

PAN TADEUSZ RÓŻEWICZ

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Welcome to the new, first and last issue of “Różewicz Gazette”,
which complements the “Pan Tadeusz Różewicz” exhibition held
at the Pan Tadeusz Museum.

The exhibition is divided into eleven stands, each accompanied by a chapter of this gazette. In the first one, dedicated to war, you will find not only fragments of Różewicz’s partisan debut (*Whoop whoop hoc hoc / beautiful blanket made of a footwrap*), a tribute to deserters, but also interesting facts about the mythology and agriculture of ancient Rome. In the next part: a reportage about a talented family from Radomsko, a piece about an unusual collection and a charming story of a man who dedicated a poem to his mother-in-law. In the chapter on cinema: the profile of a cat – the patron saint of filmmakers. The gazette also features sensationalist themes: can we find a grain of truth in the news of the Messiah’s second coming? Plus: Survivor indeed? A journalistic investigation in the X-Files style. Also: a poignant story of a mother who lost her poet son and of a poet son who lost his mother, and a story about how it’s never too late to try new things and you can become a director at any age. Moreover, in this issue: a ranking of Wrocław theatres, TOP 5 poems by Różewicz, a portion of minor lyrical announcements, painting riddles, the Nobel competition with prizes, obituaries and tips on how to save on holidays and become a tourist in your own city. In the DIY corner, you will find some tasks: make a collage and build a house for the dead. Finally, a description of a dramatic struggle with addiction (to reading newspapers) that a certain poet from Wrocław waged throughout his life. Did he manage to overcome his addiction?

The gazette can be taken as a guide and aid to navigating the exhibition and as a resource for reading at home.

The Editors



Dialogue with war

Poetry, against all odds: Różewicz, Adorno and the Professor’s knife

The Romans believed that cereal rust and rust covering iron objects were the same phenomenon and they turned to one pair of deities for protection against it: Robigo and Robigus, whom they worshipped in the form of a fox. A rusting knife made in Oświęcim (Auschwitz) from a barrel rim belonged to Mieczysław Porębski, art history professor. He became in Tadeusz Różewicz’s poem a symbol of passing and forgetting, of the destructive power of time, of entropy.

*Robigus the almost unknown
demon of corrosion – a second-rank god –
consumes tracks rails
locomotives*

[...]

*Robigus
who in antiquity
ate metals
– though he never touched gold –
consumes keys
and locks
swords plowshares knives
guillotine blades axes*

[the professor’s knife, translated by Bill Johnston]

The professor’s knife, the inspiration for the poem and the title of the volume of poetry, is also an object which allowed Różewicz to once again go back to the times of war and occupation. Already his first volumes from the 1940s and 1950s contained works such as *Ocalony* [Survivor], *Warkoczyk* [Braid] and *Ballada o karabinie* [Ballad of a Rifle], in which he tried to write about the war. He did this in spite of the famous thesis of Theodor W. Adorno, who said in 1949 that it was barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz. Thanks to his poems from the Second World War, Różewicz found his way into school textbooks, but at the same time he was branded a poet infected with death. He argued against this, saying that his generation was not infected with death at all, but with life. To return to the memories of the occupation, the memory awakened by the rusty knife, is also to rediscover the joy of the small things in everyday life. An example is a description of cooking eggs for breakfast with Professor Porębski.



Whoop whoop hoc hoc / beautiful blanket made of a footwrap / have this blanket here brother / these silk pants

Few authors can boast of making their literary debut during the war. This is the case of Tadeusz Różewicz, whose first volume *Echa leśne* [Forest Echoes], was published, *nomen omen*, in a forest and copied on a duplicator in a small number of copies. You could say that this first issue is a rarity today. *Echa leśne* was written, probably as the only publication among Różewicz’s works, on commission. The commander of the unit asked the talented cadet, who wrote articles for *Czyn zbrojny* and published the camp newspaper: “Głos z krzaka” [Voice from the Bush], to write some patriotic, but also humorous, poems and stories. The volume therefore contains epigrams, satires and jokes about the members of the unit, descriptions of different aspects of partisan life, uplifting prose. *Echa leśne* brought the author – apart from a few unpleasantries from his colleagues described satirically – his first royalties. A stick of butter was delivered to Różewicz with thanks for the poems from a nearby village to which one of the copies had arrived.

