

Old Women

Old women – helpless and beautiful
with pearls in their ears and sapphires in their eyes –
maybe faded from tears, maybe washed out,
onyx of pain in shining pupils,
in carmine of lipstick in this dump
where next to trash – refined trinkets.

Old women remember well
sheep, hills, meadows, and robes
tossed in the grass, their nudity in a stream,
sturdy lacey shoes with worn soles,
when the paths still led them up.

Old women entombed in amber
like two butterflies, dragonflies in wetlands
while through the windows the glitter of city lights
and they see again: they stand in the strip of fire,
lean, in uniforms, in the limelight of history
and they – young women, young brides
run in their dresses and lacey shoes.

Old women remember well
long hours in queues in snow
for bread, for a good word of somebody's Christmas.
And now they sit fragile and helpless
in plush purple, gilded chairs,
while they bring them gold discs on satin,
splendid medals, special addresses.
Precious women, rescued widows.

Old women remember well:
Wolves left, wolves came again.
Old women got up, cleaned, left.

Red Bucket

He came out the door with a red bucket
and splash!
Rays and leaves pirouetted in a flush.
And when the movement ceased, a flock of jackdaws
lifted off to drink moisture from drops before they
vanish in grass.
Everything transforms, and movement and being
are not separate forms of consciousness.
Waking sleep waking are the same:
a conversation with the receding world
and the beloved dead.
For a moment it seemed
that in this splash, flush, motion
I see your and my faces, my and your faces
when they lean towards each other in a quiet talk,
interrupted by laughter, lost forever.

Translated by Ewa Chrusciel



© Witold Franko

**ANNA
PIWKOWSKA**

Born 1963

Między monsunami [Between the Monsoons]

Publisher: Znak Publishers, Kraków 2019

ISBN: 978-83-240-5927-0; 80 pages

Translation rights: Znak Publishers, bolinska@znak.com.pl

Selected poetry collections

Wyspa Nieborów, 2016

Lustrzanka, 2012

Farbiarka, 2009

Niebieski sweter. Wiersze dawne i nowe, 2004

Po, 2002

Wiersze i sonety, 1992

Szkicownik, 1989

Essay collections

Wykłęta. Poezja i miłość Mariny Cwietajewej, 2017

Achmatowa czyli Rosja, 2015

Achmatowa czyli kobieta, 2003

Novels

Franciszka, 2014

Ślad tyżwy, 2007

Foreign language translations

Piwkowska's poems has been published in anthologies in Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Israel, Lithuania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, UK, and USA. The novel *Franciszka* was translated into Lithuanian and Slovenian.

Selected awards

ORPHEUS Literary Prize (2020) – nomination

Literary Award of the Capital City of Warsaw (2010, 2015)

Polish Section of IBBY Literary Award (2014, for the best YA book of the year)

Kościński Foundation Award (2002) – distinction

Georg Trakl Literary Prize awarded by the Austrian Institute (1995)