sentence rolled by fear
How do we identify the silhouettes of our executioners. 57

In this poem "The Sign", Iwaniuk states that we know and understand what is happening around us by "the sign" the traces that time leaves on people. In another poem he actually
identifies himself with the past, in concrete physical terms, to describe a metaphysical condition:

Bewildered let us look at nature's rape—
could the claw of the human brain
reach further than death? Just think
how many boils still burning inside me
nature has not healed. How many open wounds.
My hands purple with eczema until this very day
cannot touch life.
After all they carried death.58

The poet looks into himself, at his "present condition", for answers which he can only find in the world of experience.

His work reflects this in an interesting juxtaposition of paradoxes in time and space.

I bring my face closer to the mirror but there is no mirror
I trace my features with a hand but I have no hand.....

I am filled with memories—time's dry splinters....

How I wish to be there.....59

There have been few critical analyses of Iwaniuk's poetry. Andrzej Chciuk of the Tygodnik Polski in praising Iwaniuk also comments that he has not become a popular poet because he does not follow the contemporary 'cerebral' poetic trends. He (Iwaniuk) does not consider the taste of the average reader.

Iwaniuk, stripped of the false romantic poetry. Iwaniuk biting into each word until he is thoroughly familiar with it, walks in front of the reader. Walks alone following his poetry, his own image, his own criteria of beauty and truth, cool and collected, and yet so passionate—walks behind man and his time.60

Iwaniuk's life style, and his sense of history, and the importance he attributes to the "word" in poetry resemble somewhat the individuality of Norwid. For example, both
Miłosz in 'The History of Polish Literature', and 'Post-War Polish Poetry', both published in North America, and Lam in his new anthology of contemporary Polish poets, which does include some of the émigré poets--published in Poland--have chosen not to include Iwaniuk.

Iwaniuk like Norwid has been critical of his contemporaries and the limited poetic language of his predecessors. Norwid in the following poem criticises his Polish elders:

Laurels, I have not taken, then or now,  
A single leaf from you, nor a leaf's notch  
Only perhaps a cool shade on my brow  
(and that's not yours but comes  
with the sun's touch);  
Nor did I take from you, giants of stardom,  
Anything save your roads all overgrown  
With Wormwood, and your curse-scorched  
earth and boredom.  
I came alone, I wander on alone.61

In this poem Norwid shows his independence and his individuality. He claims not to have followed any poetic style but goes on alone and creates his own. This is comparable to the previous comment on Iwaniuk by Chciuk, who said Iwaniuk "walks alone following his poetry".

I am proud that I am  
that I am crowned by a self-owned cosmos  
although my body is not meant for crucifixion  
I enjoy the faraway slothful planets in the dark.  
The day whispers in my ear secrets  
unobstructed by the wayside wormwood  
dry words re-opening wounds.  
While they, so cocksure, so life-oriented,  
cannot even free themselves from the day's grey web,  
their word slips by slyly  
blindly, not touching the root of matter.  
Their feet creep stealthily side by side  
and only a golden ducat from a counterfeit mint  
and darkness will pity them.62

"My Contemporaries"--Wacław Iwaniuk
It is interesting to note that both poets refer to wormwood, the image of a bitter plant which represents decay of poetic expression. Iwaniuk criticises his contemporaries for not searching and exploring new words and lacking ingenuity in their use of language.

Although Iwaniuk's poetry uses sharp painfilled images that bring back the memories of Poland at war he does it indirectly, never stating the specific and therefore his work is universal. He is always searching for new words and new forms. As an émigré he looks to all aspects of his environment for inspiration. There is in this search a sign of great optimism concerning the development and survival of Polish émigré poetry. This optimism is based on Iwaniuk's strong sense of identity as a poet, his knowledge of the past and his faith in his own culture. The younger Polish émigré poets are more sceptical about the future. This may be the result of their own Polish cultural displacement and the condition of being dépaysé. This displacement, which occurred at a much younger age, is greater than that of Iwaniuk. We shall see how they have dealt with this problem in the following section.

Iwaniuk's optimism and hope for discovering new expression is illustrated by the following poem:

Much has been torn from us. We are returning to asceticism Poorly constructed baroque fell off us together with the fat. We await in ourselves the coming of the sign And only thus can we identify ourselves.63

"The Sign"

One of the youngest émigrés belonging to the Kontynenty
group, Andrzej Busza, whose work appears in an anthology of poems *Ryby na piasku* published in England, rebels against the influence of the Polish literary tradition.

Your grotesque concepts  
shattered my world  
into bits

and I was left alone  
on the junk pile of the absurd

How can I  
a child of a cataclysmic era  
raise temples of hope  
for future generations?

You have destroyed for me the old forms;  
new ones, I am unable to create  
I wander night after night  
in the ruins of gothic churches  
and dig into the rubble

I am searching for the treasures  
of time past  
but the debris becomes  
an even greater chaos

Is it not better to stop  
this sisyphus-like work  
and exist in a state of neutral inactivity  
which at least does not create new chaos?

Maybe at last a new generation will come  
freed from time's exorcism  
freed from your atrocious dreams  
and will build a city of sun  
on the plains of a new day.

Let silence  
become their foundation  
upon which they will embellish  
their vision with form.64

"The Argument"—Andrzej Busza

The poem expresses a hope for the future of Polish poetry in a "new generation" still to come. It also expresses anger, frustration and criticism of the "grotesque concepts" of the poet's Polish predecessors. Confronted with his Polish
and English background he feels deserted "on the junk pile of the absurd" and questions his ability to create new poetic forms. This dilemma has led Busza to the formulation of his own inner world, within which he can create as does Iwaniuk, his "self-owned cosmos".

although it's often close here and mildew afforest the wallpaper with green tetter

I keep the windows shut from the other side the whole orchard creeps led by the full moon

mountains gnaw at the sky swallowing anaemic constellations piece by piece

but I more or less have already controlled my own microclimate

once a week I clip the cactuses on the sill and feed millet to mice

when outside the gutters wheeze I plug my ears with cotton wool and read the Odyssey.65

"Microcosmology"--Andrzej Busza

While both poets have in common the idea of a world in which they can separately exist and which they can control, Iwaniuk's is derived from a moment in history and contains some of the elements of the school of the Polish Avant-garde. Busza, who is more alienated from the Polish literary past,
and is more influenced by the trends of English literature, has created a "microclimate" structured in universal time, "But I more or less have already controlled my own microclimate". This gives Busza the freedom to embrace time past, present, and future without imposed restrictions. His use of the Polish language also allows him to create new trends in Polish émigré poetry by isolating it from the clichés of English. Thus Busza has become the "new generation" he speaks of in his poem "The Argument".

Another poem called "Argument", written by Bogdan Czaykowski, expresses a conflict which differs somewhat from that of Busza. The conflict lies within the "two incomplete realities" of the Polish émigré poet who is torn between them. As in the poem "Rebellion in Verse" he revolts against his cultural displacement.

There is no place for me
not here not there
here there is freedom
a fish on the sand
there a cage awaits me in the horn of plenty
between the theatre and the stage
I am the iron curtain
dividing
two incomplete realities.

Czaykowski like Iwaniuk, recognises the importance of the past but seems uncomfortable with the present. He is trying to find his identity in two worlds; that of his Polish heritage and that of the émigré worlds of Britain and Canada. Like Norwid he has chosen to look to the unlimited past, using the history of world culture: from mythology and the
Bible to modern literature. For example, one can look at his poem 'The Garden' (Ogrod) as an allusion to the Garden of Eden as well as a childhood paradise:

Lost, which I described from memory,
or to the poem called "Mythology" (Mitologia), which includes images of Greek mythology e.g. Apollo, Cassandra, The Furies, etc. His awareness of modern literature is found for example in the poem "The Stanza of Dylan Thomas" which also contains philosophical and historic concepts, themes of time and space, life, death, and rebirth. Like both Iwaniuk and Norwid he sees a link between the past, present and future. He uses the past to describe man's condition in the present and thus questions the future. Unlike Iwaniuk, but like Norwid, in his own time, he has still to find his "moment in time".

Czaykowski's expression of rebellion stems from a feeling that he does not belong. His poetry reflects the real world and not a "self-owned cosmos" or a "microclimate".

... Czaykowski says that 'he is like a fish thrown onto sand'. We are all that fish. We can return to the sea, we can die on the sand, or of course we can also change into an amphibian... the matter concerns our basic attitude to life, the shape of our life, of the fruition of our creativity.67

Lawrynowicz in commenting on Czaykowski's image of "fish thrown onto sand", which is the émigré condition--one of the two "Incomplete Realities"--gives three possibilities for the future. Polish émigré poets can revert to Polish tradition, Polish émigré poetry can die, or it can evolve into new forms. Perhaps it is in the last possibility that the future of
Polish émigré poetry lies. This depends, as Lawrynowicz points out, on the poet's attitude towards his creativity as an émigré in a new environment. Czaykowski once stated that we are still in the stages of an "experiment"; he thus tries to find a path along which Polish émigré poetry will evolve, and he continues to question:

What have I done with the boat?  
Was it made of paper?  
Did it fall apart in the rain?  
Oh, here are the keys!  
But none fit any of the doors.68

"The Keys"

Where in history, in what time or place, does an exile find himself? It is from this predicament that Czaykowski derives his poetic drive.

... he attacks directly the pitiful condition of the poet in exile and applies in that way the old principle of existential wisdom: to transform through awareness, one's weakness into material and thence into the source of one's energy.69

Both Czaykowski and Iwaniuk use irony to emphasize various states of conflict. This irony is often expressed by the juxtaposition of contrasting statements to produce a paradox:

I bring my face closer to the mirror, but there is no mirror.
I trace my features with a hand, but I have no hand.70
Iwaniuk—"The Mirror"

On which side of the door am I?  
Am I looking in or out of the window?71
"The Keys"--Czaykowski

This use of paradox can be also found in the poems of Busza and Ihnatowicz:
even the rose
the flower of dawn
the sweetness of suns
distilled from lowly grass
in a petaled chalice
stands firmly rooted
like a white tooth
in dung.72

"The Rose"--A. Busza

In very concrete terms "The Rose" exemplifies a paradox in which ugliness and beauty are inextricably linked.

Like Iwaniuk and Busza, Ihnatowicz also commands his own universe. His use of images within images produces a telescoped view, not always easy to discern. The following poem embodies this technique which Ihnatowicz calls his "Internal Landscape".

Looking into the darkness at my own light
where a luminous fish hangs motionless
in the darkness that spreads out like water
I close my eyes suddenly and through a clenched eyelid
I see an image, contrast of night, brightness.
Thus sight immersed in itself
constantly crosses the border
there and back like a pendulum
and I know, I am looking at a world
that can only be seen in the mirror.
Suddenly the fish explodes into light like a scream
and through air suspended between stars
we fall scattered into ashes
when the monster of the ocean's depths devours us
so that transformed into him
we may rise again.73

"Internal Landscape"--Ihnatowicz

Ihnatowicz's use of images is more abstract than Busza's. His juxtaposition of light and darkness produces a paradox where light and darkness are at some point inextricable:

Looking into the darkness at my own light....
I see an image, contrast of night, brightness,

The paradox becomes more involved because of this "telescoped
technique"; like a telescope the images are fitted one within the other, so that they change in perspective:

Suddenly the fish explodes into light like a scream. The metaphor is transformed and in this way extended—we see that the fish explodes into light, the light then becomes us, our ashes, which are in turn transformed into a monster, who in turn transforms into us as we are resurrected. This although seemingly complex in technique is economical in its use of imagery.

In the "Internal Landscape" of Ihnatowicz there lies a spiritual activity within a religious concept of death and resurrection. Busza's concern with poetic form in concrete images reveals the poet's firm control of emotion. Ihnatowicz's poetic form is designed to allow a greater release of emotion. He does this by use of abstract images and the spiritual transcendence of the concrete world.

Like Iwaniuk's, Ihnatowicz's poetry does not exclude his historical awareness of the Polish plight in World War II.

The poem "Children in the Window" consists of two parts. The first describes a Polish parade

Day before yesterday light frolicked in the windows....
processions pulled along the streets.....

Children in the window watered the streets with rose petals and lilies of the valley...

The second part grimly describes the tragedy that befell the country, when the war started,

that was yesterday, then night fell
airplanes were gathering flowers in the dark
when we got up at last (woken by sobs)
the streets were strown with corpses.
With the change of time Ihnatowicz employs a dramatic style in the change of scene. It is as though one were viewing a flashback within a flashback.

"then there was nothing but dried up feathers departing from the windows of silent angels."

The late Danuta Bienkowska, who also experienced wartime Poland, although she expressed nostalgia for Poland, did not really allude to the war in her poems. Her response to the émigré life was expressed in the form of satire and social criticism and above all the element of the grotesque. In her poem "A Party" she uses "Parrots" as her image of the capitalistic bourgeois society. It is a world of triteness, in which the external appearances and the content of conversation undermine the more significant facts of life:

..... I wish to be immortal
Yes, Yes, without exaggeration
And sit forever on velvet sofas
Hand in hand, nose to nose.

..... You too? Or not?
Death is so prosaic
I told my hairdresser
I want a permanent
For all eternity......
"A Party"

The grotesque concept of life is expressed in the last verse of the poem:

Life resembles an egg
White outside
Yellow inside
And then nothing.
"A Party"

In the second part of the poem "A Monologue at Intermission Between Two Cocktails" the poet reveals her dépaysé attitude using as an analogy a Polish man at a cocktail party who
babbles drunkenly:

I come from there
Where we all come from,
But for some time now
That means nothing.
Even our old song
'Man of the Mountains, have you no regrets,'
Sounds somewhat out of tune.

. . . . . . . . .

I was therefore I am, gentlemen,
And as long as I am
Please don't laugh
Because I know what I am aiming at
It is not easy to change one's skin
But I hear it pays well
My name is Jan
I am not a man of the mountains
And I regret nothing.75

"A Party"—D. Bienkowska

A well known Polish folk song (Man of the mountains have you no regrets) is the central point on which the entire poem pivots emphasizing a sarcastic statement on the condition of the Polish émigré. Other poems of Bienkowska express nostalgia and yearning for the past.

As we have seen, the Polish émigré poets have chosen different approaches to poetic expression, as a consequence of dealing with the cultural conflicts of a dépayssé. There is no single school of Polish émigré poetry. They must all be considered as individuals.

The themes dealt with in this section have been concerned with the general problems of Polish poetry in exile and its roots in history and culture and its place in time. These are questions that influence the survival of Polish émigré poetry. We can only speculate on the answers.
A recent émigré writer, Alexander Solzhenitsyn whose moment in time, like Iwaniuk's is the past and whose "self-owned cosmos" is the Russian labor camp, in an encounter with a young Russian émigré—who had been arrested on his return to Russia--speculates on the fate of émigré poetry.