In honour of deserters

On 3 November 1944, cadet ‘Satire’ left his Home Army unit and went home. He was accused of having communist sympathies and in order to avoid disciplinary proceedings he was allowed to leave the partisan ranks. Although this happened after the fall of the Warsaw Uprising and many forest soldiers were dismissed from service, Tadeusz Różewicz experienced it extremely painfully. He expresses this in poems such as *Listopad 1944* [November 1944], later recalls this episode in the play called *Do piachu* [In the Dust], and after many years presents his views on the war in a controversial poem known as *Dezertjerzy* [Deserters]. In it, he calls for a monument to be built to an unknown deserter soldier, for is abandoning the battlefield an expression of cowardice or rather a heroic refusal to kill? In this way, once again, the poet wants to remind the world of those whom the world prefers not to remember. Several monuments to deserters have already been erected around the world: in Vienna, Cologne, Bremen, Kassel, Ulm, Mannheim, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Potsdam, Erfurt, Graz and in Nelson (British Columbia, Canada). Różewicz’s wish becomes reality.

**I read Marx
I don’t understand Bergson
I go to party with a redhead
and we laugh
about the atomic bomb
the red circle of the lips**

Tadeusz Różewicz



A happy nation

“The poems collected in *Niepokój* [Anxiety] made a bigger impact on me when published as a volume rather than scattered in journals. It is an authentic young voice after those dark war times”, writes Kazimierz Wyka in *Dziennik Literacki*. “I bought two volumes of his poems, both of which I burned”, confides Jan Bolesław Ożóg. And Julian Przyboś states with the force of his authority: “There is subtlety and brute force in his poems, cruel images. A peculiar technique, great simplicity of phrasing with sophistication of juxtaposition”. We are, of course, talking about Tadeusz Różewicz and his poems published in Kraków in 1947. Pieces on a variety of subjects, previously published in journals, now collected in *Niepokój* [Anxiety], formed a volume on the subject of war. They are images from the time of the occupation, mixed with cheerful poems, but it is mainly the former that make an impression. The poignant *Ocalony* [Survivor] with the phrase “led to slaughter / I survived” [translated by Adam Czerniawski] will become an emblematic work of its time, *Listopad 1944* [November 1944] a harbinger of the play *Do piachu* [In the Dust], *Róża* [Rose] will enter the canon of 20th-century poetry. Each of these texts speaks of horror, loss, struggle... will the young author ever manage to free himself from being labelled “a poet damaged by

war”? There is such hope, believes Czesław Miłosz, fascinated by the innovative versification of these poems, who, in *Do Tadeusza Różewicza, poety* [To Tadeusz Różewicz, the Poet], predicts a great career for him.

Dialogue with the family

An exceptionally talented family

In the small northern town of Radomsko, where the buildings end and the farmland begins, lives the Różewicz family: father Władysław – a clerk but

also an amateur actor, and mother Stefania Maria, caring for their three adolescent sons. Each of the boys displays exceptional talents: the eldest Janusz corresponds with the best poets in the country and wins prizes in literary competitions. The second son, Tadeusz, is likely to follow in his brother’s footsteps, as he shows a fondness for poetry and tries to imitate great contemporary writers: Staff, Czechowicz, Leśmian, he also publishes works in religious magazines and edits the home-made “*Styr*” journal with his brothers. The youngest Stanisław is passionate about one of the modern arts – film. Together with his brothers, he writes screenplays and plays out the plot of westerns and dramas. What will be the fate of these boys? Perhaps they will become resistance heroes, film directors or writers who shake up the country’s literary scene?

Family photographs

Although Tadeusz Różewicz was known for not liking official photographs, especially those taken of him without permission, in private he willingly posed for photographs. The Różewicz family collection comprises thousands of prints, including family portraits from the 1930s, from the time of the war and also later, from holidays, from everyday life, school photographs showing Tadeusz’s parents and brothers and images of the poet himself which do not resemble official ones presented in the press. The latter include eye-catching photographs taken in the 1930s, in which the poet shows his thick and fancifully raised hair and a broad smile. Collected over decades, they were carefully stored in albums personally decorated by Różewicz.



