

*Krzysztof Ostaszewski*

## TWO POEMS

*Translated from the Polish by Wojtek Stelmaszynski*

### Untitled

I speak to you of flowers I want to see flowers in words  
I tell you about birds I want to see birds in words  
but the words abandon me and brush against your lips

*Nowa Wieś Szlachecka, July 20, 1980*

## OPUS 63, A TRAGEDY

A little girl walked through a forest. She was not afraid of the thick undergrowth, or the gazes of animals from behind the bushes. She knew that even if she were to meet a bad wolf, a noble forester was sure to be found.

She came to a stream. Blue flowers grew along it. She sat by the water and looked at them. They were forget-me-nots; she had heard about them somewhere. When she recognized them, she raised her arms slightly—and was frightened. But, after a while the smell of the flowers calmed her. She picked a small bouquet and ran home with it.

Just at the gate she slowed down, became alert. Looking around her carefully, she went inside the house. She climbed the stairs very quietly; she placed her fingers over her lips. With eyes wide open she looked straight ahead. Finally she reached her room, opened the door. She slipped inside, closing it quickly.

For a moment she stood in silence, then she went up to the wardrobe and took out from behind it a small vase with dried flowers. Also forget-me-nots; the girl gave a little cry at their sight. She threw them into the waste-basket, and put the freshly picked bouquet into the vase. She put the flowers on the table; she breathed a sigh. Now she was safe. She sat in a chair, leaned her head in her hands and for a long, long time looked at the forget-me-nots.

*Głowno, September 10, 1977*

*Krzysztof Ostaszewski was born in 1957 in Lodz, Poland. He is a doctoral student in mathematics at the University of Washington in Seattle. Though he works in Polish, most of his work is available in English and in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Serbo-Croatian and Spanish. In this country, his poetry has appeared in*

Michigan Quarterly Review, Aldebaran, Poetic Justice *and* Prophetic  
Voices.

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