

**M****Malgorzata Bobak****Małgorzata Karolina Piekarska****Marek Czuku****Maria Jastrzębska****Maria Jolanta Kowalska****Marlena Zynger (Warszawa, Polska)****Marta Berowska (Warszawa, Polska)****Marta Brassart****Michał Wroński****Mieczysław Wojtasik****Mira Łuksza****Mirosław Majewski**

**Małgorzata Anna Bobak**  
**Pictures (Obrazy)**

Wrapped in darkness  
I pass around your side of bed  
Although you are now sleeping in another place.

Do not call my name  
I have no ears for your tender words

Although I am lying here  
where the two of us lied before  
I am trying to forget pictures  
reflected under my eyelid  
set in  
forever

**Translated by Dorota Zegarowska**

**Małgorzata Anna Bobak**  
**Simple geometry (Prosta geometria)**

Look at how friendly and beautiful it is  
Mathematics is an alphabet  
that you can use to calculate  
and find methods for weasel thoughts  
I was always alone  
like this tree behind the window  
Even when I listen to Strauss and Beethoven.  
Simplicity (Prostota)

God's beautiful invention  
remains in atoms  
solar system  
cell splitting  
leafs falling  
sewing on buttons  
and even poisoning rats

What is the need for all this waste?

**Translated by Dorota Zegarowska**

**Małgorzata Anna Bobak**  
**Owning (Posiadanie)**

I would like to know  
if I have a soul  
in addition to body

Cause if I only have my body  
I miss all  
that I owe.

**Translated by Dorota Zegarowska**

**Małgorzata Karolina Piekarska**  
**Baby Girl**

So you are  
Proof?  
The two lines on the pregnancy test

In my mind  
I furnish your little room  
buy a stroller  
we go to the first walk  
I hear your first word

pain in the lower abdomen  
temperature  
the world changes as you...  
you are now only a memory  
spot of blood on the board in the toilet  
your father's scream that I did not cleaned IT up

he slams the door when comes out  
will not come back

you know that he did not want you  
right?  
why not to choose life  
anyway ... he wanted a boy  
and you certainly were a girl

you do not exist  
only a test of two lines  
long lying on the nightstand  
lines fade  
now there is even evidence  
you existed

**Marek Czuku**  
**Autumn**

the ants and earthworms have fallen asleep  
nobody knows where and how  
the trees went crazy and send gilded letters  
to the thick cheerful litter

the wind applies moist compresses  
to the awakened from the cold grass  
the soil offers new life  
no alternative to the good old paradise

between the sun and the moon  
the shadow of night hangs  
tomorrow will be almost the same  
as it was years or centuries ago.

**Translated by Alicja Kuberska**

**Marek Czuku**  
**Winter**

The mature snow climbs the stairs  
of trees nestled in the darkness.  
The walkway attracts bright lights  
competing with the magic of the Christmas tree  
On the roof of the neighbourhood garage.  
the footsteps of birds look like tiny airplanes  
And the dogs- like turtle shells.

It is as it should be .  
Traffic moves slowly and changes into  
a dreamy journey, during which  
everything can happen

**Translated by Alicja Kuberska**

**Marek Czuku**  
**Dog**

The night sends signals from other worlds  
and soaks the windows with hot cold  
It ceases moving

Wherever you are  
do not reveal yourself hastily with this

there are  
so many single men  
so many single women

a dog lies in the bow of my legs  
whining in his sleep and moving his paws  
fills the void.

**Translated by Alicja Kuberska**



**Marek Czuku**  
**Kitten**

What is behind that open window  
who lives there  
what colour are the walls

on the windowsill  
is a small delicate kitten  
with a white-beige mouth  
it swings towards the world

with curiosity and courage of explorers  
of the highest peaks  
and freezing poles

it is like the naïve and carefree child  
in it's first  
words and steps.

**Translated by Alicja Kuberska**

**Marek Czuku**  
**Squirrel**

Blocks. A lonely willow  
next to the kiosk with the blue  
roof. Where we buy groceries

and sweets. It is going to rain  
Suddenly a red squirrel leaps  
from nowhere

to climb up rapidly up the trunk and disappear  
nobody knows where. An unexpected  
portion of grace.