We would often lie beside one another on the wooden bunks. I tried to understand as best I could, and our encounter revealed to me a concept confirmed by later encounters--that the outflow from Russia of a significant part of her spiritual forces, which occurred in the Civil War, had deprived us of a great and important stream of Russian culture. Everyone who really loves that culture will strive for the reunion of both streams, the one at home and the tributary abroad. Only then will our culture attain wholeness. Only then will it reveal its capacity for benign development. And I dream of living until that day.76

Whether the Polish émigré literature may one day form a new and unique chapter in the history of Polish literature still remains to be seen.
SOME ASPECTS OF POLISH ÉMIGRÉ POETRY IN THE
CONTEXT OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH CANADIAN POETRY
The Canadian poet cannot write in a distinctively Canadian language; he is compelled to take the language he was brought up to speak, whether French, English, or Icelandic and attempt to adjust that language to an environment which is foreign to it, if not foreign to himself.\textsuperscript{77}

This expresses some of the problems facing all the cultural groups of Canada particularly the English and French Canadian and of course the Polish émigré poet.

The English Canadian poets' environment is influenced by elements peculiar to the Canadian landscape. Nature to an English Canadian poet is a negative and a terrifying force, creating a parallel between the external landscape of his environment and the interior landscape of his art. The English Canadian poet thus becomes an uninvolved observer of his external world and describes it in his art in the same manner. Margaret Atwood in "The Journey to the Interior" uses words that create only a mood rather than an internal spiritual world and leaves the reader on the peripheries of depression.

I notice; that the hills which the eyes make flat as a wall, welded together, open as I move to let me through; become endless as prairies; that the trees grow spindly, have their roots often in swamps; that this is a poor country.\textsuperscript{78}

While the language in Atwood's poem exhibits the thin use of metaphors (spindly trees, a cliff that is now known, a tangle of branches, etc.) it also reflects her vision of the Canadian landscape as "poor" and leaves not only her poem but also the reader bereft of the rich experience of nature.

In contrast the French Canadian poet who lives in the
same country and experiences the same landscape, does not
observe it impassively but becomes its central force. His
poetic language is therefore richer, more lyrical and more
meaningful. Yves Préfontaine's poem "The River's Blood and
Sap" is an experience:

Rising in the River's blood and sap I hear the
song of tomorrow, of my country tall as a red pine,
blazing in a fire of pride on cold American sands.

Louder and louder at the headwaters grows
the murmur of the gagged man; soon torrents will
thunder from our feverish throats.

And I shall not be a single red pine consumed in vain,
but a living flame whirled by the winds from tree to tree,
until along the shores of the River of Speech,
a whole forest is burning.79

Instead of describing his environment as Atwood does in
morbid and flat words, Préfontaine gives it the image of a "red
pine, blazing in a fire of pride". He then extends this image
to "a living flame", until "along the shores of the River of
Speech, a whole forest is burning". The words of the poem
ring out like a song, and the metaphors come alive with depth
and spiritual fervour.

The French Canadian poet, by becoming the center of his
environment, has learnt to mould it to his cultural and artis-
tic needs. The English Canadian poet is still a victim of
his environment and by remaining an outsider has not absorbed
its richness into the artistic expression of a meaningful
world.

In the poems quoted above the environment is described
in terms of nature. Both poets react differently to
the same landscape. One is isolated from it; the other is in communion with it:

It is all very well for a European poet to see nature in terms of settled order like Wordsworth....

What the poet sees in Canada, therefore is very different from what the politician or businessman sees and different again from what his European contemporaries see.

Frye is correct in his distinction between what the European émigré poet and the Canadian poets see in Canada. Why should there be such a distinction? The émigré has a choice of languages in which to write. This is less likely for the older poets than for the younger ones. However, if he chooses to write in his own tongue, in this case Polish, then he must cope with a new environment and find words to describe this foreign experience. In the poetry of Andrzej Busza, which is written in Polish by choice, he has mastered this problem by creating a world of his own. This world can be considered orderly, because it is fully controlled by the poet.

transparent world
as if someone had injected
glass into the veins

fruit sings
on a glass tree

the wind ruffles
cellophane leaves

a woman walks
along the garden's pane

she has a body
and entrails of crystal

her feet do not shadow
even an inch of ground
below her she clearly sees
a multitered honeycomb
a beehive
of glass coffins.  

Busza creates a world which is molded by his careful
control of the language. In this respect it is the language
which contains the reality of Busza's art. It is a unique
microcosm isolated from the English speaking environment. In
the preface to "Astrologer in the Underground" Michael Bullock
comments on Busza's art:

He writes in a tradition which, if it is not specifically Polish, is at least strongly European. His poems
are full of intense emotion held in check and subordinated to the demands of form and structure. They are
characterised by lucid and vivid imagery formulated with
great economy of language. A rich content is compressed
and crystallised into a few short stanzas that have the
concentrated glow of stained glass windows.

In the poem "Glass" each image faithfully corresponds
to and becomes an integral part of a "glass world". In the
first line the world is created, "as if someone had injected
glass into the veins". The world, although seemingly static,
moves as "the wind ruffles cellophane leaves" and a "woman walks
along the garden's pane". In the last line the cycle is com-
pleted as the woman sees "a beehive of glass coffins". The
poet is an arbitrator; he builds, he destroys. He does not
condemn nor bemoan the fate of his environmental condition.
His words in carefully carved metaphors describe what lies in
the centre of his creative energy. Although the artistic
worlds of Atwood and Préfontaine differ from those of Busza,
one can conclude that the affinity between him and the French
poet lies in their mastery of their "spiritual landscapes",
while Atwood's psyche continues to flounder in the Canadian swamp.

The worlds created in Busza's poetry are not exclusively artificial, they can also include the real world of nature. For example:

\[
\text{day after day} \\
\text{the rose} \\
\text{becomes} \\
\text{the center and czarina} \\
\text{of my garden} \\
\text{greedily} \\
\text{drawing in} \\
\text{all the red...} \\
\text{the garden pales and blanches}^{83}
\]

In the world of Busza's garden, we experience the overpowering richness of the red rose, which in contrast to the linguistic form in which the poem is presented extends metaphorically well beyond its realistic proportions. Thus we have the surrealist image of the real world within the architecture of the constructed world of the poet.

The isolationist elements in Busza's poetry appear, as we have seen, within the "microclimates" as does the fact that he uses Polish in an English context. In Atwood's poetry the theme of isolation is a consequence of her confrontation with nature and search for the Canadian identity. The feeling of isolation expressed in Préfontaine's poetry is political since he is in harmony with nature, but as the "voice of the French collective" suffers the consequences of separatism in Canada.

It may be argued that isolationism in contemporary poetry reveals the universal condition of the artist. An
émigré is frequently in a situation where he is deprived of an interaction with poets of his own origin and who are in a similar predicament. The "Kontynenty" group which existed in London, England around 1960 was an example of a group of émigré poets who inspired each other through their interaction. Among them at that time were Czaykowski, Busza and Ihnatowicz, three poets appearing in this anthology. In reference to this group Julian Przyboś has written:

Time and social circumstance change and describe more and more the Pole and the Englishman who finds expression in your poems. In more than one I detected that which I awaited in vain to find in the poetry of your émigré colleagues; a beneficial creative influence of foreign poetry, a new flow of experiences, new discipline, new direction in the creative style of the poetic will...

This is absent from the lyrics of your contemporaries in Poland, those are the basis for your Polish poetry.

Although the Polish émigrés in Canada are now deprived of interaction, being so few and dispersed across this large country, their poetry has nevertheless been enriched by contact with a new culture. Both the English and French Canadian poets have the potential to form groups like the "Kontynenty", since they are not isolated by language or environment from each other. The French Canadian poets are at least bound by a common cause. This motivates them to communicate with each other, and strengthens their ability to express a strong sense of identity in their poetry. The paradox of the English Canadian poet is that in spite of the fact that the conditions for communication exist, he seems unmotivated to interact. His poetry expresses a search for identity,
but one senses in it a lack of sufficient energy necessary for the creation of something unique. This lethargy is still, as we have seen, a consequence of the national inferiority complex which stems from the "colonial mind".

In contrast to the English Canadian poet who is more at ease with North American society despite the British influence in his background, the Polish émigré poet who lives in Canada has the reverse problem and is more at home in Europe. His poetry reflects his European culture in his vision of Canadian nature and society. Because he is rooted in European culture his poetry has an identity of its own and therefore expresses a more individual style. It has a universal appeal and therefore communicates more effectively.

To a Polish poet, Canadian society and its philistine attitude towards life is a harassing experience. Because of his well developed literary background he is better able to cope with this new experience and his poetry will therefore absorb it in a way that will add rather than detract from the poetic expression.

A crowd is like the sea.  
We dip our hands in it  
and almost blindly  
fish out companions  
We walk out together on the beach  
for our bare feet to taste the yellow sand.

We drop into the dry sand  
next to each other like sea-shells  
and listen to our own sound,  
unable to pierce the crust  
that covers it  
unable to explore the secret
of our own and another's music.

Next to us, abandoned in yellow sand, lie crusts of fractured shells empty and silent.

In a while the tide will moisten the sand beneath, in a while the waves will deafen and carry us to their depths, where we lose ourselves.

"Man is only a Humming Sea-shell"—Czaykowski

By giving man the image of a "Humming Sea-shell" Czaykowski has constructed a non-communicating society. Each person, encrusted by his own hard shell, neither reaches out nor is able to be reached. While this is true of society in general it particularly applies to Canadian society, a point that has been discussed in previous pages. In the last stanza of the poem one gets the feeling that if this lack of communication persists, society will eventually be destroyed and the language of poetry be dead.

John Newlove's poem reflects this non-communication in English Canadian society through very crude, though cleverly contrived images:

What are people talking about. Everywhere I go they whisper. They stick their eyes at me, right at the base of the breastbone, when I'm not looking.

The breastbone seems flat, pointed like a dagger to the top of my stomach.

O, my stomach, my stomach... when the knife rips you open it will find coffee and four strips of bacon, pieces of chewed beard and a handwritten note saying I have left town forever again.

This poem draws the subjective image of a "victim" struck with paranoia, whose only consciousness is that of a
stomach filled with food, and attacked by a knife. Thus in fear the victim keeps on running, still the observer, not the participant.

The difference between the two poems is apparent in the one-sided awareness within the expression of the condition of the English Canadian poet. He is preoccupied, particularly with himself, he obviously doesn't communicate with others. The poem projects a mood in which one senses panic, fear, and shallowness of thought. In contrast, Czaykowski's poem expresses a universal awareness and understanding of the human condition, and embodies within the philosophical concept of the poem, lyrical verse, accompanied by rich and sensitive images. The man who is a "Humming Sea-shell" is not 'victimized' for the same reasons that the character in Newlove's poem is. The former is suffering from la condition humaine in general, while the latter is an exile in his own country. Here once more we witness the elements of isolationism and lack of communication as they apply to the Polish émigré and the English Canadian poet. We also see the difference in the treatment of the same theme by the two poets.

I have long been impressed in Canadian poetry by a tone of deep terror in regard to nature. . . . It is not a terror of the dangers or discomforts or even the mysteries of nature but a terror of the soul at something that these things manifest.87

A further example of this condition, this time in regard to nature, is expressed in the poetry of Earle Birney:
Then he knew though the mountain slept the winds were shaping its peak to an arrowhead poised

But by now he could only bar himself in and wait for the great flint to come singing into his heart.

Man is not in harmony with nature, there is no positive communion. He awaits his fate passively, he sees it as being the only reality. He has not assessed the value of nature nor his role in it. He is primitive in his attitude to survival.

In the mind of the Polish poet, man is an integral part of nature and therefore it is not something with which he struggles but something he is in harmony with. He can therefore regard the "terrifying aspect" of Canadian nature philosophically, intellectually interpreting it as part of the working order of life.

I

The mountain moved a great bulk pierced by a tunnel as if crumbled within by a dark thought a rubble of rocks suddenly slides in an avalanche beyond the cathedral rock a parting of waters as rivers unravel from streams at the parting of the waters where time has a stone back I drink from a chained mug from a dog's gullet the sun above me whittles a lake of boats a bird cries in the waterfall
II

In the mountains
air is clear
the panoramic copperplate
tightly clamps the passage of escape
one's own death is visible

who falls
who when wounded crawls
like a rattlesnake
who stonily stares
who thunderously glides by

a cloud silently closes the overpass above
a fuming storm fills the wild spaces
dark is the climb
deaf is the fall.89

"From the Rocky Mountains"—Czaykowski

The interpretation of nature in Czaykowski's poem differs from Birney's in demonstrating how the aspect of nature evolves with the aspect of time. In the concept of the moving mountain, lies the concept of its historical life on a universal time scale. The beautiful image that runs through the poem is the movement of the mountain as analogous with the movement of time. "The tunnel" in its "great bulk" is but an image of man's tiny segment on this infinite scale, no more than "a rubble of rocks". Man, the observer, but at the same time a participant, at some "moment in time", "where time has a stone back", drinks "at the parting of the waters". But even the mug from which he drinks is "chained", it is not his water, it is not his mug. He is but a brief instant in time, as "the sun whittles a lake of boats", no more than the cry of a bird "in the waterfall". In this gigantic panorama of time and space "one's own death is visible", the mountain lives on uninfluenced by the wounds imposed by men, for example "The
tunnel" and "thunderously glides by". Man, too, "when wounded crawls", and when hurt "stonily stares". "Dark is the climb, deaf is the fall" embraces the inevitability of both the beginning (the climb) and the end (the fall) for both man and nature. In Birney's "Bushed" the man sees the mountain as a menacing messenger "shaping its peak to an arrowhead" in order to eventually strike him dead. The mountain symbolizes the conquest of man by nature. It is obvious from this comparison that the maturity of Czaykowski's poem lies in his ability to communicate his human experience with regard to his environment, no matter how hostile it may appear to Birney.

In Paul Wyczynski's "Le langage des arbres" we see another aspect of nature which is analogous with human life. The tree is:

That which in times of extreme creative energy has become for some poets an honest testimony of their efforts, the magic mirror of their dreams....
The union with a tree is already the beginning of a symbol that suggests the blossoming, the spirit and the eternal movement.

'Live like a tree' remarks Bachelard, 'what growth, what depth, what rectitude, what truth.'

In the poem "Obituary" Bohdanowiczowa "mirrors her dream" in a tree:

Tree silent as thought
Mysterious as a parable
Elevated as a cathedral propped on black arches
Where angels cast from the sun
Dance along the billowing stucco,
Painted aquamarine......

Afterwards darkness grew on the leaves,
Dew welled up, fog floated,
And I said goodnight to the tree
With Robert Frost's sentimental poem
Tree at my window, window tree......"
In this dream the poet approaches what Maria Kuncewicz referred to as "Love of nature verging on pantheism". The tree becomes a cathedral, with angels dancing around it. In the second part of the poem the dream is shattered when:

People came with saws and axes
With hearts of screws and factory smoke
A handful of Lilliputians they swarmed at the trunk
Dwarfs hate giants.

They sawed it systematically
First the hands then the arms
The green head on the black carcass
Falttered for a long time.
Then they butchered the body into quarters
Through the breast, stomach, loins
And drove it out to an unknown cemetery
In the trucking caravans of death.

