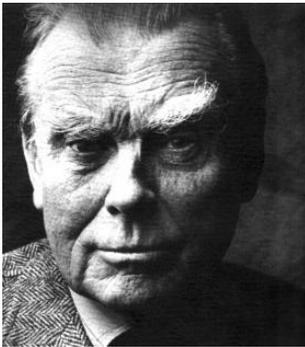


Miłosz Year

Beata Paszyc and Melissa Szwanke



In Poland and Lithuania, the year 2011 is officially being observed as *Miłosz Year*, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Nobel Prize winning poet Czesław Miłosz. To celebrate the anniversary of his birth, a wide range of cultural events are planned in Poland, Lithuania, France and the United States.

As part of the celebrations, fragments of Miłosz's works were illuminated outside at Wawel Hill in both English and in Polish. "We're going to project the images not only on the Wawel walls, we are also going to show the text on the surface of the river and on the trees all around," Jenny Holzer, American artist and 1990 Venice Biennial winner, who prepared the "For Kraków" project specially for the 3rd ArtBoom Festival in Kraków. The poems were shown daily, from June 10-24, 2011, at 9:00 p.m., on the walls of the Royal Wawel Castle.

Miłosz was born June 20, 1911 in Szetejnie, Lithuania. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1980. As a poet, prose writer, essayist, and translator he won many other prestigious literary awards. His work has been translated into 42 languages.

His youth was spent in Wilno and he lived out the German occupation in Warsaw. After the war he worked in the diplomatic service of the People's Republic in the USA and in France until 1951, when he appealed for political asylum in Paris.

From 1960 to 1989 he lived in California where he spent twenty years as a professor of Slavic languages and literature, lecturing at Berkeley University. Until 1989 he mainly published in the Paris émigré journal "Kultura" and in the Polish underground press. After 1989 he lived in Berkeley and in Kraków. He died on August 14, 2004 in Kraków, Poland. Miłosz's poetry is rich in visual-symbolic metaphor. Critics say he transcends genre. ☺

So Little

I said so little.
Days were short.

Short days.
Short nights.
Short years.

I said so little.
I couldn't keep up.

My heart grew weary
From joy,
Despair,
Ardor,
Hope.

The jaws of Leviathan
Were closing upon me.

Naked, I lay on the shores
Of desert islands.

The white whale of the
world
Hauled me down to its pit.

And now I don't know
What in all that was real.

Tak mało

Tak mało powiedziałem.
Krótkie dni.

Krótkie dni,
Krótkie noce,
Krótkie lata.

Tak mało powiedziałem,
Nie zdążyłem.

Serce moje zmęczyło się
Zachwytem,
Rozpaczą,
Gorliwością,
Nadzieją.

Paszcza lewiatana
Zamykała się na mnie.

Nagi leżałem na brzegach
Bezludnych wysp.

Porwał mnie w otchłań
ze sobą
Biały wieloryb świata.

I teraz nie wiem
Co było prawdziwe.

Some of Miłosz's works include:

The World: Naive Poems (1943) about the German occupation in WWII; *Six Lectures in Verse* from the volume *Chronicles* (1987); *The Seizure of Power* (1953), about the installation of communism in Poland; *The Issa Valley* (1955), the semi-autobiographical tale of growing up and the loss of innocence; *The Captive Mind* (1953), a classic essay of the literature of totalitarianism; *Native Realm* (1959), one of the best studies of the evolution of the Central European mentality; *The Land of Ulro* (1977), a sort of intellectual and literary autobiography; *The Witness of Poetry* (1982); *The Metaphysical Pause* (1995) and *Life on Islands* (1997).

Polish laureates of the Nobel Prize for Literature

Henryk Sienkiewicz (1905)
Władysław Reymont (1924)
Isaac Bashevis Singer (1978)
Czesław Miłosz (1980)
Wisława Szymborska (1996)