**Translated by Alicja Kuberska**

**Maria Jastrzębska**  
**MICHAL**

He's seventeen  
 plays heavy metal, likes beer.  
 He met a man at Warsaw Central  
 who took him home,  
 pays his way.  
 Michal shows me his new  
 silk shirt, peacock green -  
*no messing, that's quality.*

*I'm not one of them*  
 'aunties' - which is what they call fags here.  
*I'm normal - this is just for now.*  
*Tell me, is it better*  
*over there in England.*

I'm trying to rescue the plants  
 in their apartment.  
 The living room doesn't get much light.  
 and they don't look  
 cared for enough.  
 Michal helps me out.  
 He tells me about his great grandmother -  
*she was all right -*  
 kept a pig and talked to it,

so he understands  
 when I say  
 you've got to *talk* to plants.  
*Is it better over there,* he asks  
*in England.*

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**MARIA JOLANTA KOWALSKA**  
**BY POEM**

I pass with verse  
all thresholds

I merge  
into the ocean of life

on the stave I scud  
to stars

and in Bethlehem night  
I kneel with him by the creche

my verse  
pulsates  
in memory's hearts

**MARIA JOLANTA KOWALSKA**  
**I BREATHE THE SILENCE**

I hum her favourite chorus

I whisper -  
you reached for my heart  
you hide your soul  
in a sweet stream of  
desire

wherever fate throws me  
you are with me  
and with my poem

**MARIA JOLANTA KOWALSKA**  
**YEARNING**

Eyes of Canada  
are misting over  
The country's fragrant with resin,  
milk and honey

in the heart  
abandoned shell  
echo pulsates

letter  
pens healed wounds...

Soft evening light  
charge April pollen

in their crown rests  
beloved  
longed  
weary

unimported  
good or bad  
small or large

sensitivity dream of beauty

Fear to face

men's cry  
held a breath

this hell on earth  
everyday heroes

tear victims

where are you safe world?

settled

marking their exam of humanity

in a sea of ruins

**MARIA JOLANTA KOWALSKA**  
**RAT RACE**

promotional ladder  
higher and higher

first suits  
zero of truth  
personality in s h a p e

fighting rush to  
what better nibble for yourself

promotional ladder are cracking



## **The Poetry of Marlena Zynger**

### **by Aleksander Nawrocki**

Viewed against a background of an increasingly uniform poets and cultures, the poetry of Marlena Zynger is expressive and unique. Firstly, she writes poems with rhyme and rhythm, focussing the potential energy, both shaping the reader's reaction and making them memorable. Secondly, her works have their own vocabulary and an imagination which throws away the textbook. Third, these works exist in their own unique space, neither placed everywhere or nowhere, but in the country where the author lives and observes that which others are unable to notice, or of which they are somehow ashamed, scared of accusations of the literal, or (and who knows why these days) an unfashionable clinging to a homeland. So when Marlena writes about Warsaw's Lazienki park, her favorite dishes in a restaurant, the family and her own, far from metaphysical, dilemmas, she discreetly exposes a sensual femininity. She knows the names of the trees, the birds, can see beauty in a rotating leaf, and wants to be 'in your plans for next week'. And if that schedule is busy, she will 'let her hair down and with the wind arm in arm go out for coffee' alone.

Marlena's poems make one wish to return to them, even to sing them. And indeed many have been set to music and are sung: Motley; Tarantella; Love in Warsaw Lazienki park. The words live a dual life - as great poems, and as songs sung in Polish and in translation. Her poems have inspired the artwork of eminent painters, and translators eagerly bring them into their own languages.