Now the world tumbled into my window:
The dynamo and tin drums
Sexological posters
Rouged showcases
Posts, chimneys, wires.
And the gasoline-poisoned wind
And the sky torn into shreds
By the propellers' iron fingers

While on the uncovered window-sill
Whose naked whiteness glints above the street
A stupefied pigeon tramps in circles

Always cooing the same thing:
Tree at my window, window tree.....91
"Obituary"--Bohdanowiczowa

Having lost the shelter of the tree and what it stood for, the world of a new environment is suddenly exposed:

Toronto--a place of "sexological posters...and gasoline poisoned wind". Canadian society assumes the form of Lilliputians, "dwarfs who hate giants". It is interesting to note how the new environment influenced the poetry of a poet from the pre-war Polish literary tradition. However the poet's love of
nature and the nostalgic mood reappear at the end of the poem where she sees herself in the image of a "stupefied pigeon," who "tramps in circles, always cooing the same thing, tree at my window, window tree..."

But these dead thoughts
Hang like burnt forests
By a northern lake
Whose waters take
The bone grey skeletons
And mirror the grey bones
both dead, the trees and the reflections.92

The dead trees and reflections in D. C. Scott's poem parallel the symbolism of the dead tree in "Obituary". However, the trees in Scott's vision have never really been the symbol of life, like the tree in "Obituary", but simply trees.

The second part of Bohdanowiczowa's poem expresses her criticism of the Canadian treatment of nature. In the poem "Canada" the poet, overwhelmed by the massiveness of this country, shares the terror of nature with the English Canadian.

And brought close by a mutual fear
We watch how death creeps
Through the bristling brush of pines
And terror-sweating leaves.93

The last poem written before her death in 1964 takes the poet back to her original spirituality and nature once more becomes a tranquil place:

Where a silver pierced cobweb
Unfolds wounded wings on the heather
Where mourning for grass crushed by stones
A dandelion lights a candle
Where a leaf speared by blackberry barbs
Still drains its own fading verdure
There lay me down on the crossroads of sand
And cover me with rain.94

Both Polish and French Canadian poetry contain a
similar spiritual world, where nature and religion interact.

In Jean-Guy Pilon's poem "The Pure Presence"

Only the tree, the tree is a pure presence
a speechless strength.\(^{95}\)

Paradoxically the "speechless strength" of Jean-Guy Pilon's tree parallels the "Murmuring Tree" by Ihnatowicz. The tree in this poem embodies the Christian ethic of life, death and resurrection. First the tree symbolizes life, and its creation; as the cycle evolves the tree personifies Christ when He was sinned against:

there were screams beneath me
under my branches they cut off
noses and hands
thousands of eyes were burnt out
in my shadow

The cycle of the tree then passes through a phase of retribution against man

a child was born
with frog's eyes
and lizard's paws
my trunk is of thunder
my root is of fire
my autumn leaves
bloody storks

The tree is then crucified as it takes on the shape of man, and a cross:

then they crucified me
nailing me to a man's body
and with this corpse I am escaping
through row upon row of graves

The metaphor of the tree is now extended to the "steeple of the church of nations"
above me in mourning
towers a trunk
steeple of the church of nations
and the processions whisper at night
these are my leaves that have returned
from the dead

The tree has come to life again; it has been resurrected.

now I wait for the serpent
that is being born
to embrace and fill my womb
with ancient flame.

The last four lines of the poem still within the metaphor of
the tree, symbolize the prophetic concept of awaiting once
more the beginnings of Creation.

This is another example of Ihnatowicz's telescoped
image but in this case bearing a deeply religious signific­
ance.  Juxtaposing this poem with that of the French Canadian
poet Gatien Lapointe "The First Word", we can note that the
technique and the concept of man and nature as symbolized by
a tree are similar.

I say tree, but cannot grasp the word
Nor name the time which carries it......

I carry man within my breath, my cry
Grows tall into the sky.
I carry in me a living cathedral
And all the sins of God.....

I do not know what I am
But there is a quivering in me
Which will not go

Upright, I shall be born with a word.97

The continuation of the symbolism of the tree, as an
embodiment of human life is clearly contained within the
images of this poem.  The birth of something to come is
anticipated, this something new will carry its own identity
in a national, religious and artistic sense.

Within this search for a "new word" we should consider those émigré Polish poets who have adopted one of the languages of their new country (Canada), English and French. For example:

Verbe tu es le monde
Le rythme et le temps
Tu tournes avec le soleil
Tu es l'âme de toutes choses
La couleur et l'élan
Tu es aigle de feu et de vent
Quand tu es verbe de l'amour.

Mais le verbe de ton coeur
Est mon désert de sable
Le verbe de ton coeur
Et ma chute mortelle
Verbe tu n'es qu'un muet
Tu deviens sang
Quand le cri est dans la gorge.98

Kwiatowska-De Grandpré very aptly stresses the meaning of the "word". While she writes in free verse her style, reflecting both French and Polish backgrounds, can be described as romantic symbolism. The mood in her poem is of a romantic nature, while the "word" is endowed with symbols of rhythm, time, colour: eagle of fire and wind, desert of sand; she also refers to it as a word of love, the soul of all things. This mixture of symbolism is created in a blend of the modern and romantic tradition.

Jagna Boraks, a Polish émigré poet who came to Canada after the Second World War, has chosen to write in the English language.
before the leaves unfold in our eyes
let the sea-weed bind and tow you
to my island
let the crater flow its lava tongue
into my mouth
lighting the words of your song

let the earth part
so that heaven may pass
unseen
and we shall trace the levels of time
through the veined roots of trees
in the fossil-strung deeps
where lovers once dwelt
on the isle of spring

so engendered
in the dust and the darkness of our search
wait
till the leaves unfold in our eyes
and a garden of sleep
bursts fiery green
from the smoldering pores
of this branded star

"Atlantis"—Jagna Boraks

The search for the "word" is evident in the following lines:

let the crater flow its lava tongue
into my mouth
lighting the words of your song.

In a situation where a poet of one country adopts the language of another, a new set of conflicts arises. The poet has a need to create a new and different identity using the roots of both cultures.

and we shall trace the levels of time
through the veined roots of trees
in the fossil-strung deeps.......

so engendered
in the dust and darkness of our search
wait
till the leaves unfold in our eyes.

Both poems express an experience conceived in one culture but written in the language of another. This combination produces a form of expression which may not always be understood
or appreciated by the English reader. Translation of Polish poetry into English may produce a similar effect. However, whether translated or written in English or French, émigré poetry must still stand on its own merit. The European reader may be more sympathetic than the North American reader to this poetry.

The future of "Canadian literature" which, as we have seen, includes two major language groups and a number of smaller ethnic groups like the Polish, depends on intercommunication, and literary interaction—thus a mutual understanding of each other's cultures as revealed through poetry. But most important the new poetry should be innovative and continue to search for its own truth.

whose is this red and white sail
frayed like a skeleton

Is there still room inside
for a credible word--
unsullied
not overheard
one's own

Pure without decoy
visa or passport

naked as a bone.100

Iwaniuk cries out like Norwid in Vade Mecum that there must be a continuing search for a "word", new forms, new uses of language and new styles in poetry. He reminds the émigré poets that in order to develop their art they must make use, in this search, of their unique backgrounds.
Those whose horizon was sealed off by fire continue to circle shadows -
While those who were saved and shattered by war have so much to tell
who could tie sentences with threads of lightning and rescue life with life - they
forever buried in themselves - remain silent. 101

This is another reminder that the future of Polish émigré poetry cannot be totally divorced from its Polish past, just as the poetry of French and English Canadians cannot be divorced from theirs. Creative activity must be continued; poets must not remain silent if their poetry is to survive. The secret of this survival is inevitably contained in the never ceasing evolution of language, and its use for communication through literature.


3 Bogdan Czaykowski, see Anthology p. A30.


23 Yves Préfontaine, 'Country to Let', *ibid.*, p. 238.


37 Czesław Miłosz, ibid., p. 268.

38 Czesław Miłosz, ibid., p. 273.

39 Czesław Miłosz, ibid., p. 522.


46 Cyprian Norwid, 'Za Wstęp (Ogólniki)', ibid., p. 42.


48 Florjan Smieja, ibid., p. 4.

49 Bogdan Czaykowski, ibid., p. 2.

50 Ortega y Gasset. Man and Crisis, p. 120. W. W. Norton New York, 1962.


52 Zofia Bohdanowiczowa, see Anthology p. A2.

53 Zofia Bohdanowiczowa, see Anthology p. A7.

57. Wacław Iwaniuk, see Anthology p. A21.
58. Wacław Iwaniuk, see Anthology p. A20.
62. Wacław Iwaniuk, see Anthology p. A14.
63. Wacław Iwaniuk, see Anthology p. A21.
68. Bogdan Czaykowski, see Anthology p. A27.
70. Wacław Iwaniuk, see Anthology p. A9.
71. Bogdan Czaykowski, see Anthology p. A27.
73. J. Ihnatowicz, see Anthology p. A39.
74. J. Ihnatowicz, see Anthology p. A40.
75. Danuta Bienkowska, see Anthology p. A49.


Andrzej Busza, see Anthology p. A44.


Bogdan Czaykowski, see Anthology p. A28.


Bogdan Czaykowski, see Anthology p. A26.


Zofia Bohdanowiczowa, see Anthology P. A1.


Zofia Bohdanowiczowa, see Anthology p. A4.

Zofia Bohdanowiczowa, see Anthology p. A3.


J. Imiłowicz, see Anthology p. A38.

Irena Kwiatowska-De Grandpré, see Anthology p. A52.


Wacław Iwaniuk, see Anthology p. A25.

Wacław Iwaniuk, see Anthology, p. A12.


Eliot, T. S. *Selected Poems*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd., MCMLXI


Anthology
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Zofia Bohdanowiczowa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obituary</td>
<td>A 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrhos</td>
<td>A 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excerpt from Beyond the Ocean</td>
<td>A 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>A 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snows</td>
<td>A 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luna</td>
<td>A 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Joseph Wittlin on the day of his arrival.</td>
<td>A 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Waclaw Iwaniuk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory verse to The Mirror</td>
<td>A 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mirror</td>
<td>A 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If night was assigned to earth</td>
<td>A10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those whom the night releases</td>
<td>A11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of Kierkegaard</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Four Fold Poem</td>
<td>A13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Contemporaries</td>
<td>A14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Touch me I am Full of Snakes</td>
<td>A15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planet</td>
<td>A16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia Plath</td>
<td>A17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Antipodes</td>
<td>A18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An excerpt from My Epic part V</td>
<td>A20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sign</td>
<td>A21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Dylan Thomas was dying in New York</td>
<td>A22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leaf</td>
<td>A23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwid in New York</td>
<td>A24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naked as a bone</td>
<td>A25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bogdan Czaykowski

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the Rocky Mountains</td>
<td>A26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keys</td>
<td>A27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man is only a Humming Sea-shell</td>
<td>A28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument</td>
<td>A29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellion in Verse</td>
<td>A30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspects of Time</td>
<td>A31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement</td>
<td>A32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Janusz Ihnatowicz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through the Prairies - At Sundown</td>
<td>A33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In search of a lost Home</td>
<td>A34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cupid Flying by</td>
<td>A35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nun transformed into a scream</td>
<td>A36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, Poor, Poor, Poor</td>
<td>A37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murmuring Tree</td>
<td>A38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Landscape</td>
<td>A39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children at the Window</td>
<td>A40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrzej Busza</td>
<td>Bright Morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palmistry in the Shade of Plane Trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Witchcraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From Microcosmology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danuta Bienkowska</td>
<td>A Party - I Parrots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II A monologue as intermission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>between two cocktails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You Not-You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irena Kwiatkowska-De Grandpre'</td>
<td>Word you are the World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metamorphosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four Walls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ZOFIA BOHDANOWICZOWA (1898-1965) left Poland during the war, and having travelled via Roumania, Yugoslavia, Italy and France, came to Wales in 1943 where she made her home until her arrival in Canada in 1960. She wrote poetry and prose for which, in 1951, she received an award from the Catholic publishing organization Veritas, who also published several books of her poetry and prose. Some of her poems were published in Polish periodicals in England. She also translated American, English, French, and Bielorussian poetry into Polish. A volume of these translations, *Time of Unrest*, was published in New York in 1958. Because Zofia Bohdanowiczowa belonged to the Skamander tradition of Polish poetry, most of her poems are rhymed. In translation, this rhyme has not been reproduced in order to give the interpretation of the imagery its full force, rather than sacrifice it in order to contrive rhymes.
Do Józefa Wittlina na dzień Jego przyjazdu do Toronto w 1963 r.

A spotkaliśmy się w Sądny Dzień
Kiedy niego wezbrało płaczem Izraela.
Po raz pierwszy oglądaliśmy wzajemnie
Gliniane oprawy naszych dusz. —
Amfory archaiczne i ośniedziałe,
Twoja miała pewną przezroczyłość
I ametystowe światło przebijało od wnętrz.
Świadomość po mistrzowsku nam mówiła,
Że jesteśmy w miejskim parku nad jeziorem,
W jesiennych płonących drzew
I naszych dusz opurpurowiałych od cierpienia.
A naprawdę nie było nas.
Pochmurnym niebem grzmiały wielkie granie
Jerozolimskich trąb, archanioł gasił słońce
I wypełniała się cmentarna ziemia.
I to było nasze pierwsze spotkanie,
A następne będzie w Dzień Sądu.

* * * * *

Wiersz dzisiejszy w opozycji do mnie.
Szukam w nim pociechy znajduję pogórzkę,
Nostalgia historyczna
Ekspatracja z czasu i przestrzeni.

Komu budujemy katedry?

Kubizm, Dadaizm, Verticyzm, Futuryzm
Naszą bog ma Przemyśl na imię.
Wroga współczesności — Modernizm.
Modernistyczna literatura, modernistyczne domy
Modernistyczny gust i reklama
Zmumifikowany świat.
Gdzie jest człowiek, twórca człowieka
Szuka więzi ze światem a więzi nie ma.
Modernizm siłę swą czerpie jedynie
Z ataków na przeszłość.

Stado samotników
To Jozef Wittlin On the Day of His Arrival
In Toronto - 1963

We met on the Day of Atonement
When the sky swelled with the tears of Israel
For the first time we examined together
The clay frames of our souls
Those stale and archaic amphoras.
Yours had a certain transparency
And an amethyst light beaming from the interior
Consciousness masterfully persuaded us
That we were in an urban park above a pond
Within the autumn's flaming trees
Inside our souls purpled with much suffering
But we weren't really there.
Clouded heavens thundered loud music
Of the trumpets of Jerusalem, the Archangel extinguished the sun
And the funereal earth was bursting
This was our first encounter
The next will take place on Judgement Day.

**********

Today's poem disagrees with me
I seek consolation but find foreboding
Historical nostalgia
Expatriation out of time and space.

For whom are we building cathedrals?