Men are like children, especially poets, i.e. Różewicz as a child

An impressive collection of toys can be seen in Tadeusz Różewicz's favourite museum, the Toy Museum in Karpacz. It was created on the basis of the collection of the poet's friend, Henryk Tomaszewski, the founder of the Wrocław Pantomime Theatre in the 1960s. In the 1970s, he began collecting dolls and miniature furnishings for dolls' houses. However, not everyone knows that Różewicz was also a collector. He collected books, of course, as anyone who is interested in literature does, but he also collected postcards and toys, or rather trinkets or even, as the Różewicz family used to say, knick-knacks. Small objects, sometimes of unknown purpose, which usually only gather dust: animals made of various materials, figurines, boxes, bird feathers, tins, toys encapsulated in chocolate eggs... Some lay hidden in desk drawers, others stood on cupboards and shelves, often among other things collected during walks: pebbles, cones and chestnuts, of which the poet was clearly a fan. As his granddaughter recalls, in autumn chestnut structures appeared almost everywhere in his study.



Obituary

Janusz Różewicz is dead! We are saddened to announce the death of our late colleague, Second Lieutenant Janusz Różewicz, who served in Division II of the Home Army Headquarters, dealing with intelligence in the Republic. He was arrested by the Gestapo and executed on 7 November 1944 in Łódź. Before the outbreak of the war, this promising young poet won the second prize for his poem *Modlitwa* [Prayer] in a poetic competition organised by the Polska Zbrojna magazine. This poem was also published in *Antologia współczesnej poezji polskiej 1918-1938*. Janusz was a role model for his younger brothers, and one of them, Tadeusz, wants to follow in his footsteps and plans to become a poet. May the heroic attitude of Janusz Różewicz serve as an example to future generations. Honoured be his memory!

Three women

The first film by brothers Stanisław and Tadeusz Różewicz was *Trzy kobiety* [Three Women], but this article is not about them. Three other women occupied an important place in Tadeusz's life. The first is his wife, Wiesława, whom he met during the war as Filis, a runner in the partisans. It was she who typed up his poems from that period. They married in 1949 and settled in Gliwice, where his wife got a pretty good job and an allocated flat. At the time, the poet was not employed anywhere and it was Wiesława who supported the family in that period, until with growing fame came greater royalties and fees for staged plays. The second, but chronologically the first woman in the poet's life, was of course his mother, Stefania Maria. It was she who sparked her sons' interest in literature and said she would like one of them to become a poet. Tadeusz took care of her in the last years of her life and described her illness and death movingly in his collection of poems and memoirs called *Matka odchodzi* [Mother Departs], for which he received the Nike Award.

We should not forget about the third woman, whose virtues he described in one of his most famous poems. *Dytyramb na cześć teściowej* [Dithyramb to the Mother-in-Law] did not come out of pure speculation, but out of experience. Tadeusz Różewicz lived with his mother-in-law during his Gliwice years and it was then that he wrote this surprisingly necessary work. Its timelessness is evidenced by letters of thanks for this very poem, which can be found in the poet's archive.

Dialogue with film

Różewicz Bros. Director and poet behind the camera

The Tenth Muse fascinated the Różewicz brothers since their Radomsko days, when they spent their time at the *Kinema* cinema. The younger brother, Stanisław, became one of the most prominent Polish film directors after World War II, while Tadeusz was his screenwriter in the 1960s and 1970s.

The brothers made five films (including one short film) as a duo. The first, *Trzy kobiety* [Three Women] (1956), a film adaptation of Kornel Filipowicz's short story *Trzy kobiety z obozu* [Three Women from the Camp], is a story of female prisoners who became friends at a concentration camp and promised each other the future together after the war. In 1945, they found themselves in western territories, where life forced them to part. The leading roles were played by Anna Ciepielewska, Elżbieta Świącicka and Zofia Małynicz.

Other films include *Świadectwo urodzenia* [Birth Record] (1961), probably the most famous film about the wartime experiences of children, *Echo* (1964) – the story of a lawyer wrongly accused of contacts with the Gestapo, *Mąż pod łóżkiem* [The Husband Under the Bed] in the series called *Komedie pomyłek* [Comedies of Errors] (1967), *Samotność we dwoje* [Loneliness for Two] (1968) – a tragic story of a pastor and his wife after the death of their son, *Drzwi w murze* [The Door in the Wall] (1973) – a psychological drama touching on the problem of schizophrenia. The themes of many of the Różewicz brothers' films stemmed from their wartime experiences, while the protagonists of others were people who had not adapted to post-war reality.