**Marlena Zynger**  
**tick-touching**

clock ticks  
 you touch me

lightly tenderly time potters  
 round nooks in the room  
 breath of soul and body turns  
 in the rhythm of clock words and gestures

hearing only double echoes  
 voices of hearts and ticking

in strong emotions of chimes  
 time of kisses runs by  
 too fast passing the moment  
 blinks with shadows  
 disappears with light  
 as water in a Monet  
 your stroke vibrates  
 and stays in touches of dreams

pulsing time flows evenly  
 wave of voices in our blood  
 full of you i stay enclosed  
 like tears in sketches by Munch

clock ticks  
 heart beats

unwilled a noose about the neck  
 feet thighs hips hands  
 captured by a messenger of desire  
 nameless and without face  
 echo of time thoughts and dreams

breast heaves in thought  
quickened by touch  
quietly speaks the clock of life

heart listening  
you touching

**Translated by Anita and Andrew Fincham**

**Marlena Zynger**  
**indian summer**

late afternoon blows perfume  
 essence of scents collected in the past  
 delicately matching appropriate auras  
 bouquet of abundance connection touch

hints of infusions of herbs of experience  
 flowery resins arising from root  
 powerful seduction so casually played  
 desirous of coolness and heat

smoothing with softness and teasing with thorns  
 secretly glinting in colours of change  
 late summer marches through woods across meadows  
 in gold and in red and gossamer webs

sometimes at rest in unsteady suspension  
 among pine needles leaves flowers meadow spreads  
 allowing existence of memory mist  
 light racing among branches of shrubs

as this summer late afternoon breath  
 so was I conscious of body and mind  
 casting spells of honey tar and sighs  
 playing with life without trembling or fear

**Translated by Anita and Andrew Fincham**

**Marlena Zynger**  
**spring**

i rise up lightly  
opening my hands  
fingers stretching  
woken by shivers  
breath pervading  
earth and body

i yearn so much  
still more and more

eyes shine  
absorbing rays  
from meadows woods sky  
first sigh  
juicy green  
foamy azure  
gaudy flowers

i fly through scents  
of swollen buds  
grass dewed by breath  
caressed by scent  
kept close to temples  
trembling the space around  
body in waves

yet something still is insufficient  
something i wish more

amid the whispers of leaves  
and green needles  
in shade and shine of bush

and trees inspired  
i raise my thoughts  
and thirsting (wanting) body  
on vapours of spring

and i give in to magic

changeable like her  
subservient led astray  
i give in penetrate  
all permeated  
i raise fall apart  
join into one strange whole

it matters not  
if more or less

**Translated by Anita and Andrew Fincham**

**Marta Berowska**  
**Letters From Margaret Trakl To Her Brother**

**Letter 1.**

We could sin only like the rest of them  
With a bold look  
Whisper while with others  
Or with a loud question asked in the dining room  
For which we were scolded by our aunts stern looks

We could sin only like the rest of them  
With naive lies – just like other children  
It was even allowed at home  
You were sent to the corner for a while  
And then  
God forgave you  
And you could do it again

But our sin was different  
They couldn't be like that  
Remember Georg  
It was July - remember  
With the open window  
Scared by the shadow of the tree...  
You got to know all of me as the first  
For the first time

**Letter 2**

Snow flowers  
Like droplets of sweat on your forehead  
When after the night with me you hurriedly put  
Your shirt smelling like a pharmacy

Hurry up hurry up you said  
The collar the cuffs  
A little button fell  
What if the aunt finds it?  
Oh Georg  
Will you stop being scared  
You hugged me in a hurry and I desired so  
much  
Of your steady breath next to my temple  
So different than fear  
- This noise at the door - it's a mouse  
Georg  
And the whistling sound  
That's wind in a leaky window

And only scream was close  
That was my scream  
Yes  
That scream  
For which you didn't want to forgive me



**Letter 3**

You were always annoyed by the abundance  
Of things  
Needed for sleep...pillows bedskirts  
Night caps stiff from the starch  
And sheets that displayed everything  
Georg and one could see us  
And in the end the aunts noticed

Then you went to the army and I  
Straight into the hands of that butcher...  
Don't call him my husband  
I  
Did not want him that big handed  
German smelling like pigs feet with beer  
Grabbing me with yells of victory

Now there are no pillows no night caps  
It's good when there is a hard sofa  
That's not him  
Who breathes heavily over me every night  
Taking what rightfully belongs to him  
Not him but you Georg  
And that's why I draw him to myself so  
close with my thighs

**Translated by Barbara Voit**

**Marta Brassart**

**The dance**

To slip into skin of a suntanned dancer  
To feel the frustration of being beautiful and lusted  
after  
And  
Pain shooting out of burning foot  
Up, an arrow through a cracked knee  
Heart  
Dry mouth, I fill them with water  
Cross – not Lord's – my own  
Loin barely upright  
The rule number one:  
Warlike in the world of peace:  
Never give up  
Head high  
Hands up  
No gravity – just pull.