Cubism, Dadaism, Vorticism, Futurism
Our god calls himself Industry
Enemy of our time - Modernism
Modern literature, modern houses
Modern taste and commercials
Mummified world
Where is man, creative man
Who seeks a link with the world but has none
Modernism draws its strength
From attacks on the past

We are a herd of recluses
Luna

Tutaj nie ma księżyca, co by drżał na wodzie
i sypał złote iskry po czarnych lagunach.
Tu czasem z Europy utraconej przychodzi
Blada Luna, mleczna Luna, śliczna Luna.
Lecą wichry z Jukonu i chmurami trzęsą,
Wszystkie drogę runęły w otchłań Atlantyku.
A Luna milczy i patrzy w oczy lunatyków,
Którzy wciąż jeszcze tęsknią.
Luna

There is no moon here trembling on the water
Casting gold over black lagoons.
Here from lost Europe sometimes comes
Pale Luna, milky Luna, lovely Luna.
Winds race from the Yukon shaking the clouds,
All roads have collapsed into the Atlantic pit.
While Luna silently gazes into the eyes of lunatics,
Who still yearn.
Śniegi

Wicher nas zadusił, huragan pogrzebał,
Zasypało nas, zasypało po szyję.
W żyłach powolny rytm wieczności bие,
Na wargach zimny smak nieba.
Kryształami sieka w nas gwiazdy,
Walą słupy zorzy polarnej,
Pełznie po zaspanych trwoga.
Ręce nam do boków przymarzły
I stoimy, bałwany niezdarne,
Na opęczniałych nogach.
A gdy przyjdzie wiosenna odmiana,
Osuniemy się na kolana,
Mokrymi strzępami zwiśnięć,
Ziemia nas wypije. Trawa z nas wytrąśnie.

Toronto, 1961
Snows

The wind stifled us, the hurricane buried us
We are covered, covered to our neck
The slow rhythm of eternity beats through our veins
Lips taste the coolness of the sky
The stars' crystal smites us
The poles of northern lights strike
Fear creeps along the snowdrifts
Hands frozen at our sides
We stand like clumsy snowmen
On bulging legs
And when spring comes
We drop to our knees
Dangling wet wisps
The earth will drink us, spurting grass.

Toronto 1961
Kanada

Kanada blaskiem rozsypana,
Na dwóch lecąca oceanach,
Nie słyszy mnie i nie dostrzega
Żdźbła wiszącego na jej brzegach.
Ona jest skrzydło i huragan
I śpiewająca wichrem saga.
A ja — przywiana z dróg kurzawy
Niedodeptana kępka trawy.

Lecz noc nas łączy jak dwie siostry,
Kiedy klingami świateł ostrych
Tysiąc milowa autostrada
Pod serce puszczy się podkrada,
I wspólnym lękiem bliskie sobie
Na śmierć pełznącą patrzym obie
Przez najezone sosen kście
I przez spocone w strachu liście.

Toronto, 1960
Canada

Canada strewn with brilliance
Races along two oceans
Like a storm and a wing
And the saga of a singing wind
Neither sees nor hears me
And I - blown by a cloud of dust
Am a partially trampled small patch of grass

But the night unites us like two sisters
When with the sharp blades of light
A thousand mile superhighway
Steals underneath the jungle's heart
And brought close by a mutual fear
We watch how death creeps
Through the bristling brush of pines
And terror-sweating leaves

Toronto 1960
Gdzie przestrzelona srebrąm pajęczyna
Zranione skrzydła na wrzosach rozpina
Gdzie przygniezionej kamieniami trawie
Żałobną lampkę zapala dmuchawiec
Gdzie liść przebity czarnym grotem ożym
Gasnącą żeleń sączy z siebie jeszcze
Tam mnie położcie na piaskach rozdroży
Nakryjcie deszczem.

Ostatni wiersz Poetki
napisany w roku 1964
Where a silver-pierced cobweb
Unfolds wounded wings on the heather
Where mourning for grass crushed by stones,
A dandelion lights a candle
Where a leaf speared by blackberry barbs
Still drains its own fading verdure
There lay me down on the crossroads of sand
And cover me with rain.
Wieczorze letni, ileż w tobie smutku!
Wije się ścieżka wśród barwnych ogródków
Niby wioskowa ulica.
Z baraku zwisa znak czerwono-biały,
Bo jakiejś dawnej narodowej chwały
Dzisiaj przypada rocznica.
Trzepot dwubarwny po niziutkich ścianach,
Zapach macieki, kapliczka drewniana
I malwy i liście chmielu...
A za kapliczką w jeżynowych krzakach
Ktoś patrząc w gwiazdy gwiędże kujawiaka,
Zsunąwszy z czoła kapelusz.
Wieczór na ziemi i wieczór na niebie.
Oczy wieczorne zapatrzone w siebie,
Nieczorna skóra i siwizna.
A my na scenie ciemnego teatru
Pod kolująca różą obcych wiatrów
Wciąż gramy sztukę — „Ojczyzna”.

Penrhos, 1954
Summer evening, how much sadness in you,  
A path weaves among the colored gardens 
Like a country road. 
A red and white insignia hangs from the barracks. 
Today is the anniversary 
Of some long-past national triumph. 
A two-tone flutter along squatting walls, 
A scent of gillyflowers, a wooden chapel, 
Mallows and hop leaves ......... 
And behind the chapel in blackberry bushes, 
A star-gazer whistles the kujawiak,* 
Pushing back his hat. 
Evening on the ground and evening in the sky 
Evening eyes introverted, 
Evening temples and grey hair. 
And we on the stage of a dark theater 
Under the whirling rose of foreign winds 
Continually act our play, "The Native Land". 

Penrhos, 1954

* National dance of Poland
Nekrolog

Było drzewo wiadomości dobrego:
Finezji liści i prostoty ptaków,
Przyjaznych szeptów i znaków
Wśród mrugających gałęzi.
Drzewo ciche jak myśl,
Tajemne w treści jak przypowieść,
Wyniosłe jak katedra na czarnych wsparcia łukach,
Gdzie ulani ze słońca aniołowie
Tańczyli po sklebionych stiukach
Malowanych akwamaryną.
Drzewo przystań, gdzie pod brzeg cienisty
Podpływali smukłe ryby poranka
Koloru mleka i miodu,
A koralowe okrąty zachodu
Zaczępiąły żaglami o szczyt.
Potem cienność na liściach rosną,
Tryskały rosy, falowały mgły
I mówiłam drzewu na dobranoc
Sentymentalny wiersz Roberta Frosta:
Tree at my window, window tree...

Przyszli ludzie z piłami, siekierami,
Z sercami ze srebrem i fabrycznych dymów,
Garstką liliputów wyroili się u pnia
I rzekli: "Zamordujemy drzewo."
Karły nienawidzą olbrzymów.
Piłowali je systematycznie,
Najpierw dłoń, potem ramiona,
Długo na czarnym kadłubie
Chwiała się głowa zielona.
Potem rozciągnęły ciało na świercz
Przez piersi, przez brzuch, przez lędźwie
I wywieźli na nieznany cmentarz
W ciężarowych karawanach śmierci.

Teraz runął w me okno świat:
Dynamo i bęben z cyny,
Seksologiczne afisze,
Uszuminkowane witryny,
Słupy, kominy, druty
I wiatr brzyną otwarty
I niebo darte na strzepy
W żelaznych palcach śmiegieł.

A na odsłoniętym parapcie,
Co nagą bielą nad ulicą lśni
Oszołomiony gołąb drepcze w kółko
I grucha wciąż to samo:
Tree at my window, window tree...
Obituary

There was a tree bearing good news:
Subtle leaves and simple birds
Friendly whispers and gestures
Amidst wavering branches.
Tree silent as thought
Mysterious as a parable
Elevated as a cathedral propped on black arches
Where angels cast from the sun
Dance along billowing stucco,
Painted aquamarine.
A tree-port where towards the shadowy bank
Swam the slender fish of dawn
In colors of milk and honey
While western coral ships
Caught their sails on the peaks.
Afterwards darkness grew on the leaves,
Dew welled up, fog floated,
And I said good night to the tree
With Robert Frost's sentimental poem
Tree at my window, window tree

People came with saws and axes
With hearts of screws and factory smoke
A handful of Lilliputians they swarmed at the trunk.
Dwarfs hate giants.
They sawed it systematically
First the hands then the arms
The green head on the black carcass
Faltered for a long time.
Then they butchered the body into quarters
Through breast, stomach, loins
Drove it to an unknown cemetery
In the truck caravans of death.

Now the world tumbled into my window:
Dynamo and tin drums
Sexological posters
Rouged showcases
Posts, chimneys, wires.
And gasoline-poisoned wind
And sky torn into shreds,
By propellers' iron fingers

While on the uncovered window-sill
Whose naked whiteness glints above the street
A stupefied pigeon tramps in circles

Always cooing the same thing:
Tree at my window, window tree
WACLAW IWANIUK is a poet, translator and essayist. He was born in Warsaw, Poland, where his first books were published. After graduating at the Free University in Warsaw he joined the Polish Foreign Office and was posted to Buenos Aires. At the outbreak of war he joined the Polish Army in France and served with the Mountain Brigade and later the First Polish Armoured Division. In 1948 he moved to Canada, and he is now employed as an interpreter by Toronto City Hall and the Ontario Provincial Government. He is the author of seven volumes of poems including his Collected Poems published in 1964 by Kultura, Paris, and has been translated into French, German and Italian. He has been awarded several major Polish literary prizes. Waclaw Iwaniuk's poetry has its roots in the Polish Avant-garde, which in turn has set trends for his emigre contemporaries. He is therefore the major link between the Polish native and Polish emigre poets; that is why his poems in this anthology outnumber those of the others.
Mówią że ja nie cierpię — a kto myśli za mnie
Kto się za mnie przez życie codziennie przedziera
Kto traci siły, kto pada, kto kleka
Komu noc jest torturą
Kogo krwawi sen. —
Introductory verse to LUSTRO

They say I do not suffer – but who thinks my thoughts
Who tears through my everyday life for me
Who loses strength, who falls, who kneels
For whom is my night a torture
Who bleeds in my dreams --
Lustro

Przybliżam twarz do lustra ale lustra nie ma
Szukam rysów mych dłonią ale nie mam dłoni.
Pod turkusowym niebem które nie płowieje
Czystą jak lilia Róża powraca z kościoła.
Wiem że się w cnotach zanurzą jak paw
Pilnuje własnej dumy jak przodka kądzieli
Jedli mówi, orkiestra instrumentów gra w niej
Jak w parku na Powiślu w słoneczną niedzielę.
Wspominam tamte czasy zamienione w wór
Z drzewa które się spóźnia nietoperz ułata.
Pod górę po kamieniach prosto na Krakowskie
Przedmieście, biegnie Tamka wyboistym krokiem.
Chciałbym tam być, ktoś słowo ponagla do ucha
Pragnę istnieć, o lustro, pomóż mi wyjść z siebie.
Niestety, błądzę jak król Lear, palce są mi wzrokiem
I byle wiersz ojczysty przegija mnie wskros;
Chwytam, co mam pod ręką. Może sucha gałąź
Połamana wiatrami, wskaże mi kierunek.
O, ślepy królu Learze, z niedołężnym ciałem
Jak długo można być ślepym i nie wiedzieć o tym.
Mirror

I bring my face closer to the mirror but there is no mirror
I trace my features with a hand but I have no hand.
Underneath a colorfast turquoise sky
The lily-white Rosie returns from church.
I know that she basks in her virtues like a peacock
Guards her pride like a spinner her wool
If she speaks, an orchestra plays in her
As in a Powiśle park on a sunny Sunday.
I am filled with memories - time's dry splinters
Off a tree that releases a bat at twilight.
Uphill on the cobblestone road straight to the Krakowskie
Przedmieście, speeds Tamka.
How I wish to be there, someone bends a reminder to my ear
I long to be, oh mirror, help me to become myself.
Alas, like King Lear I wander, my fingers my sight
And the native verses stab me.
I clutch at whatever touches the palm of my hand. Maybe a dry branch
Snapped by the winds will point the way.
Oh blind King Lear of the awkward body
How long can one be blind and not know it?
Jeżeli ziemi przypisano noc
Jeżeli trawy mają zejść nam z oczu
Jeżeli mamy stracić wiarę w zieleń
Jeżeli drzewa wywiozą do pieców
I ptakom każą uciekać za morze
Jeżeli kwiaty umrą bez powodu
Odcięta gałąź opróżni powietrze
Słodkie owoce przedziurawi robak
To co z człowiekiem stanie się? Co z nami
Po przebudzeniu?
Powiedz — co?
For Olga

If night was assigned to earth
If grasses should uncover our eyes
If we must lose faith in verdure
If trees will be transported to ovens
And birds ordered to escape far beyond the sea
If flowers wilt without reason
If a snapped-off branch will empty the air
And sweet fruit be hollowed by a worm
What then will become of man? of us
After the awakening?
Tell me - what?
Ci których noc uwalnia

Ci których noc uwalnia, niosą z sobą ciemność
Idą jak chmury dymów z pogorzelisk.
A gdy przechodzą przez próg horyzontu
Dzień odwraca się do nich plecami, jak człowiek
Przed nimi drzewo poci się i drży
Cienki kształt liścia ciemnieje od wnętrza
W korę o skórze pomarszczonych ropuch
Wbiegają z hukiem krople rosy
I wchodzi noc, zatrzaskując drzwi.
Ci których noc uwalnia, niosą z sobą ciemność
Wchodzą w nasze wnętrza skrytymi kruchtami
By nas z nienacka nakryć zapomnieniem.
Those Whom Night Releases

Those whom night releases, bring with them darkness
They drift from the ruins, like clouds of smoke.
And when they cross the horizon
The day turns its back on them, like a man
The tree sweats and trembles before them
The leaf's slender form blackens from inside
Dewdrops rush thundering
Into the toadlike skin of the bark
And night enters, bolting the door.
Those whom the night releases, carry with them darkness
They enter us through secret passages
To cast oblivion over our memories.
Z Kierkegaarda

Zegary nasze aż do śmierci
szukają gruntu pod nogami
gdzie nas powoli przysypuje czas,
Ślepi, wchodzimy w stygające godziny —
Pod nami krok się ugina i łamie.
Czasem w cienności zawiedzie nas słowo
martwe, jak gór ochronona w kamień.
Inne jak drzewo, jak skarły dźwięk
w suchym korycie zdania.
Ci, którym ogień zagrodził horyzont,
ci ciągle chodzą dookoło cieni —
A ci, co ocaleli, zdruzgotani wojną
mogliby dużo powiedzieć o sobie,
powiązać nici w błyskawice zdań
i życie życiem ratować — lecz oni
na zawsze w sobie pogrzebani — milczą.
Out of Kierkegaard

Until death our clocks seek
a solid footing on the ground
while time slowly covers us,
Blind, we enter the chilling hours -
Steps bend and crack beneath us.
Sometimes in the dark a word thwarts us
dead, like a hill turned to rock.
like a tree, a note stunted
inside the dry trough of a phrase.
Those whose horizon was sealed off by fire
continue to circle shadows -
While those who were saved and shattered by war
have so much to tell
who could tie sentences with threads of lightning
and rescue life with life - they
forever buried in themselves - remain silent.
Czterowiersz

Tylko droga do świata nigdy się nie kończy
I pamięć żłobi we mnie swój odwieczny krzyk
Tylko ciemność za nami żłobi korytarze
I słowo szuka po omacku jakubowych drabin.
A Fourfold Poem

Only the road toward light has no end
And memory furrows in me its everlasting scream
Only darkness furrows corridors behind us
And the word blindly gropes for Jacob's ladders.
Moi współcześni

