

The Rise of Polish Poetry

On Tuesday, May 8th at 6:30 PM join us at the Polish Center of Wisconsin to hear Professor Peter Burzynski read and discuss the poetry of two of the most prominent Polish poets of the post WWII era. Czeslaw Milosz, and Wislawa Szymborska. Read in English translation.

Milosz and Szymborska have each been honored with the Nobel Prize for Literature - 1980 and 1996 respectively.

Why should we Americans read Polish poetry in English translation? As reported by Sarah Boxer of the New York Times in March of 2002 at a poetry reading in New York City several months after 9/11, "Innocent America became a land of experience. Postwar Polish poetry became eerily pertinent". These...poets who lived, suffered, and composed under Communist Poland repression captured the experience of terror in much of their writing. "...suddenly their poems hit a new American nerve". But their entire bodies of work tell us more.

Milosz:

*The purpose of poetry is to remind us
how difficult it is to remain just one person,
for our house is open, there are no keys in the doors.
And invisible guests come in and out at will.
What I'm saying here is not, I agree, poetry,
as poems should be written rarely and reluctantly,
under unbearable duress and only with the hope
that good spirits, not evil ones, choose us for their
instrument.
(from "Ars Poetica")*

Szymborska:

*Poetry –
but what is poetry anyway?
More than one rickety answer
has tumbled since that question first was raised.
But I just keep on not knowing, and I cling to that
like a redemptive handrail.
(From "Some People Like Poetry")*

Peter Burzynski is a fourth year PhD student in Creative Writing Poetry at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. He holds a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, an M.F.A. in Poetry from the New School University and an M.A. in Polish Literature from Columbia University. He is a Graduate Assistant Coordinator for Creative Writing at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. Among his other talents, he has worked as a chef in New York City and St. Francis, WI.

Admission is Free-of-Charge. A reception will be held after the reading. Please RSVP at the Polish Center call 414-529-2140, or on our website: www.polishcenterofwisconsin.org

The Center is located at 6941 S. 68th St. in Franklin, WI. One half mile north of Rawson Ave.