**Translated by Grzegorz Gaszczak**

**Michał Wroński**  
**Ballerina**

**(for Eve Latała)**

Ballerina  
The daughter of Time  
Danced without fatigue  
According to the rhythm of the Sun  
Without looking at the calendar  
She danced without final  
With closed curtain  
From the beginning to start  
Only time was her  
Audience  
And I sometimes  
Peeping through a crack  
In the curtain  
Naked

Maybe one day I'll show  
One important thought  
Perhaps the most important  
But she's naked  
And do not want to wear  
Even in the ethereal attire

**Translated by Bożena Helena Mazur-Nowak**

**Mieczysław Wojtasik**  
**ESCAPE**

more and more prophets  
vacate the town

tear back the bedclothes of adultery  
with the muse of homelessness  
and a faded blush  
from teen girls' faces  
trample on shy flames  
of hearth and home

run panting heavily  
towards a plain spread on its back

on the big river bank  
they pour the sadness of locked hearts  
out of amphorae

inspect each other in the sun  
as washed horses

sink in the water up to their necks  
ravenously quenching their thirst  
for pure voice of destiny

**Mieczysław Wojtasik**  
**IN SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH**

The poet Wojciech Sobecki  
in one of his poems reveals  
that hell has been always full of revellers  
wallowing in frolics and debauchery.

Satan is very caring of his business.  
Holds open days,  
special offers.

To believe and believe not,  
It is worth investigating.  
The sacred principle..

If I am not back in time,  
please write:  
He surpassed himself.  
Mieczysław Wojtasik

**Mieczysław Wojtasik**  
**OUT OF NOTHING**

There is nothing under the yellow spot  
of the eye of nature  
neither fox-like greed  
nor a tear over the history of a horse  
come up in Turin  
and in Bari

All is in the standby quantum of light  
under the mother's eyelid  
in the father's raise of hand  
in the embodiments of bird routes

In the movement of a transparent thread  
on the medium of NOTHING

**Mira Łuksza**  
**The place**

This place follows me, wherever I go.  
In my pockets I have remnants of ancient suns and  
new moons, an evening mist of a virgin forest  
dampens my hand hidden under a torn lining,  
covered from suspicious handshakes, shady smiles,  
where the coin has tarnished, the handkerchief has dried,  
and a scrap of a map to nowhere, because round here is the  
edge of the world.  
Everywhere is the edge of the world, and the tops of my  
houses  
turn with me, they always orient themselves to the east,  
like the house which remains alone, on the foundation made  
of stones,  
gathered by the grandpa from the field, sold to strangers by  
the grandson.  
What is mine here? A house, a boulder, a fence, a tree, a field  
and a road,  
that lead me, a sister blinded by the world, towards those  
like me.

**Translated by Edyta Rosiak**

**Mira Łuksza**  
**Białystok**

I'm walking through the white city,  
opening the wings of my arms.  
Here, for a moment yet  
you won't guess,  
what wall has grown just behind the corner  
built from the unified bricks,  
whether that mask is a face  
stripped from the personal skin,  
or that face is a mask.  
We hold all the colours  
of the visible spectrum  
in the young wings  
and the old eyes.

**Translated by Edyta Rosiak**



**Mira Łuksza**  
**Ivan, Ivan,**

Your ash trees can be seen even from a satellite,  
 against the dense wall of an old forest.  
 They are all you left behind, rescued from the slaughter,  
 and they shine in black Novembers with their bark so white,  
 and they leave reflections in the window glass voicelessly  
 staring  
 to the east. Once more I'll put my hands  
 under your grey hair, and I will close your blue eyes,  
 burnt with the fires of two wars, a revolution,  
 looking at the field they saw a sky full of larks.  
 You didn't save her, when she was led to the slaughter.  
 Sprinca from Narewka, a daughter of a tailor and a  
 bookbinder.  
 She lived in you till the end of the century. And you were  
 standing  
 in a black furrow, with a grain of rye in your hand,  
 with each new spring, with your face to the new east,  
 hoping for the birds to come home.  
 The war finished with no trace. Slabs on the slanting  
 Kirkut in Narewka grow into the ground. Sprinca  
 was dispelled by the wind in a foreign country all over the  
 world.  
 Sprinca lasted in you like a seed deprived of light,  
 and at the end of the world she pierced the blind eyelid.  
 She had frizzy hair, she was carrying hay for the horse  
 when you came to order summer suit.  
 Between the apple trees you could see Sprinca's head,  
 when with her basket she picked red apples for you.  
 You loved her. You would have saved more than your life.