Dummy jestem że jestem
że mam swój kosmos nad głową
a chociaż ciało moje nie do krzyżowania
lubię w ciemności gnuśne odległe planety.
Dzień mi do ucha szepcze tajemnice
nie zamulone przydrożnym piołunem
suche słowa otwierają zagojone rany.
A oni, choć tacy pewni siebie, oblatani życiem
nie mogą się uwolnić z pajęczyny dnia,
ich słowo obok nich przemyka się chyłkiem
ślepe, nie dotyka sedna spraw.
Stoja ich skrada się przy stopie
i tylko ciemność zatroszczy się o nich
i złoty dukat z fałszywej mennicy.
My Contemporaries

I am proud that I am
that I am crowned by a self-owned cosmos
although my body is not meant for crucifixion
I enjoy the faraway slothful planets in the dark.
The day whispers in my ear secrets
unobstructed by the wayside wormwood
dry words re-opening wounds.
While they, so cocksure, so life-oriented,
cannot even free themselves from the day's grey web,
their word slips by slyly
blindly, not touching the root of the matter.
Their feet creep stealthily side by side
and only a golden ducat from a counterfeit mint
and darkness will pity them
Don't Touch Me,
I'm Full of Snakes

Don't touch me, I'm full of snakes!
Jestem jak martwa gleba bez kropli powietrza
Jak zestrzelony wiatrem obłok
Jak rzeka która była i której już nie ma
O skamieniałych brzegach. Jak bezsilne słowo.
Don't touch me! Wolę nosić w sobie
To, co wypełnia moje sny po brzegi
Lata których żadne słowa nie odmodlą.
Chowam w sobie trujące wspomnienia
Żmije płomieni i jad gazu —
Żyję jak lustro, z twarzą ku przeszłości.
Don't Touch Me I'm Full of Snakes

Don't touch me, I'm full of snakes!
Dead soil without air
A cloud shot down by the wind
A river that was and no longer is,
Whose banks have turned to stone. A powerless word.
Don't touch me! I prefer to carry in myself
That which fills my dreams to the brim
Years which prayer cannot undo.
I hide poisonous memories in myself
Vipers of flame and venom of gas -
I live like a mirror, my face towards the past.
Planeta

Nauczyłem się mówić szeptem
Gdziekolwiek wkraczam budzę popłoch
Napełniony po brzegi ciemnością
Żeruję na waszych snach.
Jestem jak suche drzewo
Jestem nagi
Zdjęto ze mnie klejnot zieleni
Bez kwiatu
Bez owocu
Jestem jak paralityk elektrycznie zwawy
Z głową pochyloną nad własną ruiną.

Gdybym był planetą, miałbym własny ruch
I własną siłę do dźwigania innych.
Planet

I learned to speak in whispers
And create chaos everywhere I go
Filled to the brim with darkness
Scavenging food in your dreams
I am a dry tree
My green jewel has been removed
I am naked
Without flower
Without fruit
I am a paralytic electrically mobile
With head lowered over my own ruin

If I were a planet, I would possess my own motion
And my own strength to carry others
Sylvia Plath

Znałem ją — drobna jak diament —
słowa jej koronował blask.
Jeśli porównać z dzieckiem,
to jeszcze drobniej i nieskazitelniej —
a jeśli z aniołem,
to widziała wszystko jak na dłoni.
W jej wyobraźni świat się kurczył,
nabierał światła. Jej jasne oczy
zamieniały się w dwie żarzące świece
i gasły jednocześnie —
dwa naparstki popiołu.

Weszła w gardło ziemi
jak płomienna róża.

Była głosem zapowiadającym bitwy.
Z ustnikiem złotego rogu przy wargach,
grąała Bogurodzicę na powszechny mord —
ulatując w niebo.

Widziałem ją w Chicago,
tak jak się patrzy na czerwony ranek.
Klasztor miasta
przemylał na jej skroni młode pasma łęków.
Już wtedy niosła w sobie mądre skąpstwo słów —
bolesne ich piękno,
kościiste chodniki,
zgrzane w ulicach domy
i whitmanowską falę gorącego zdania.

Znałem ją —
Czytałem o niej.
Umarła nagle —
Czas załamał ręce.
I tylko Poezja
z palcem na ustach
mówi cicho — usnęła.
Sylvia Plath

I knew her - tiny as a diamond -
her words haloed in brilliance.
Compared with a child
she was even slighter, and more innocent -
with an angel,
she saw it all on the palm of her hand.
In her imagination the world condensed,
aquired light. Her bright eyes
turned into flaring candles
and waned together -
two thimbles of ashes.

She entered the earth's gullet
like a flaming rose.

Her voice foretold rebellion
gold horn at her lips
soaring toward heaven
She played Bogurodzica at the universal slaughter.

I saw her in Chicago
as one beholds a June morning.
The urban cloister prematurely
streaked her temples with fear.
Even then her words bore a wise frugality
pain in their beauty,
skeletal paths,
houses sweating in the streets
and the Whitmanesque tide of a heated sentence.

I knew her -
Read about her.
Suddenly she died -
Time clasped its hands.
And only Poetry
finger on its lips
whispers - "she's asleep".
Na antypodach

Siedzę w milczeniu nad zamkniętym słowem.
Za oknem płowieje czas, przyroda przezielenia —
Zmieniąą horyzonty.
Mam szeroko otwarte oczy, patrzę w głęb —
I czekam.
Słońce octem żłobi warstwy dnia
Noc nieskazitelna jak pustynia Gobi
Jasność wchodzi z renicami w piasek,
za paznokcie diun, świeci gorliwie po chmurach.
A ja chodzę i czepiam się marginesów dnia.

Najpierw biłem świnie w tutejszej rzeźni
Pracowałem po pas zanurzony w parze
I czekałem na urodzone zapalenie płuc.
Potem pielęgniarki włożyły mnie w czystość
Owinęły prześcieradłami
Karmiły penicyliną —
Sakramentem cierpliwych sntów.
Czarne i białe godziny prześlizgiwały się
szparami światów jak kameleon.
Pamięć nie zawsze zgadzała się z czasem.
Leżałem w rozłożystych snach
Strzeżony przez doktoryów, syntetyczne proszki
i zawiesiste pływy, w których chemia
urabiała sobie rece. Wszechmocne zdrowie
nie miało tu władzy.
Złote promienie jak tancerki wirowały czasem
wokół czegoś, co kiedyś tryskało życiem,
A dzień wyglądało jak wychudzony kikut,
odzięta ręka, nieruchomy dramat.
Wiatr za oknami przesuwał stalugi chmur
Księżyc wychodził na samotne spacery
A mnie się wydawało że ukryte wulkan
leżały we mnie oazami bólu,
na pustyni gdzie już nic się nie działo.
I że lada chwila rusza karawany —
Czytelnicy będą płynąć na garbach wielbłądów
Dążyć pieszo przez wyschnięte diury
Niosąc w oczach spalone osiedla
Zarobione życie, suszę smierci
której oni szczęśliwie zdołali uniknąć.
A za nimi przylecą dobroczynne ptaki
Rzeki otworzą swoje koryta.
On the Antipodes

Silently I sit over a locked word.
Outside time fades, and nature grows too green
Perspectives change.
Eyes wide open, I look inward -
Waiting.
The sun gouges the layers of day with vinegar
The night is as inaccessible as the Gobi desert
Light pounds its pupils into the sand,
Under the nails of the dunes, eagerly glimmering on the clouds.
And I walk clutching at the day's margins.

In the beginning I slaughtered pigs at the local slaughter house
Laboured waist deep in steam
And anticipated the comeliness of pneumonia
Then nurses placed me in sterility
Wrapped in sheets
Fed me penicillin -
And the sacrament of patient words
Black and white hours slithered
like chameleons through the fissures of dawn
Memory did not always agree with time
I lounged on the flower beds of dreams
Guarded by doctors, synthetic tablets
and thick liquids, inside which chemistry
kneaded its hands. Almighty health
had no power here.

Gold rays like ballerinas whirled at times
around something, that once brimmed with life
but today resembled a dried up stump,
an amputated hand, an inert drama.
The wind outside was shifting the easel of clouds
The moon took lonely walks
While I felt inside me hidden volcanoes
spread into an oasis of pain,
in a desert where nothing any longer happened.
And that at any moment caravans will start to move -
The readers will float on the backs of camels
and wander through the dried out dunes
eyes carrying their burned settlements
stolen life, drought of death
which they luckily managed to escape.
Benevolent birds will follow them
Rivers will open their beds
Mountains will come to life.
And before the trusting animals recognise human fear
Plants will come out to greet them
Deluge of verdure will kiss the soil.

But all this needs the word
Góry się uplastyczniają.
I nim ufne zwierzęta poznają ludzki strach
Rośliny wyjdą na ich spotkanie
Potop zieleni ucałuje glebę.

Ale do tego potrzebne jest słowo
Nad którym siedzę w milczeniu i czekam
W suchym jak ziarno piasku krajobrazie.
Above which I sit silently and wait
Inside a landscape dry as a grain of sand.
Bewildered let us look at nature's rape - could the claw of the human brain reach further than death? Just think how many boils still burning inside me nature has not healed. How many open wounds. My hands purple with eczema until this very day cannot touch life. After all they carried death.
Znak

Ludzi poznajemy po sylwetce słowa
Po twarzy gdy ciemnieje, gdy zmienia się w metal
Po rękach gdy wygłaszają ruchliwe kazania
Po otoczeniu. Sięgnij a zobaczysz
Ile dokoła leży zapomnianych faktów
W których niesyta pamięć drapieżnie płąduje.

Ludzi poznajemy po kronice czasu.
Człowiek z naturą sprzymierzył swój los.
Po oczach, bluszczu czoła, po sklepieniu skroni
Po wypukłościach czaszki, po włosach gdy są
I błyszczą niby tiara ozdobna na czubku.

Ale po czym poznamy, co ukrywa pamięć
Wypukłość głosu z wykrojenia warg
Suszę gdy idzie na zdobycie ciała
I atakuje serca ruchome sygnały
Zdolną zatrzymać życie.

Po czym poznamy zdanie gdy je toczy strach
Po czym poznamy sylwetki naszych kotów.

Wiele z nas zdarto. Wracamy do ascezy.
Źle ułożony barok spadł z nas razem z tłuszczem
Czekamy w sobie na nadejście znaku
I po tym tylko możemy się poznać.
The Sign

People can be identified by the silhouette of their words
By the face that darkens, when it changes to metal
By the hands that preach sermons.
By the milieu. Reach out and you will find
many forgotten facts
Inside which a hungry memory claws.

People can be identified by the chronicle of time.
Man allied his fate with nature.
By the eyes, by the vine-covered brow, by the temples' arch
By the bulging of the skull, by the hair when it is still there
And glistens like a tiara bedecking the head.

But how do we identify the secrets hidden by memory
The voice bulging from the carved lips.
Drought when it sets out to vanquish the body
Attacks the heart's moving signals
And is able to hold off life.

How do we identify a sentence rolled by fear
How do we identify the silhouettes of our executioners

Much has been torn from us. We are returning to asceticism.
Poorly constructed baroque fell off us together with the fat
We await in ourselves the coming of the sign
And only thus can we identify ourselves.
Gdy w Nowym Jorku
umierał Dylan Thomas

Gdy w Nowym Jorku umierał Dylan Thomas
Padały razem z nim walijskie drzewa
I wszystkie płaczki zbiegły się na lament.
Śmierć! Śmierć! On, który wszedł zaledwie w życie
Już kwiatem słowa kłaniał się ciemności
Bezradny w swej podróży. Poeta umierał!
O, jakie jady wchodzą w nasze ciało
I zmartwychwstają w jego zgonie?
Chociaż śmierć nad nim nie będzie mieć władzy
Żadnej — świeckiej, ani z krzyżem w dłoni
Gdy do mnie przyjdzie, nie będę się bronić
Ani uciekać w mój z popiołów świat,
Przeciwnie, położę się twarzą do zenitu
Jak on — i po schodach wyłożonych wiatrami
Wspinać się będę, dochodzić do celu
And death shall have no dominion
Nad nami!
When Dylan Thomas was Dying in New York

When Dylan Thomas was dying in New York
The trees of Wales were falling with him
And all the wailing women gathered to lament.
Death! Death! He who hardly crossed life's threshold
Was already bowing to darkness, his word in blossom.
Helpless in his journey the poet was dying!
Oh what venom enter our flesh
And rise in its waste?
Although death shall have no dominion over him
Whatever – neither worldly nor cross in hand
When it comes to me, I will set my face towards the zenith
Like him – and along the stairs laden with winds
I will climb, reaching the goal
"And death shall have no dominion"
Over us!
Liść

Koniec sezonu: upadłem na ziemię
już mnie nie ucałuje promień
już się nie pozbieram
ptak mnie podepcze
rosa oczy wyje
wiatry ze mną przestaną się swarzyć —

tyle długich dni
wrastałem — czerpiąc —
w miękkość tlenu
w góry powietrza, w upał
tyle dni
chłonąłem stromą nawałę promieni —

płaskie moje ciało
uwieszone za szyję
śpiewało hymny —

tyle nocy
przeszeptanych ze świerszczem
przegadanych z rosą
na śliskich wywoskowanych zielonych posadzkach —

a teraz tylko ludzki dla mnie los
leżę i cierpię
pamięcią
nie cięłem.
The Leaf

End of season: I fell to the ground
no more to be kissed by a sunbeam
no more to be gathered
or trampled by a bird
dew will ravish my eyes
winds will stop squabbling behind me –

so many long days
I thrived – growing –
into the softness of oxygen
into billowing air, into scorching heat
so many days
I absorbed the steep streams of sunlight –

my flat body
strung by the neck
sang hymns –
so many nights
whispered away with the crickets
talked away with the dew
on wax-green floors –

and now only human fate for me
I lie and I suffer
the pain of memory
not of flesh
Norwid w Nowym Jorku

Był jak schizma odłożona na jutro
Jak dąb pokryty bluszczem
A myślał że się o niego upomną współcześni
Że jego głos wyda echa.

Siadał w Parku, na ławce jak starszy pan
Którego mężczy spacer, który przyszedł z ulicy
Sąsiadującej z oceanem. Przypłynął tu z portu
Do którego musiał iść wiele dni i nocy.
Nie zatrzymując się, głodny, wyszedł z domu
W połowie snu. Kraj bezustannie
Oddalał się, dusił go Paryż
On siadał w Parku sam
Czekał, zapadał się w mrok
Po kolana
Albo po szyję
Uwięziony jak żła
Gdy się przemienia w perłę.

Dziś też są ludzie
Niezręczni
Nieodgrzebani
Życie po nich przeszło
Z impetem lawiny
Starci, podnieśli się
Wyjechali.

Ich słowa w dymie wypłakały oczy
Pozostała na nich skorupa milczenia
I ciemność pełna brunatnych opadów
Jak po wybuchu wulkanu.

Rozumię potrzebę Ziemi Obiecanej
Jerozolimy
Ale nie rozumię
Kary samotności.

