

*Krzysztof Ostaszewski*

## Opus 7

A man walked a long way, such a long way that he didn't even know where he was going. But he did know he wasn't walking alone, that all men were there walking with him, regardless of race, religion or political conviction. They were holding each other's hands, in this way they weren't abandoned by each other — this gave them strength. Our man also felt that in his roaming he was not alone.

And then one day he noticed that his left hand was touching his right. He was *holding his own hand*. He was *terrified*. It seemed to him that he was totally lost in this vast world.

But even if he had lost all the other people, he had found himself.

Lódź, March 7, 1979

## Opus 18

When I was still a small camel and grains of sand were blown into my eyes without doing the least bit of harm, I felt as though the waves of a desert ocean were flowing through me. In the distance a deceptive mirage could appear and no one would admire it. Were my impressions just another mirage, I asked myself. My only joy, which was the world /my world of the desert/ was for others /for old and experienced camels, for ever unsettled people/ only a torment, one which they cursed, but from which they could never free themselves.

The desert was my life's teacher. And, like every teacher, it also forced me to see only its own world, as though I couldn't create something equally strange myself. But can I be sure that I would be able to escape from the desert, if I have to ask myself that question at all.

Today I finally became convinced that the desert, the world and even people are also a distant, illusory mirage and that it is this mirage that has always taught me, reminded me of itself, though I'm sure that it does not exist now and never will exist, just as I vanish.

Lódź, October 5, 1979

## Opus 28

Let's imagine several snails crawling around a circle. And let's also suppose that the dream of these snails is to reach the centre of the circle /one dream for all/. Well, we'd say, nothing could be simpler than to head in that direction: the road is just as long and just as difficult for all of them, since the distance from all points to the centre of the circle is the same. This is true, but we haven't considered one further problem. For among the snails there

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is one stronger and more important than the rest, in short—he is the leader of the pack. The others must comply with his orders—by necessity. And this most important snail found his way to the centre, straight and simple, along the radius; now he is ordering all the others to crawl along the arc of the circle to the point from which he departed, and only then to proceed to the centre—in his tracks. Thus, any snail wanting to reach the centre by the shortest route is making a mistake, and the leader of the pack proves it to him.

Lódź, October 7, 1978

## Opus 48

If a daisy were to grow in a large square covered with concrete slabs, maybe with luck no one would notice.

But more than likely it would be spotted by some serious and respectable man who would submit somewhere his serious and respectable opinion.

Then the square would be covered with another layer of concrete slabs, to the height to which the daisy had grown, in order to bring the surroundings to the level designated by it.

Lódź, December 5, 1977

## Opus 21

A feather set in motion by a gust of wind, with the slow passage of time and all the sanctity of light, it swept somewhere beyond the limits of its own conception of reality; it changes its shape, forgets about respect for sweet tradition.

The feather sees a city below, then a large forest—the trees rustle peacefully, people are the size of pinheads, yet they can be seen bowing to grey shadows.

The feather flies among the clouds, the sky is blue; the face of a predator leans out from behind the sun.

There, where only yesterday deceived smoke swirled round and round trying to find a place for itself, though it really shouldn't have been looking; there, where all the neighbouring inhabitants grimace and shake their heads, hum a few notes, then again go jumping through the clouds.

There the feather disappears, it is very tired. Before leaving, it bids everyone a fond farewell.

Głowno, October 3, 1979

Translated by Wojtek Stelmaszynski