

The
Antigonish
Review

Number 52, Winter 1983

Krzysztof Ostaszewski



opus 2, a tragedy

Sad and quiet, people sleep over white clouds. And there are clouds beneath them, birds above them. All is nothing but a warm farewell.

Despite the warmest farewells, the fondest words, these people sleep and each of them is just lonely, hoping to share a few words. But the words will not reach them, the words will not touch their bodies.

These, who bid farewell to the travellers, are right, especially when they do not want to, when they do not believe in clouds, dreams and birds.

These, who bid farewell, wave their hands. The one who leaves has only himself. His two hands hold the luggage bags.

Gander, September 7, 1981

opus 13, a comedy

Let's imagine a table on which many diamonds are spread. Where can we find such a table? I don't know, maybe it doesn't exist; or perhaps there are many such tables. But let us remember, each of these little stones lying on the table is a diamond, an authentic diamond.

Several of the above-mentioned precious stones have been polished. Therefore they should rather be called cut diamonds. Yet we must admit that polishing has not really changed them, save for giving them a brighter shine, but a purely external one at that.

And the other diamonds? They don't like the cut ones, they are angry with them, jealous of their gleam. They feel too that the cut diamonds are inflicting their shine on them and therefore being indiscreet.

What do the cut diamonds think of this? They just go on shining, ignorant of the whole affair. How are they to know?

This problem could most likely be resolved if the source of the cut diamonds' gleam were discovered. But this is not an easy task, since there are cut diamonds polished by an invisible and secret Jeweller, and those which have polished themselves, taking advantage of a momentary lapse in the whole world's attention.

Lódź, November 16, 1978

opus 16, a comedy

In the nineteenth century of the New Era, on the planet Theta, two great sculptors, Bayten and Gayten, discovered that beautiful sculptures could be made not only of stone, but of metal.

Since Sculpture was an expression of the Secret of Singular Existence for the inhabitants of Theta, this discovery caused a great stir. The reactions were many, mainly indignation at the shameless profanation of sacred traditions — for how can one sculpt in metal?

Bayten and Gayten sacrificed their whole life in the struggle for their idea. After their death, they were recognized as being as great, perhaps even greater, than those who had once sculpted so beautifully in stone.

In the twentieth century of the New Era, on the planet Theta, only metal sculptures are created. Stone has been designated an anachronistic resource.

Katowice, June 24, 1977

opus 20, a comedy

At night the stars look down from heaven at the people on earth. Each of them shines with the light within it and with which it is, by nature, indivisibly tied.

People raise their heads, look up at the sky and ask — which star shines most brightly, which is the most important?

And sometimes one of the stars would like to give them a human answer — then those down below smile and say, “Look! A falling star!”

But whoever would like to hear a true starry reply — it makes no difference which star shines most brightly or which can't even be seen, for stars shine not for their brightness but for the light alone.

On the great arras of the North and South, people still seek different answers.

Molunat, August 29, 1979

opus 23, a comedy

For a number of years two zebras have been occupying the same cage in a certain zoo. One of them was captured in Africa and brought to the zoo. There it joined the other, older one, which had been born in the cage and not on the African savannah.

Both zebras were always very sad. Because every day, every hour, they saw only the wire mesh surrounding them. They were in captivity and felt this very keenly.

The older zebra did a lot of thinking. One day it realized that the vertical bars of the cage were only for the younger zebra, while the horizontal ones were positioned exclusively for it, the older one. Why was this so? It's hard to say, for who can enter the mind of a zebra with its tangled thoughts?

The older zebra told its companion of the discovery it had made.

From that day on it was observed that both zebras seemed somehow happier, or — more precisely — sadder in a different way.

Lódź, February 3, 1979

Translated by *Wojtek Stelmonynski*