I pomyśleć że za drzwiami było niebo
A on nie mógł otworzyć drzwi.
Norwid in New York

He was a schism postponed till tomorrow
An ivy-covered oak
But he thought that his contemporaries might think of him
That his voice will resound.

He would sit in the Park, on a bench, an elderly man
Who tired by a walk came off a street
Next door to an ocean. He drifted in from a port
Which he reached by walking nights and days
Hungry, not stopping, he left home
In the midst of a dream. His land continued
To grow more and more distant, Paris stifled him
He would sit in the Park alone
Waiting, falling into dusk
Knee-deep
Or up to the neck
Immured like a tear
Changing into a pearl

Today too there are people
Clumsy
Not quite buried
Life swept them
Like a snow slide
Wiped out, they rose
Left.

Their words, whose smoke-filled eyes have shed all their tears
Remain covered by a shell of silence
And darkness filled with brown dust
As if a volcano had burst
I understand the need for the Promised Land
Jerusalem
But I don't understand
The penalty of loneliness

To think that beyond the door there was a heaven
And he could not open the door.
Nagie jak kość

Zamknąć oczy, nie liczyć dni
być ślepym (wiatr nade mną
otyłym ruchem strzępuje popiół)

Czyja to łódź bez dna
na opuszconym morzu —
czyj to żagiel biało-czerwony
postrzępiony jak szkielet

Czy jest w nim jeszcze miejsce
na wiarygodne słowo —
nie zabrudzone
nie podssłuchane
własne

Czyste, bez przynęty
bez wizy i paszportu

nagie jak kość.
Naked As A Bone

To close one's eyes, not counting days
to be blind (the wind's corpulent arm
whisks away ashes above me)

Who owns this bottomless boat
on a deserted sea -
whose is this red and white sail
frayed like a skeleton

Is there still room inside
for a credible word -
unsullied
not overheard
one's own

Pure, without decoy
visa or passport

naked as a bone.
BOGDAN CZAYKOWSKI (b. 1932) left Poland at the age of seven. Having travelled through Persia and Africa, he came to England, where he grew up. He studied at the University of London, where he obtained an M.A. in Slavic Literature. In London he became a member of a group of Polish writers with whom he shared a similar fate. This group called themselves the Kontynenty and, although fluent in English, chose to write in their native tongue. Nevertheless they defied the older generation of émigrés who wrote in the old tradition. They also edited a small magazine and published an anthology of poems called _Ryby na piasku_ (Fish on Sand). Czaykowski has published several volumes of poetry and many of his poems have appeared and still appear in Polish periodicals. He is currently head of the Department of Slavonic Studies at the University of British Columbia.
Z gór skalistych

I

Góra ruszyła
masyw przebity tunelem
jak ciemną myślą
pokruszony
rumowisko skał
zbocza nagie po lawinie
za górą katedralną
przedział wód
rozplatające się z potoków rzeki
u przedziale wód
piję gdzie czas
na grzbiet kamienny
z kubka na łańcuchu
z gardzieli psa

słońce nade mną
łuszczy jezioro żółdż
kwili ptak z wodospadu

II

w stronę gór
powietrze czyste
zobaczyć by można własną śmierć
miedzioryt panoramy
przesmyk zaciska

któ spada
któ poraniony czołga się
jak grzechotnik
któ patrzy kamiennie
któ z hukiem przepływa

obłok cicho przełęcz zamyka
opar buzy wypełnia dzikie przestrzenie
ciema teraz wspinaczka
głuchy upadek
From The Rocky Mountains

I

The mountain moved
a great bulk pierced by a tunnel
as if crumbled within
by a dark thought
a rubble of rocks
suddenly slides in an avalanche

beyond the cathedral rock
a parting of waters
as rivers unravel from streams

at the parting of the waters
where time has a stone back
I drink
from a chained mug
from a dog's gullet

the sun above me
whittles a lake of boats
a bird cries in the waterfall.

II

In the mountains
air is clear
the panoramic copperplate
tightly clamps the passage of escape
one's own death is visible

who falls
who when wounded crawls
like a rattlesnake
who stonily stares
who thunderously glides by

a cloud silently closes the overpass above
a fuming storm fills the wild spaces
dark is the climb
deaf is the fall.
Kluczyki

Oto jest dziwny świat.
Gdzie ja zgubiłem kluczyki?
Wiatr w okiennicę bije.
Oto jest dziwny wiatr,
Otwierający szpary w mroku
Dla swoich niewidocznych, chłodnych oczu.
A ja?
Z której strony drzwi stoję ja?
W pokój patrzę czy na dwór przez okno?
Oto jest dziwny deszcz,
W którym topole i fotele mokną.
Lecz ja!
W czym salonie jestem?
Malarz jakiś używał wodnych farb na ścianach.
Gwiazdozbiorem kopuła spieciona.
Orion w dłoni krzyż południa trzyma.
Lecz po której stronie gwiazd ja jestem?
Niebo mam pod nogami czy nad oczyma?

Dziwne niebo. Dziwolężne.
Gdzie ja podziałałem kluczyki?
Nić wije się — jak w bajce.
Lecz wątek kłębkem w trawy się potoczył.
Ale trawy nie moje.
Nie depcz traw — mówi księżyc.
Nie bierz w usta rosy — nie widzisz, 
że ja ją zapalam.
Mój jest płomień w wodzie — mówi sierp
Księżycu koszący blaszkę łąką.

Moja jest łąka — woła koń
I owałuje ku księżycom przez trawy.
Gdzie ja jestem, patrzący na walkę
Księżycu z koniem? Grzywę konia
Chwyta zębami księżyć,
Kon staje dęba w niebo, rząc.

Gdzie ja zgubiłem kluczyki?
Gdzie ja podziałałem ścieżkę?
Z twoich oczu zielonych
Zrobiłem ci kolczyki.
I teraz oczy nosisz w uszach.
Co nimi widzisz?
Rozdzielają nas fale
Unosząc dziwny sen.

Gdzie ja podziałałem łódkę?
Czy była papierowa?
Czy ja rozmoczył deszcz?
Ach, znalazłem kluczyki.
Ale żaden z nich do żadnych drzwi nie pasuje.
Behold this strange world.
Where did I lose the keys?
The wind is pounding on the shutters.
Behold this strange wind,
Opening cracks in the dusk
For its sightless, cool eyes.
But I?
On which side of the door am I?
Am I looking in or out of the window?
Behold this strange rain,
That soaks chairs and poplars.
But I
In whose living room am I?
Some painter used water colors on the walls.
The dome is fastened by a constellation.
Orion holds the Southern Cross in his hand.
But on which side of the stars am I?
Is the sky beneath my feet or above my eyes?

Strange sky. Monstrous.
What have I done with the keys?
Nothing weaves itself — as in a tale
Although the spool of thread rolled into the grass.
But the grass is not mine.
Don't trample the grass — says the moon.
Don't put the dew into your mouth — can't you see
That I am setting it alight
The flame in the water is mine — says the scythe
Of the moon mowing the meadow with radiance.

The meadow is mine — yells the horse
Galloping through the grass towards the moon.
Where am I looking at this battle
Between the moon and the horse? The moon
Grabs the horse's mane with its teeth,
The horse strains on his hind legs towards the sky, neighing.

Where did I lose the keys?
Where did I lose the way?
I made earrings
Out of your green eyes
Now you are wearing your eyes in your ears.
What do you see?
We are parted by waves
Carrying a strange dream.

What have I done with the boat?
Was it made of paper?
Did it fall apart in the rain?
Oh, here are the keys!
But none fit any of the doors.!
Człowiek to tylko
szumiąca muszla

Tłum jest jak morze.
Zanurzamy w nim dłonie
i prawie na ślepo
wyławiamy przyjaciół.
I wychodzimy razem na plażę
bosymi stopy smakować żółty piasek.

W piasku sypkim porzucamy się
obok siebie jak muszle
i słuchamy szumu sweto,
nie mogąc przebić skorup
co kryją ten szum,
nie mogąc zbadać tajemnicy
ni swojej, ni cudzej
tej muzyki.

Obok nas, porzucone w żółtym piasku,
leżą skorupy pękniętych muszlik
w nich jest pustka i cisza.

Za chwilę przypływ
zaczną zwilżać pod nami piasek,
za chwilę jego fale nas zagłuszają
i poniosą w głąb,
gdzie się gubimy.
A crowd is like the sea.
We dip our hands in it
and almost blindly
fish out companions
We walk out together on the beach
for our bare feet to taste the yellow sand.

We drop into the dry sand
side by side like sea-shells
and listen to our own sound,
unable to pierce the crust
that covers it
unable to explore the secret
of our own and another's
music.

Next to us, abandoned in yellow sand,
lie crusts of fractured shells
empty and silent.

In a while the tide
will moisten the sand beneath,
in a while the waves will deafen
and carry us to their depths,
where we lose ourselves.
Argument

nie ma nie ma dla mnie
miejsca
ni tu ni tam
tu wolność
ryba na piasku
tam mnie klatka czeka w rogu obfitości
mięczy widownią a sceną
to ja jestem żelazną kurtyną
dzielę
dwie
niedorzeczywistości
Argument

There is no place no place
for me
not here not there
here there is freedom
a fish on the sand
there a cage awaits me in the horn of plenty
between the theatre and the stage
I am the iron curtain
dividing
two incomplete realities.
Bunt wierszem

Urodziłem się tam.
Nie wybierałem miejsca.
Chętnie bym się urodził po prostu w trawie.
Trawy rosną wszędzie.
Nie chciałyby mnie tylko pustynie.
Lub mogłem się przecież urodzić
W kłębuszku wiatru,
Gdy oddychają powietrza.
Ale urodziłem się tam.
Przykuli mnie gdy jeszcze byłem dzieckiem.
A później z łańcuszkami puścili w świat.
Jestem tutaj. Urodziłem się tam.
Gdybym choć się urodził na morzu.
Żelazo namagnesowane
Co wciąż mnie na biegun kierujesz,
Ciężkie jesteś; bez ciebie mi nak lekko,
że tracę wagę siebie.
Więc noszę te łańcuszki
I potrząsam nimi jak lew grzywa.
A ludzie stamtąd krzyczą:
Wróć.
Wołają: cip, cip, cip.
Proso z kąkolem na wiatr.
Pies do budy.
Ja jestem poeta (trzeba się nazwać).
Język moim łańcuchem.
Słowa obróżą moją.
Urodziłem się tam.
(Chętnie bym się urodził po prostu w trawie).

1956
Rebellion in Verse

I was born over there.
I did not choose the place.
I would gladly have been born in the grass.
Grass grows everywhere.
Only deserts would reject me.
Or I could have been born
In a skein of wind,
When the air was breathing.
But I was born there.
They chained me while I was still a child.
And later in little chains released me into the world.
I am here. I was born there.
If only I had been born at sea.
O magnetic iron
That forever pulls towards a pole
You are heavy; without you I am so light
That I become weightless.
But I wear these little chains
And shake them as a lion shakes his mane
While people from over there shout:
Come back
They call: chick chick chick.
Millet and corn cast to the wind
Dog into the kennel
I am a poet (one has to be called something)
Language is my leash.
Words are my collar.
I was born over there
(I would gladly have been born in the grass).

1956
Aspekty czasu

Czas nas dościga nawet w obłąkaniu.
Ucieczki nie ma. Gwałt w zawiłych sferach.
Krążą drapieżne sowy puszyste od snów
i jak zegary przybywają nocą
by w dzień ubywać cienką strugą pierza
z krwiożerczych szponów. Tyle napisano
o właściwościach czasu.

Obłąkani krzyczą: minuta na dwunastą
i dwunasta biała.
W cyfrach jest alegoria. Cyfry są światami.
Zamknięte w czaszach opukują światło.
Godzina mija, godzina przybywa,
w wyschniętym doku straszy szkielet wrak.

Potem okręty. Pasażer pijany
wstrzymuje słońce, toto coelum słońca
wprawia w ruch czasu.
Z dalekich gwiazd zabłyska chwila świetlna
i okopolonym szkłem jak Iza w myśl spływa.

Gazza mija, gazda przybywa.
On nas dościga nawet w obłąkaniu.
A coż dopiero w racjonalnym bycie,
który podzielił czas na dysocjacje.
Pereant mundi: trzeszczą grawitacje.

I znów krzyczą: minuta, minuta,
a już dwunasta ich stawia za czasem
i sto czterdziestu czwarta grzmi po tarczy
zegara, który ptakiem puszystym ucieka
rozczapierzony w ptasim obłąkaniu.

I dzień ubywa,
zastyga w Zodiaku.

To jest gów łańcuch
i rytm twego tańca.

O gwiazdo czasu.
Aspects of Time

Time overtakes us even in madness. There is no escape. Only panic in twisted realms. Rapacious owls more feathery than dreams, circle and arrive at night like clocks so that by day their bloodthirsty talons wane into thin streams of feathers. Much has been written about the properties of time.

The insane scream: one minute to twelve and twelve strikes. There is an allegory in numerals. Numerals are worlds. Locked inside skulls they sound out light. An hour comes, an hour goes, The skeleton of a wrecked ship haunts the dry dockyard.

Then ships. A drunken passenger halting the sun, sets its toto caelo into the motion of time. a moment sparks a light wave from faraway stars and falls along a sooty lens like a tear into thought.

An hour comes, an hour goes. Time overtakes us even in madness. And how much more in a state of sanity which divided it into dissociations. Pereant mundi: screech the gravitations.

And they scream again: minute, a minute, while twelve already puts them behind time and a hundred and forty four thunders along the dial of the clock, which like a bushy bird escapes dishevelled in birdlike madness.

And the day wanes, congealing in the Zodiac.

This is your chain and rhythm of your dance.

Oh star of time
Komunikat

Wchodzimy potwornie w te same wody,
w te same zastałe sadzawki,
ale gdzie jesteś?

Czy ascetyczny piach wyssał już twoje kości?

Co zrobił z duchem twoim Bóg, duch na duchach?
Gdzie porwał twą istotę jastrząb złotopióry?

Dwie kobiety cię nosiły,
a teraz gdzie jesteś?
Pochylały się nad tobą dwie jasności.
A dziś, srebrnie rozświetlona
ciemność cię wyobraża
pochylona.

Z synem brata powiązany ciemnym losem,
w konstrukcji serca ponad czas
później ucieleśniony?

Nie ma od żywych ratunku, kiedy kochają.
Z bogami chodzą w ognich twórczego szalu.
Szalę sprawiedliwości bezbożnie przechylają
dla tych co wiecznie skrzywdzeni
martwą dłońią
natury?
Announcement.

Monstrously we enter the same waters,  
the same stagnant pools,  
but where are you?

Did the ascetic sand suck all marrow from your bones?

What has God done with your soul, soul of souls?  
Where has the gold-feathered hawk captured you?

Two women carried you,  
but where are you now?  
Two radiances bent over you once.  
Today, only a stooping  
silver-lit darkness  
shapes you.

Tied by dark fate with a brother's son  
inside a heart constructed beyond time  
twice embodied?

