

UTWORY POETYCKIE: POEMS. By *Czesław Miłosz*. Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1976. xxviii, 401 pp.

Czesław Miłosz hardly needs an introduction: American students are familiar with his *History of Polish Literature* (1969), political scientists will remember his *Captive Mind* (1953), and readers of the leading Polish émigré journal, *Kultura*, appreciate his frequently published essays. But above all, he is known to the general public as an outstanding poet. Indeed, his poetry has established him as one of the most accomplished masters of modern poetry. Although he is officially banned in Poland, he is still widely read in that country and abroad (in the original as well as in numerous translations). Last year the University of Michigan bestowed upon Miłosz an honorary degree, and, as a fitting tribute, Michigan Slavic Publications has published this impressive collection of his poems.

The collection contains poems written between 1933 and 1974, a forty-year period encompassing his youthful volume of poetry, *Trzy zimy*, published in Vilnius (1936), and his most recent, mature poems, *Gdzie słońce wschodzi i kędy zachodzi*, written in Berkeley. Such a span of time and space may very well illustrate the long road covered by the author in his relentless search for the truth, and yet, interestingly enough, it confirms the notion of uniformity in Miłosz's personality as a man and as a poet. Faithful to his poetic credo that "one good stanza weighs more than many laborious pages," as he stated in probably his most important poem, "Traktat poetycki" (reprinted in this volume), he has followed this conviction throughout his literary career, and as a result, has produced some excellent prose fiction and essays as well as poetry. In his constant quest for stable values in a world shattered by the experiences of our cruel century, Miłosz has remained devoted to the lost land of his youth—Vilnius and Lithuania—and his last poems in the collection are a moving testimony to that everlasting bond. Therefore, his poetic *oeuvre*, all natural transitions and developments of the form notwithstanding, remains uniquely homogeneous, solid, and as impressive as it had promised to be forty years ago. Today one cannot imagine modern Polish poetry without Miłosz's lasting contribution, which is constantly being revived by the generation of Różewicz and his followers.

Professor Alexander Schenker has provided a brief but enlightening English introduction to the collection.

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MODERN HUNGARIAN POETRY. Edited and with an introduction by *Miklós Vajda*. Foreword by *William J. Smith*. New York and Budapest: Columbia University Press and Corvina Press, 1977. xxxv, 289 pp. + 12 pp. photographs. \$11.95.

In his elegant and generous introduction to the anthology, the editor, Miklós Vajda, claims that "it was designed to survey post-war, that is to say, contemporary Hungarian poetry in the variety of its attitudes and approaches, its richness of themes and styles, with a strong emphasis on the most important poets." With the help of an impressive array of distinguished poet-translators—essential to any good anthology of foreign literature—Vajda succeeds in presenting a wide and attractive picture of contemporary Hungarian poetry or, at least, parts of it. Sensitively registering the tremors of both history and the soul, the translators render the poems into vivid, colorful, and poetic English (a language distant from Magyar in syntax and diction). The reader is grateful for the warm empathy of Robert Graves in translating Deve-