In 1958, the duo was joined by Kornel Filipowicz and, already as an informal company called Miczura Film, they made *Miejsce na ziemi* [A Place on Earth] (1960) – the story of a rebellious boy who, having left a reform school, tries to come to terms with the meaninglessness of life, *Głos z tamtego świata* [Voice from Another World] (1962) – about the famous case of a pre-war conman-spiritualist, and an ironic philosophical-religious morality play *Piekło i niebo* [Hell and Heaven] (1966). Finally, without Tadeusz, Stanisław produced the picture *Szklana kula* [The Glass Ball] with Filipowicz (1972). The last work the brothers made together was *Opadły liście z drzew* [Fallen leaves] (1975), which Stanisław Różewicz produced on the basis of his brother's short stories under the same title, but without his participation in the script. Twenty years later, a moving documentary *Nasz starszy brat* [Our Elder Brother] (1994), directed by Stanisław, was produced based a joint script by the Różewicz brothers.



„Kinema”

The Różewicz brothers began their film education at the *Kinema* cinema/theatre in their hometown of Radomsko, the only cinema in town owned by the Voluntary Fire Brigade. "A full-price ticket cost 50 grosz, for morning screening it was 25. [...] An hour before the box office opened, I already circulated around the cinema. [...] Finally, a dark-haired cashier came with a briefcase in which she brought the tickets. She was beautiful", recalled Stanisław.

Years later, they both returned to the days of *Kinema* with nostalgia. "Tadeusz and I have watched films in different countries around the world. In Paris and Shanghai, Rome and Berlin, Moscow and New York, but I think that nowhere did we experience such a deeply magical feeling which, with the lights going out in the *Kinema* hall, transported us into a mysterious world of illusion and emotion", wrote Stanisław Różewicz. Years later, he devoted a nostalgic documentary to the cinema of his youth, *Kinema* (1999).

Cat patron of „Miczura-film”

As reported by our film correspondent, on 1 April 1958 a new film company, "Miczura-Film", was established in Kraków. It was set up in a flat of a well-known Kraków prose writer, Kornel Filipowicz, who joined the previously two-man film company of Stanisław and Tadeusz Różewicz. Filipowicz will co-write scripts of Stanisław's films with the younger of the Różewicz brothers. The team began working on scripts in Kornel Filipowicz's office in Lea Street in Kraków, amidst the fumes of the writer's pipe smoke and in the company of his beloved black cat Miczura. The cat was unanimously elected patron of the new team.



Birth record. One war, three children, three short stories

A joint film by brothers Stanisław and Tadeusz Różewicz, *Świadectwo urodzenia* [*Birth Record*], was released in Polish cinemas. It is a moving story about the fate of children during the war.

– It is the adults who determine the children's fate – says the director. – Politicians and military leaders are most willing to be photographed with children – embracing them, holding them, kissing them. “Kinderfreund” Hitler put millions of children to death. The film consists of three short stories. The protagonist of *Na drodze* [*On the Road*] is a boy looking for his mother who disappeared in September 1939. He meets a soldier carrying military documents, but he too is killed in a shootout with the Germans. The boy is left alone in the forest. In the second story, *List z obozu* [*A Letter from Camp*], two brothers await their father's return from captivity. The father does not return, but a fugitive from a camp for Soviet soldiers appears in the house. The heroine of the third story, entitled *Kropla krwi* [*A Drop of Blood*], is a girl rescued from the ghetto who ends up in a Polish orphanage. That is where Gestapo men appear looking for hidden Jewish children. But a German doctor examining the children declares little Mirka a child of pure Aryan blood and decides to take her away, because no drop of this blood can go to waste.

The film was a success at the Venice and Cannes film festivals, and a reviewer from the German weekly *Die Welt* wrote that *Świadectwo* is the best film about the fate of children during the war he had ever seen.