Is there no salvation from the love of the living  
Who walk with gods in fires of creative frenzy.  
Impiously tipping the scale of justice  
for those who are forever wronged  
by nature's dead  
hand?
ARTHUR JANUSZ IHNATOWICZ (b. 1929) left Poland in 1946, studied in Britain and Ireland, and received a B.A. in philosophy and psychology. He came to Canada in 1951, lived in Toronto, then in 1958 returned to Poland where he attended a theological college and became a priest. In 1967 he came back to live in Ottawa. Ihnatowicz is a poet, critic and essayist as well as a dramatist and a translator of poets such as Whitman and Pound. His translations of psalms Izrael w poezji polskiej (Israel in Polish Poetry) appeared in an anthology in Paris. He was a member of the Kontynenty group in England. Many of his poems were published in Polish periodicals and a number were included in the anthology Ryby na piasku (Fish on Sand). His latest book of poems is Pejzaż z postaciami (Landscape with Figures) and he is currently teaching at the University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas.
Jadąc przez prerie — o zachodzie słońca

1.

uciekając od słońca
(podwójna taśma: żelazo i beton,
martwe morze traw
i niebo za oddechem chmur martwe)
uciekając od słońca
ulatując w noc
oto masz powrót niemarnotrawny
ale całkowicie znarnowany,
bo ożęśmy dokonali?

2.

przebiegli wieże elewatora
i szary jak kości wykopane corral
i tylko słupy każdy w samotności swojej
powiązane tajemnych roznów pustką
na płowej fali wieczornej trawy
słońce (coraz coraz dalej)
rozbełtane na pomarańczowy pas
krowy zwolna się zamieniające
w czarne upiory
i koń przez piszczeli barierę
wyciągający szyję
ku cieniom z drugiej strony

3.

powolnieje metalu o metal gra
pośród ciemno zielonych drzew
szary gotycki wieży kikut
i suchy spopielają drzew trzon
i rzeka zimna jak metal
to stacja: Medicine Hat!
Through The Prairies - At Sundown

1.
running away from the sun 
(a double band: iron and steel.
dead sea of grass 
and the sky dead behind the heaving cloud) 
running away from the sun 
flying into the night 
the unprodigal return 
totally wasted 
for what have we accomplished?

2.
the elevator towers swept past 
and a corral-grey like a mass of dug up bones 
only the solitary telephone poles 
on the faded wave of twilight grass 
and bound by the emptiness of secret conversations 
the sun (farther and farther away) 
melts into an orange strip 
cows are slowly transforming 
into black phantoms 
and the horse stretches its neck 
through the fence's crossbones 
toward the shadows on the other side

3.
the play of metal against metal slows 
among the darkening trees 
the grey stump of a gothic tower 
an ash-dry tree shaft 
and the river's cold steel 
the station is: Medicine Hat
W poszukiwaniu straconego domu

Siostrze mojej Irmie Zalewskiej.

w naszym domu nie było okien tylko niebo poza firanką na ścianach rosły cienie jak grzyby po słońcu a w nocy spacerowały kawalkady świateł i czasami — gdy ptaki były najbardziej głośne — wchodził czerwony jak begonia klon cowiosenny klon z latającymi noskami

w naszym domu nie było mebli tylko przyczajone tygrysy pluszowe zwierzęta nadymane baloniki i można je było głaskać i czuć jak pod pluszem drżą i mruczą oczami koty o oczach z poduszek

ach te poduszki! ogrody płynące w oceanie kanapy rajsie ptaki skłaniające omdlęwającą głowę nad jedwabnym strumykiem błękitno-ożółtymi gwiazdami o poduszki pachnące tysiącznymi bajkami grające przytulonej twarzy jak muszla schronienie gdy o zmierzchu wysuwa się zza firanki straszny pan Cień i stojąc w kącie połyka fiołkowe i jak motyl drżące powietrze aż go zabije strzałą lampy wypływająca z głębin kanapy mama

o w naszym domu fontanna światła ukryta w zapachu kolan naszej matki
In Search Of A Lost Home

To My Sister Irma Zalewska

our home has no windows only sky behind the curtain
shadows crept along the walls like vines against the sun
cavalcades of lights paraded at night
sometimes - when the birds were noisy -
a begonia-red maple entered
a spring maple with flying seed-pods

our home had no furniture only lurking tigers
velvet animals blown up balloons
one could caress them and feel how under the velvet
sleeping cats with button eyes tremble and purr

ah those pillows! gardens floating in the sofa's ocean
paradise birds bowing their languid heads
above the silken stream of blue-eyed stars!
oh pillows smelling of a thousand fairy tales
humming like shells next to snuggled faces
a shelter when in the dusk the terrible Bogey Man
slips from behind the curtain and standing in the corner
swallows the trembling butterfly and violet air
until he is stabbed with a lightbeam
by mamma flowing out of the sofa's deeps

our home has a fountain of light
hidden in the fragrance of our mother's knees
Amor przelatujący

a dalej, za oknem, świeci ogród
nanizane kryształy na krzaków pręty
pójdziemy może razem tamtędy
srebrne jagody na dłoń brać

otwiera się parasol niebieskiej pogody
i dymami ulatuje trawnik
i my też, stebni i barwni,
w niebo w przezroczysty świat

zamienieni w powietrze jaśminne i bzowe
na szczycie słonecznej fontanny
zaśpiewają młodzieńcy i panny
jak posągi z muzyki i szkła.
Cupid Flying By

over there outside the window, a garden glistens
the bushes' twigs are threaded with crystals
maybe we will go that way
to gather silver berries in our palms

the parasol of blue weather opens
the lawn drifts away with smoke
and we fly, in bright hues and silver
into the transparent world

at the top of a sunlit fountain
maidens and youths
transformed into jasmin and lilac air
will sing out like statues of music and glass
Zakonnica przemieniona w krzyk

siostrę graj na kornecie
noc taka pusta jak piekło
biały sufit białe wieko
wokół głowy obniż nade mną
bo mię pochłonie ogromność
ciemności
siostrę milczenie to pora diabelska
graj na liczydłach łaski
brzękaj
szeleszcz jak niedokończona książka
siostrę znów się cisza otwiera
siostrę wołaj głośno siostrę
siostrę patrz umieram.
A Nun Transformed Into a Scream

sister play the cornet
the night's empty as hell
lower over me the white ceiling
coffin lid around your head
or the immense darkness
will swallow me
sister silence is the devil's hour
play on the abacus of grace
tick
rustle like an unfinished book
sister the pocket of silence opens again
sister scream loudly sister
sister look I am dying
O poor poor poor

czego ci potrzeba więcej kochana krowo?
trawy zielonej, miłości trochę,
dachu nad głową i łożka pod...
i kolorową poduszkę?

więc dobrze, masz i poduszkę
i nawet trochę słonecznego pyłu
i ciepła trochę pulsującego nocami i jego
brudne skarpetki pod łożkiem
O Poor Poor Poor

what more do you need my beloved cow?
a little green grass, a little love,
a roof over your head, a bed underneath ....
and a colorful pillow?

well then, you have a pillow
and even a little sundust
nights pulsating with warmth and his
dirty socks under the bed
Drzewo szumiące

oliwka przypadła do ziemi
w getsemani
noc granadząca w zieleni:
pode mną krzyczano w bólu
u moich gałęzi obcinano
dłonie i nosy
wypalono tysiące oczu
w moim cieniu u-
rodziło się dziecko
o żabich oczach
i łapach jaszczórki
mój pień jest z huku
mój korzeń z ognia
moje liście jesienne
kwawe bogiany
szybują zarzewie żurawie
nad łanem
prosa i pszenicy
halcedama
deszcz ognisty
spadają
na włosy lata
rodząc popiół
potem mię ukrzyżowano
przybiwszy do człowieka
i z tym trupem uciekam
przez szeregi kolejnych grobów
nade mną w żałobie
stoi pień wieży
kościoła narodów
i procesje nocami szepczą,
moje liście powrócone
z martwych
teraz czekam na węże
co się rodzi
by mnie objąć i zapłodnić
starowiecznym ogniem.
Murmuring Tree

an olive squats, clinging to the earth
in gethsemane
night swells in verdure:
there were screams beneath me
under my branches they cut off
noses and hands
thousands of eyes were burnt out
in my shadow
a child was born
with frog's eyes
and lizard's paws
my trunk is of thunder
my root is of fire
my autumn leaves
bloody storks
burning brands
cranes glide
above a field of millet and wheat
fiery rain
halcedama
years fall on the hair
giving birth to ashes
then they crucified me
nailing me to a man's body
and with this corpse I am escaping
through row upon row of graves
above me in mourning
towers a trunk
the steeple of the church of nations
and the processions whisper at night
these are my leaves that have returned
from the dead
now I wait for the serpent
that is being born
to embrace and fill my womb
with the ancient flame.
Krajobraz wewnętrzny

Patrząc we własne światło w ciemność
gdzie zawieszona trwa kryształowa ryba
zagłębiająca w ciemność rozpostartą jak woda
oczy nagle zamykam i przez zaciszną powieki
widzę obraz, kontrast nocy, światło.
Tak wzrok zatopiony w siebie
przechodzi wciąż przez granice
tam i napowrót jak wahadło
i wiem, że patrzę we zwierciadło
we świat widzialny tylko kiedy wspak
sie patrzy. A nagle ryba
jak krzyk wybucha w światło
i oto opadamy na proch rozsypani
przez powietrze zawieszone między gwiazdami
gdy nas potwór głębi mórz pożera
by zamieniwszy w siebie — wskrzesić.
Internal Landscape

Looking into the darkness at my own light
where a luminous fish hangs motionless
in the darkness that spreads out like water
I close my eyes suddenly and through a clenched eyelid
I see an image, contrast of night, brightness.
Thus sight immersed in itself
constantly crosses the border
there and back like a pendulum
and I know, I am looking at a world
that can only be seen in the mirror
Suddenly the fish explodes into light like a scream
and through air suspended between stars
we fall scattered into ashes
when the monster of the ocean's depths devours us
so that transformed into him
we may rise again.
Dzieci w oknie

1.

przędwczoraj grało światło w oknach
i ulicami ciągnęły procesje
a co chwilę defilada maszerowała
raz dwa raz dwa jak zdecydowany dzień

w oknach dzieci polewały ulicę płatkami
róż z cudzych ogrodów i konwalii
łuskanych jak groszek pachnący z gron

na jezdni łopotały chorągwie i wstęgi
i błyszczały blachy na głowach mężczyzn
a na balkonach dywany klask-klask na wietrze
i stukała o poręcz fotografia w ramkach
i wołaliśmy piskliwie: nich żyje babcia

2.

to było wczoraj, potem noc zapadła
jeździły samoloty pocisku i zbierały kwiaty
a kiedyśmy wstali (wreszcie, obudzeni płaczem)
na chodnikach i na jezdni zasadzone były trupy
i huki wisiały na gałęziach wystraszonych klonów

płakaliśmy w wysokim oknie, aż babcia
z trumny wypłynęła jak obłok i dalej
już nie było nic tylko suche pióra
odeszłych z okna ucichłych aniołów
Children at The Window

I

day before yesterday light frolicked in the windows
processions pulled along the streets
and every minute a parade marched by
one two one two like a set day

children in the windows watered the streets
with rose petals and lilies of the valley
sweetly smelling peas in clusters

ribbons and banners fluttered in the street
tin glimmered on the heads of the valiant
colourful rugs flapped on the balconies
a framed photograph knocked against the railing
while we shouted: long live our grandma

II

that was yesterday, then night fell
airplanes were gathering flowers in the dark
when we got up at last (woken by sobs)
the streets were strewn with corpses
and thunder hung in the branches of terrified maples

framed in the tall windows we cried until grandma
like a cloud floated out of her casket
then there was nothing but dried up feathers
departing from the windows of silent angels
ANDRZEJ BUSZA (b. 1938) is the youngest of the poets appearing in this anthology. After leaving Poland at a very young age and living in Palestine for some time, he went to England, where he was educated. In London, along with several of the other poets considered here, he belonged to the Kontynenty group of writers and, like his friends, chose to write poetry in his native language. He has had many poems published in England and France; his most recent volume of Polish poems Znaki wodne (Signs on the Water) was published in London, England. A book of poems in English translation, Astrologer in the Underground was published by Ohio University Press in 1969. He is at present an associate professor in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia.
Jasny poranek

Trzy falujące palmy
potrząsają szklistym włosem
nad zatoką
której błękit
upływa
złotą bramą
w nicość
dziś w noc
nie wierzę

nawet cień ptaka
który raz po raz
czarną błyskawicą
okna oślepia
nie odnajduje oddźwięku
w rozwidlonym kamertonie serca

zapisuję ten ranek od razu
nim się rozwieje
z dymem parowca
odpływającego nazajutrz
jasnym oceanem
na Jawę
Bright Morning

Three undulating palms
toss their glassy hair
above a bay
whose blue
seeps away
through a golden gate
into nothingness

Now I do not believe
in night

not even a bird's shadow
which time and again
blinds the window
with black lightning
finds no resonance
in the tuning fork of the heart

I am recording this morning at once
before it drifts away
with the smoke of a steamship
sailing tomorrow
on the bright ocean
for Java
Czerwona róża

z dnia na dzień
róża staje się
centrum i carycą
mego ogrodu

skupia w sobie
zaborczo
wszystkie czerwienie

odbarwia maki i maliny
okrada gwoździe w płacie
ze rdzy

ogrod blednie i bieleje

róża rakowato rośnie
jak wampir pęcznieje
na Mirę i Antares
się boczy

kiedy rano
budzę się
i otwieram oczy
przez serca okiennic
nie świeci już słońce
tylko śpyte

czerwona róża
Red Rose

day after day
the rose
becomes
the center and czarina
of my garden

greedily
drawing in
all the red

bleaching poppies and raspberries
robbing nails in a fence
of rust

the garden pales and blanches.

