

The novel begins in 2025, and it is the continuation of Clark's excellent *W cichym lesie Vermontu* (2010). The narrative centers around Halina Szadurska's daughter who is, perhaps, also the daughter of the famed novelist Rubin (modeled on Philip Roth). As always in Clark, a detective story and an unexpected ending compete for attention.

I Remember Bialystok *Pamiętam Białystok*

Mark F. Tattenbaum

Huddled deep under the bed clothes
Skulony głęboko w pościeli
As deep as the blanket of snow
Outside my window

I remember Bialystok
Pamiętam Białystok

My Grandfather's Bialystok
Mego dziadka Białystok

Now My Bialystok
Teraz mój Białystok
And I remember the desolation of the Polish
Winter
Polska zima
That followed so quickly
On the heels of that Golden Polish Autumn
Birch trees with golden leaves
brzozy w złote liście
Against the cobalt sky
Of my Grandfather's village
Mojego dziadka wioski

Deep under this blanket of snow
Głęboko pod tą kołdrą śniegu
I remember. . .
I remember
Akademicka Street
Pamiętam
Ulicę Akademicką
Walking in the park
Amongst a cathedral of trees

Surrounding me
Ducks on Branicki Palace pond
Brides posing for photographers
That Glorious Golden Polish Autumn
Ta Glorious złota jesień polska
On Academia Street. . .

I remember
past *Akademicka* Street
up the walkway
where it joins the Rynek
There is a Bar
where the Polish Lunch Ladies work
Telling me to "Take Vegetables"
Snippets of the Cold War remain . . .

I remember
walking on *Młynowa* Street
Beyond the Hall of Justice
There!
There stands the remains
Of the Nazi justice
Severely dealt to
The Polish Jews
Locked in the Temple
Burnt to the ground
A dinosaur remains
The giant
Metal skeleton
Twisted and torn
Only the dome survives

Lying on the ground
It remains
2000 souls perished
There!

The old Orthodox Church
in the middle of the city
close to the shwarma stand
Surrounded by walls
old wooden gate
swings to admit me.

I wander about
the church door unlocked
I slip in
like one of Amahl's night visitors

The immenseness of the church
swallows me

the fragrance of the incense
 transports
 me to G-d

Architecture and Angels
 surround me
 faces of Saints
 stare back at me
 They recognize me
 they smile
 But I do not
 recognize
 these Eastern Saints.

I pray
 from fear or joy
 I know not which
 An eternity passes
 I slowly remember myself
 and pass through the
 swinging wooden door.

Out again
 to the streets of the profane world

Out to Bookstores
 Searching for English texts in a Polish world

Out to Candy stores
 Searching for chocolates in a Polish world

Out to the Delicatessen
 on the *Rynek*

Where the Delicatessen Ladies
 waited on the crazy American Professor
 and hand sliced my Salmon and
 wrapped my cucumbers and onions
 all with a smile for Professor Pepsi!

Out of Bialystok!
 Somewhere in northeastern Poland
 Transported by *Paweł*.
 Volkswagen gliding
 black ribbon of highway
 surrounded by fields of snow.

We travel deep into the forest
 close to the Belarus border.
 We park near *Bocian's* nest.
 Just for luck!

We set off into the forest.
 My mind's eye conjures images
 German tanks and German soldiers.

The din of tanks and gunfire.
 The silence of premature death.
 Alone in this forest cacophony of carnage.
 Alone in the past.

A low stonewall delimits the boundary of the
 graveyard.
 Blowing snow . . .
 eyes have difficulty
 reading inscriptions.
 Headstones incised with three languages.
 What do the dead care to read?

Paweł's quiet words gently shake me from this
 dream.
Marek, we should have some soup.
 It is bitter in this forest.
 I am worried you are cold.

We emerge from the forest.
 We meet with a Professor of Tatar Studies
 Enjoy a simple Tatar soup.

We return to *Bocian*
Wracamy do Bocian
 Head to Bialystok
 Picking up a hitchhiker
 On this cold cold day
 In northeastern Poland.