**Translated by Edyta Rosiak**

**Mira Łuksza**  
**Wooden Street. Halina**

She is creeping, no, no creeping,  
 She is pacing slowly but inevitably  
 with a smile on the eyeless face. No, it's not  
 a smile, it's a slot left by a knife  
 on the face with no lips. It's not a face, a surface,  
 which each of us wants to reveal and mitigate.  
 No – exculpate! This is she without mercy  
 mercifully given for pain and anguish, to give them. No, to  
 take them from you.  
 I won't take your pain away, I won't have on my forehead  
 your ruby blemish, because I'm already marked.  
 I'll stifle my tears. And I'll let them run through my burning  
 throat,  
 through that tunnel that lets the words fall out, the words  
 which were first  
 and the last, in the act and on the street, megapublicised.  
 Frozen in ears, not dead on paper, although motionless.

You turn tragedy into joke. You limit history with the metal  
 frames of your bed. A girl from the Third Lycee – you are  
 like that  
 again, your white hair rakishly sticks out  
 and your eyes shoot fireworks. Behind the frame – your  
 helpless son,  
 who believes in the word. And silence covers his mouth.  
 Speechless.  
 Not us? And there's no escape. There's no pity. Only loving.  
 The ruby mark on our skin and on all of those who see and  
 know.

**Translated by Edyta Rosiak**

**Mira Łuksza**  
**Staszica Street**

A grey house, timbered, behind a wooden fence,  
over the slag street bunches of lilac hung.  
In the tailor's workshop of Mrs Gierasimczukowa,  
Between the brickhouses of Miller and Paul,  
I freeze in the half-light; above me a glass roof.  
Dresses and heavy tailoring left this place a long time  
ago –  
coats, furcoats, pellisses, wadded jackets,  
but noble fabrics' whispers and hisses,  
rough touch of wool, leather scratching,  
will lean out from the corners, settle on books,  
will grow in like dust in millimeters of silence,  
and behind the window the city goes to Bojary,  
cement and marble encroach, and you won't step  
on slag anymore, nor on sand or living grass.

**Translated by Edyta Rosiak**

**Mirosław Majewski**  
**A piece of his book**

- It was I who killed Kostek...

- I'm listening... - she smoothed a strand of hair falling over her eyes.

- Oh! - she suddenly remembered something. - I forgot to brush my teeth... What are you talking about, Honey? - She turned towards her husband sitting on the edge of their bed.

- I can no longer live with it! - He looked into her dark, almost black, eyes.

- Wait a minute, I'll just go to the bathroom. - she sighed - Just don't fall asleep.

She left. Disappeared. As if she didn't exist.

- Is it really happening? - sighed Karl.

He thought he was the biblical Jacob fighting an angel.

Maybe he is the angel fighting against Jacob...

He wrestled with himself.

As always!

-I wonder if Jacob fighting the angel was already a Jew or if he became one later when he became lame? - He tried to put his thoughts into words. - Anyway, it doesn't matter now...

Doesn't matter.

Kostek...

He regretted mentioning him at all and hoped Marta wouldn't register what he said. It's good to have hope in such situations.

He opened the drawer of his bedside table and produced an old Ronson cigarette lighter and a pack of cigarettes from among an array of objects serving no apparent purpose.

He didn't smoke but he always had something, just in case.

Just like now.

He went out onto the balcony.

- Yes, it's good to have hope ... – he mumbled under his breath.

- Even on such an airless night like tonight... – he added, mingling the words with cigarette smoke.

And then he dissipated into the night with a Ronson cigarette lighter in hand.

**Translated by Urszula Śledziowska- Bolinska**