the rose
cancerously growing
swells like a vampire
and looks with spite
at Mira and Antares

in the morning
when I awaken
and open my eyes
the sun no longer shines.
through the hearts of the shutters
only a red rose
leers
Biała róża

tu ogród zaniebany
wszędzie mnóstwo zielska
panoszy się i przelewa
jak zielone pomyje

pokrzywa zajęła ścieżki
włochatą hordą
chwast wdzierza się
na grzędę zuchwale

w samym środku
łysego trawnika
sterczy jak piszczeł
złamana motyka

opodal płot kuternogi
przebiera żerdziami
i rwie się
do drogi

nad nim
przewalają się ciężko
barchanowe chmury
wypchane po brzegi rtęcią

wierną na swój sposób
pokonała mi
w tym krajobrazie
tylko róża

wschodzi codzień z rana
biała i niepokalana
jak jutrzenka
nad ruiną raju
White Rose

here is a neglected garden
dominated by masses of weeds
overflowing everywhere
like green swill

a hairy horde of nettles
occupies all paths
while thistles
rudely claw into the flowerbeds

in the very center
on the bald lawn
a broken hoe
protrudes like a shinbone

nearby a crippled fence
shifts its palings
and leans
toward the road

above it
fustian black clouds
stuffed with quick silver
billow heavily

all that is left to me
in this landscape
true in its fashion
is just one rose

it rises each day
immaculate and white
like the morning star
above the ruins of eden
Szkło

przezroczysty świat

jak gdyby w żyły
ktoś wstrzyknął szkło

na szklanym drzewie
brzęczą owoce

celofanowe liście
czochra wiatr

szybą ogrodu
idzie kobieta

ma kryształowe ciało
i wnętrze

stopami nie zaciemnia
ani skrawka ziemi

i widzi pod sobą jasno
wielopiętrowy plaster
ul trumien
za szkła
Glass

transparent world

as if someone had injected
glass into the veins

fruit sings
on a glass tree

the wind ruffles
cellophane leaves

a woman walks
along the garden's pane

she has a body
and entrails of crystal

her feet do not shadow
even an inch of ground

below her she clearly sees
a multitiered honeycomb
a beehive
of glass coffins
Crimancja w cieniu platanów

siedzieliśmy na tarasie
w samosłodkcie południe
otuleni błękitem
platanów

z nieba
na drzewa
opadał bezgłośnie
ciepły złotospad
słońca

dwa pionki
na ruchomej szachownicy
cienia
czytaliśmy sobie nawzajem
dłonie

ja w miękkiej mapie
twego ciała
widziałem swoje ujście
szerokie leniwe wody
ławice lnianych chmur
i białe plamki ptaków
o zmroku

ty biegła pod prąd
linią mego życia
do źródeł
gdzie paproć
płucze włosy
w chłodnym szkle

a wokół nas
dopełniał się dzień
brzęczały muchy i pszczoły
i kapał na ziemię
miód światła
Palmistry In The Shade of Plane-Trees

we sat on the veranda
in the sweet core of noon
wrapped in the azure
of plane-trees

from the sky
a warm goldfall
of light
was silently falling
on the trees

two pawns
along the chessboard
of shade
we read each other's
palms

I saw in the soft map
of your body
my exit
wide languid waters
dunes of linen clouds
and spots of white birds
at twilight

you ran against the current
of my life-line
to the springs
where ferns
wash their hair
in cool glass

while around us
the day was ripening
flies and bees buzzed
and the honey of light
dripped on the soil
Czary

szpalerem topól
złoto-zielonych
jak średniowieczne zmartwychwstanie
biegnie dziewczyna
włosy jasne
koloru pszenicy
upiête do góry
ku słońcu

druga dziewczyna
wierzbami okolona
siedzi nad stawem
włosy czarne rozpuściła
po nich
do ciemnej wody spływa
cień jak krew
dyptyk ten
do proste go
sprowadza się równania

albo one
w zmowie
nad woskową kukłą
zamówia mnie

albo ja
zdążę przyszpilić je

na jednej kartce motyla
na drugiej śmę
Witchcraft

along the avenue
of green-gold poplars
like a mediaeval resurrection
runs a girl
her hair light
the colour of wheat
pinned upward
to the sun

a second girl
encircled by willows
sits beside a pond
she has loosened her black hair
and down it
a shadow like blood
flows into the dark water

this diptych
leads to a simple
equation

either they
plotting
over a wax doll
will bewitch me

or I
will manage to pin them down

on one sheet the butterfly
on the other the moth
Cisza

naki napój słodki i gęsty
wypełnia drzewa
po brzegi cienia

żylastym wężem korzeni
sączy się z ziemi
gdzie bez głosu
biją cienne źródła
i diament twardnieje
w sercu węgla

gromadzona
w jednych skójach
przez lata
przelewa się
pni pionem
w roz词条one
konary

ku blaszkom liści
których ostry poszum
sprawdza jej smak

po zmroku
wielokrotnieje
mnożona
złotym milczeniem
pięciu tysięcy gwiazd
Silence

Silence
like a sweet thick drink
fills the trees
to their shadows' brim

it oozes from the earth
through the veined knot of roots
where dark springs pulse
without sound
and diamond hardens
in the heart of coal

gathered
in the fibrous jars
for years
it flows
straight through the trees' vertical
into the forking boughs

towards the foil of leaves
whose sharp whisper
confirms its flavour

after twilight
it grows
multiplied
by the gold muteness
of five thousand stars
Z mikrokosmologii

choć nieraz tu duszno
i pleśń
zielonym liszajem
zalesia tapety

nie otwieram okian

z tamtej strony
cząy sad
skrada się
z pełnym księżyce
na czele

góry gryzą niebo
polykając po kawałku
anemiczne konstelacje

ja zaś
ujarzmiłem już
z grubsza
swój mikroklimat

raz w tygodniu
strzygę kaktusy
na parapcie
i karmię myszy
prosem

kiedy na dworze
rzężą rynny
zatykam uszy wątą
i czytam odyseję
From Microcosmology

although it's often close here
and mildew
afforest the wallpaper
with green tetter

I keep the windows shut

from the other side
the whole orchard
creeps
led by
the full moon

mountains gnaw at the sky
swallowing anemic constellations
piece by piece

but I
more or less
have already controlled
my own microclimate

once a week
I clip the cactuses
on the sill
and feed millet
to mice

when outside
the gutters wheeze
I plug my ears with cotton wool
and read the Odyssey
DANUTA BIENKOWSKA (1917-1974) left Poland in 1940 and lived in Russian labour camps and Polish refugee camps in Persia and India. She arrived in London, England, in 1946, and emigrated to Canada in 1955. Having received her Ph.D. in Polish literature at the University of London, Ontario, she became a professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of Toronto. She has published scholarly works in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* and *The Polish Review* (New York). Many of her poems were published in the periodical *Kultura* (Paris), and a collection of Polish poems, *Piesń suchego języka*, was published by "Biblioteka Kultury" in Paris in 1970.
Seria towarzyska

1. Papugi

Papugi na pluszowych fotelach
Główka w główkę
Dziobek w dziobek
Piórka im się lśnią
I wciąż kręcą ogonkiem.

— Chciałam być nieśmiertelna
Tak, tak, nie przesadzam
I żeby zawsze na pluszowych fotelach
Rączka w rączkę, nosek w nosek

— Pani też? Czyż nie?
Śmierć jest taka prozaiczna
Powiedziałam u fryzjera:
Wieczna ondulacja
Na całą wieczność
I żeby mi się piórka lśniły
Bo przyjdę stamtąd
I zażądam zwrotu pieniędzy.

Papugi na pluszowej kanapie
Z ogryzkiem papierosa
W srebrnym ustniku
Ze strzępem myśli
Wśród kolorowych piór
Wypchane sobą
Aż po czubek głowy
I po ogonek.

Prawda, pani Daiuniu
Ja z panią...
Jaka pani...
Może jeszcze sałatki
Lub jajko w majonezie?
W życiu jest też jak w jajku
Z wierzchu biało
W środku żółto
Potem nic.
A Party

1. Parrots

Parrots on velvet sofas
Heads together
Beaks together
Gleaming feathers
Constantly flipping their tails

- I wish to be immortal
Yes, yes, without exaggeration
And sit forever on velvet sofas
Hand in hand, nose to nose.

- You too? or not?
Death is so prosaic
I told my hairdresser:
I want a permanent
For all eternity
And I want my feathers to gleam
Or I will return from there
And demand my money back.

Parrots on velvet sofas
Nibbling on cigarettes
In silver holders
With wisps of thoughts
Amidst colored feathers
They sit stuffed with themselves
From the tip of the head
To the very tail

You are right Dziunia
I am with you ..... 
What lady ..... 
Maybe a little more salad
Or an egg with dressing?

Life resembles an egg
White on the outside
Yellow inside
And then nothing.
2. Monolog w przerwie między jednym, 
a drugim kieliszkiem

Nazywam się pan Jan
Dlaczego, nie wiem
Każdy jakoś się nazywa.
Wolałbym zresztą Wincenty
Albo Napoleon,
Ale nic już nie poradzę
Może zresztą mógłbym poradzić
Wszystko daje się naprawić
Jeśli nie żałować pieniędzy.
Więc nazywam się Jan
I pochodzę stamtąd
Skąd wszyscy pochodzimy,
Ale od pewnego czasu
To już nie ma znaczenia
I nawet nasze dawne
"Góralu, czy ci nie żał"
Brzmi cokolwiek fałszywie.
Bo, po prawdzie, to mż nie żał
I wcale się tego nie wstydzę,
To znaczy wstydziłem się dawniej,
Ale teraz sobie powiedziałem:
Janie, daj spokój mrzonkom.
I od razu poczułem się lepiej.
Więc właśnie się nazywam,
Ale to nie jest ważne
I pochodzę, ale nie o tym
Chciałem tutaj mówić.
Chciałem tylko powiedzieć
Że jestem.
Po co jestem, nie wiem.
Jestem, bo byłem.
Będę, bo jestem,
A potem przestanę być.
I wtedy to już naprawdę
Będzie wszystko jedno.
Proszę nie chrząkać — powiadam
Byłem, więc jestem, panowie
I póki jestem...
Proszę się nie śmiać
Bo wiem do czego zdążyam
Nie tak łatwo jest zmienić skórę
Chociaż to podobno popłaca.
Nazywam się pan Jan,
Wcale nie jestem góralem
I niczego mż nie jest żał.
2. A monologue at intermission - between two cocktails

My name is Jan
Why, I don't know
Everyone must have some name
I would prefer to be called Vincenty
or Napoleon
But there is nothing I can do about it
But maybe I could do something
Everything can be done
If one isn't stingy with money
I come from there
Where we all come from,
But for some time now
That means nothing.
Even our old song
"Man of the Mountains, have you no regrets?"
sounds somewhat out of tune
Because really, I have no regrets
And I am not at all ashamed of it
That means that I used to feel shame before
But then I told myself;
Jan stop hallucinating
And I felt better immediately.
In any case I have been named
But that is no longer important
And I come from, but that is not what
I intended to talk about here.
I only wanted to say
That I am
Why I am I don't know
I am because I was
I will be because I am
And afterwards I will stop being
And then it will really be
Immaterial
Please stop clearing your throat - I say
I was, therefore I am, gentlemen
And as long as I am
Please don't laugh
Because I know what I am aiming at
It is not easy to change one's skin
But I hear it pays well
My name is Jan
I am not a man of the mountains
And I regret nothing.
Ty nie-Ty

Słońce, pająk ognisty
Nad kominami miasta —
I dzień dymem się ściele
Po dachach.

Czemu zawsze stoję
Z twarzą przy szybie?
Ja, nie-ja,
Ktoś, kto ma
Głowę i ręce.

Słońce, nie-Słońce,
Dymem, nie-dymem,
Po dachach,
I ja nie-ja,
Między dymem, a słońcem.

A mówiłam ci zawsze:
— Ty, nie-Ty,
Chciałeś być nie-być,
Może dymem się rozpłynąć
Po niebie?

A mówiłam ci zawsze:
— Ty, nie-Ty,
Kochałeś, nie-kochałeś,
Może ci się zdawało,
Że widziałeś twarz słońca
Za szybą?

Czemu zawsze
Wiem, nie-wiem,
Czuję, nie-czuję?
Czemu patrzę,
Nie patrząc,
Otwartymi szeroko oczyma?

Słońce, pająk ognisty,
Poza płotem kominów,
I dzień dymem zagląda
Do okna.
You not - You

Sun, a fiery spider
Above the chimneys of the city -
and the day beds down in smoke
Over rooftops.

Why do I always stand
Facing the window pane?
I, not-I,
Somebody, who has
A head and hands.

Sun, not-Sun,
Smoke, not-Smoke,
On rooftops,
And I not-I,
Between the smoke, and the sun.

I always told you;
- You, not-You,
Wanted to be, not-be,
Should one disperse like smoke
Into the sky?

I always told you;
- You not-You,
Loved, not-loved,
Maybe you thought
That you saw the sun's face
Behind the window pane?

Why do I always
Know, not-know
Feel, not-feel?
Why do I look
Eyes wide open
Unseeing?

Sun a fiery spider,
Beyond the hedge of chimneys,
and the day peers into the window
Through an eye of smoke.
IRENA KWIATKOWSKA-DE GRANDPRÉ was born in Poland and completed her university education in France at the Sorbonne, where she obtained a doctorate. She is both a painter and a poet. Her latest volume of poems, *Le Coeur contre les murs*, written in French, was recently published in Montreal. It is illustrated by her and was displayed at the first international Festival of Books, in Nice. She now lives in Montreal. Irena Kwiatkowska was also one of the artists chosen in 1967 for an international exhibition of painters on the occasion of the Centenary of Canada. In addition, she has collaborated with her husband, Pierre de Grandpré, a Canadian writer, in *L'Histoire de la littérature française du Québec*. 
Verbe tu es le monde
Le rythme et le temps
Tu tournes avec le soleil
Tu es l'âme de toutes choses
La couleur et l'élan
Tu es aigle de feu et de vent
Quand tu es verbe de l'amour.

Mais le verbe de ton cœur
Est mon désert de sable
Le verbe de ton cœur
Est ma chute mortelle
Verbe tu n'es qu'un muet
Tu deviens sang
Quand le cri est dans la gorge.
Word you are the world
Rhythm and time
You turn with the sun
You are the soul of all things
The color and dash
You are the eagle of fire and wind
When you are a word of love

But the word of your heart
Is my desert of sand
The word of your heart
Is my mortal fall
Word you are only a mute
You become blood
When a cry rises in the throat
Source

Une seule fois
J'ai bu à la source
L'eau pure l'eau claire
Aujourd'hui.
Une lourde pierre
Blesse mon front
Quand je me courbe
Pour y boire
Et je reviens chaque jour
Vers cette source morte
Je m'agenouille et j'attends
Que l'eau vive rejaillisse
The Well

Once only
I drank from the well.
Pure water, clear water
Today a heavy stone
Bruises my forehead
When I bend down to drink
And I return each day
To that dead well
I kneel and wait
For living water to
Spring forth again
Metamorphose

Dans la nuit mon corps
Chat méchant
Se dresse au fond d'un puits
Profond
Sans sortie
La volonté dompteur puissant
Se repose
Je contemple l'animal
Je veille
Et regarde le ciel
La porte de nuit est bien fermée
Le soleil du jour encore si loin

Pauvre bête
Quelle peine
Tu te donnes
Et ton âme est toute prête
A renaître humaine
Ton âme est toute prête
A devenir dieu
Metamorphosis

At night my body
A mean cat
Arches its back at the bottom of the well
Abysmal
Without an exit
The will - a powerful tamer
Rests
I observe the animal
I keep watch
Gazing at the sky
The door of night is firmly closed
Day's sun still so far away

Poor beast
What pain
You suffer
Your soul is ready
For a human rebirth
Your soul is ready
To become god
Quatre murs
Jouent avec mon cœur
Le renvoient face à face
Je regarde
Je ne sens plus rien
Les heures s'en vont
Vides de temps
Pas de geste
La pensée coule
La nuit s'est figée
Pas de ciel
Pas d'hier
Ni de demain
Quatre murs blancs
Jouent avec mon cœur
Je regarde
Je ne sens
Plus rien...
Four walls
Play with my heart
Tossing it back and forth

I watch
I feel nothing
Hours pass
Timelessly
No movement
Thought flows
Night congeals

No sky
No yesterday
No tomorrow

Four blank walls
Play with my heart
I watch
I feel
Nothing
SOURCES OF POLISH AND FRENCH POEMS

COLLECTED FOR THE ANTHOLOGY


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