

The Garden in Pszów

It was
at the hour of the southern wind
wafting over the Moravian Gate
that I heard the footsteps of the Lord God
walking about our garden

I know He comes by
here often, from of old

here on this patch of land
they used to call my people
Matuszki from the Garden
more than one's baptismal record
reads *Zagrodnik* or *Gärtner*

And I know now, Lord, that I am unclothed
But I am not hiding myself from Your eyes

I hoe and weed, I watch, I linger here,
according to Your word. You know that well
for You come by, You pray here.
I know from Magdalena it's no gardener
but You.

I snip, I spread manure - and I'll uproot
or plant, according to Your will.

I am at home. This is no longer Eden
nor yet Gethsemane. Between Paradise
and the stamping press of sweat and blood.
That moment from the prophetic books endures,
Your promise: the life of the redeemed
will be like a well-watered garden.

I hear Your footsteps and I live by Your
prayer; I'm cooled by Your breeze

paradisiacal, olive-scented, Pszowian.
The tree of knowledge, gnarled trunks, elder.

The shrill whistle of swallow, woodpecker, nightingale.
My sweat sinks in the earth
with Your blood.

They ask me ever more frequently:
was it not you I saw with Him in the garden?

Yes, that was me

Pszów, 17 January 2020

Sara Sampaio

the twenty-four year old body
of Sara Sampaio
graces Lisbon in August.
The body of Sara eight storeys tall
reigns over the white city
from the exterior of shopping gallery

cell-phone headquarters
and the cranes at the Olivais docks,
exposed to the eyes of all
like the bodies of thieves in mediaeval pillories
and stocks or those of heretics during the Spanish reign
or those of half-naked gladiators on the Roman sands
of Olisippo. And just like them it arouses desire and awe,
lewd jeers and indifference by turns. Sara
Sampaio is the face, breast and thigh of Victoria's
Secret. Now, on this silver afternoon beneath the banner
of Sara's body, which lends a patch of shade,
I'm reading Deutero-Isaiah in my breviary -
'there is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness
and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness
that we should be desirous of Him'
when a crane pulls up. To paste over the body of Sara
Sampaio.
But we're all counting on this - before long, above the
city
Ana Delgado's body will reign: the face, breasts and
thighs of Calzedonia.
On the far bank of the Tagus, in the heat waves of the
air above Almada
stands the statue of Christ the King. Eight storeys tall.
But He has no comeliness, that we should be desirous
of Him.

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Translated by Charles S. Kraszewski



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Father
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Selected poetry collections

Hilasterion, 2014

Cierpliwość Boga. 66 wierszy z lat 2003-2006, 2006

Śmiech i płacz, 2000

Father Jerzy Szymik is also the author of many essays and academic dissertations.

Selected awards

Franciszek Karpiński Literary Award (2017)

Silver Gloria Artis Medal for Merit to Culture (2006)