The sun descends
 the sky is dark. . .
 stars ascend into the heavenly canopy
 I cannot shake the horrors of the past.

We return to Bialystok
Wracamy do Białegostoku
 I remember
pamiętam
 the warm city lights
Ciepłe światła miasta
 that warmed my cold soul.
które ogrzewają moją zimną duszę.

I remember
pamiętam
 so many places

*Tak wiele miejsc
so many smiling faces
Tyle uśmiechniętych twarzy*

*I remember
pamiętam
so many students
tak wielu uczniów
so many smiling faces
Tyle uśmiechniętych twarzy*

*I came searching for my Grandfather
Przyszedłem szukać mojego dziadka
I came searching for my past
Przyszedłem szukać mojej przeszłości
I found my future in you
Znalazłem moją przyszłość w Tobie*

*What a wonderful discovery!
Co za wspaniałe odkrycie!*

*I sit in my library
Siedzę w mojej bibliotece
this cold winter day
W ten zimny zimowy dzień
sun low on the horizon
Niskie słońce na horyzoncie*

*I remember
pamiętam
Because of you
Dzięki Tobie
I remember Białystok!
Pamiętam Białystok!
Not my Grandfather's Białystok. . .
Nie Białystok dziadka. . .
But. . .
My Białystok!
Ale. . .
Mój Białystok!*

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NOTES

¹ Translated by Charles Kraszewski in "Norwid's 'Quidam' as heroic literature," *Polish Review* 36, no. 3 (1991): 317–18.

² Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie*, vol. 3, ed. Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, 212 (Warsaw: PIW, 1971).

³ Maria Cieśla-Korytowska, *O romantycznym poznaniu* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997), p. 116.

⁴ Norwid, vol. 3, 212.

⁵ Unless stated otherwise, fragments of Norwid's poems are given in Agnieszka Mizera's translation.

⁶ Stefan Sawicki "O „Śmierci” Cypriana Norwida," in *Norwida walka z formą* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986), 83–92; Agata Brajerska-Mazur, "O przekładzie na język angielski wierszy Norwida 'Śmierć,' 'Do Zeszłej,' 'Finis'," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 97, no. 4 (2006): 230–32.

⁷ The translations by Brajerska-Mazur were done especially for this article.

⁸ Norwid, vol. 1, 116.

⁹ Danuta Borchardt *Cyprian Norwid: Poems*. Translated in collaboration with A. Brajerska-Mazur (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), 105.

¹⁰ Norwid, vol. 1, 236.

¹¹ To date the problem of martyrdom in Norwid has been studied most extensively by Beata Wołoszyn in *Norwid ocala. Heroizm, śmierć i zmartwychwstanie w twórczości postromantyka* (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2008) and Jacek Salij, "Problem męczeństwa u Norwida," in *Norwid a chrześcijaństwo*, eds. Józef Fert and Piotr Chlebowski, 31–51 (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2002).

¹² Norwid, vol. 1, 165.

¹³ My annotation – ŁN.

¹⁴ Norwid, vol. 1, 164.

¹⁵ Translated by A. Brajerska-Mazur.

¹⁶ Norwid, vol. 1, 164.

¹⁷ Translated by A. Brajerska-Mazur.

¹⁸ I use Stefan Sawicki's redaction of Norwid's poem "Dla czego Sokrat nie uszedł z więzienia" in the chapter titled "Czy Norwid sławił mistrza Andrzeja? O wierszu 'Do A.T.'," in *Wartość – sacrum – Norwid 2. Studia i szkice aksjologiczno-literackie* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2006, 231); it is significantly different from the one presented in *Pisma wszystkie* edited by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (Cyprian Norwid, vol. 3, 519). In the subsequent part of my essay I also use Sawicki's interpretative findings.

¹⁹ Norwid, vol. 2, 156.

²⁰ Juliusz W. Gomulicki, "Dodatek krytyczny," in C. Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, vol. 2, ed. Juliusz W. Gomulicki (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1966), 340.