Cinema devourer. Tadeusz Różewicz about film

“Cinema has always been entertainment for me and always a mystery, cinema to this day is for me like a market stall and a mysterious temple; there, in the darkness, one experiences a revelation. All this strange land has always attracted and fascinated me. I am devoured by cinema and I devour cinema. A ‘cinema devourer’. While some ‘higher’ (metaphysical?) force turned me into a poet, film director Stanisław Różewicz, my brother, tried to turn me into a film scriptwriter. On a bumpy road, full of discussions and clashes, a mysterious metamorphosis takes place between the writer and the director, a thought transforms into a word, a word into a picture, a picture into a film. A film that can do perfectly well without a word...

My collaboration with Stanisław Różewicz has now lasted for over thirty years (sometimes with long breaks). Some of our scenarios were deformed or even annihilated during the period of the so-called ‘cult of the individual’. Various people, various committees and ‘opinion’ bodies destroyed many of our ideas and scenarios over the years; perhaps somewhere in the dusty files there are sinister and often just unwise analyses and opinions that usually end with the word ‘rejected’. [...] Ruthless interference distorted the dialogue, the image – the very soul of the film. Often the film was released mutilated.

For me the biggest difficulty was the form itself, the ‘technique’ of collaboration. That is writing together, the presence of another person not only in the process of writing, but in the very inside of that process, which for me is inseparable from absolute solitude and isolation from the outside world. [...] Of course, it all depends on the psyche of the writer. We looked for a solution in various ways. Some scenes we wrote together, others I wrote separately and presented to the director. But yet again there were disputes. The interference of the director often seemed to me identical to the destruction of the image-word. My vision came out on screen enhanced, and often weakened. The lone writer clashed with a big team, with a film crew headed by a director”.

Judgement day on screen

In their latest film, Stanisław and Tadeusz Różewicz (the other scriptwriter is Kornel Filipowicz) depart from the war theme present in most of their joint films.

Piekło i niebo [*Heaven and Hell*] is an ambiguous film: part comedy, part philosophical morality play. Bus passengers after an accident face the judgement day, which turns out to take place in a cinema hall. There they can see their lives on the big screen, but they can also see their dreams. On this basis, a decision will be made as to whether they will go to heaven or hell. In heaven, waiting for them are virgins with lilies in their hands and martyrs in blue robes, arguing who is happier. In hell, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin are already being boiled in big cauldrons, Marquis de Sade is being fried on a spit. In addition, it is not clear where things are better, because both heaven and hell are in a mess, documents have gone missing and it is just as difficult to get on with angels as with devil guards.

– The film is not meant to be an imitation, let alone a parody, of either the *Divine* or *Undivine Comedy*, the film-makers assure us. – It simply plays with the most common ideas about hell and heaven. Because it is good to believe in a land where good and evil still exist.

Stanisław Różewicz on cooperation with his brother

The ISKRY Publishing House has published a volume of Stanisław Różewicz's memoirs *Było, minęło... w kuchni i na salach X Muzy* [*Days long gone... in the*

Kitchen and in the Parlour of the 10th Muse], which contains a great deal of information about the director's collaboration with his brother, anecdotes from behind the scenes of film productions and moving confessions. “Sometimes a longing comes over me to once again become the owner of a children's ‘cinema’ – equipped with a magnifying glass”, wrote the director.



Dialogue with God

Hello, God, it is me. The figure of the Heavenly Father in Różewicz's work

In a poem entitled *bez* [*without*], Tadeusz Różewicz addresses God:

*father our Father
why
like a bad father
at night like a thief*

*without a sign without a trace
without a word*

*why did you forsake me
why did I forsake
You*

[*without*, translated by Adam Czerniawski]

The piece echoes the *Our Father* prayer and the cries of Christ on the cross described in the Gospel. The figure of God as an evil, or at least absent father, is significant in Różewicz's work. God did not answer Tadeusz's desperate plea to save his brother, who had been arrested by the Gestapo, although at first it seemed that a miracle had happened. On 20 July 1944, an assassination attempt on Hitler was carried out. With no information about the failure of the attack, the young poet regarded it as divine intervention and an answer to his request. Later, when he learned of the failure of the assassins and the lack of chances of freeing his brother, he considered his prayer childish.

Attention, Messiah!

According to Artur Sandauer, the first sentence of *Mesjasz* [*Messiah*], Bruno Schulz's lost novel, was: "You know – said my mother this morning. – The Messiah has come. He is already in Sambir". Waiting for the coming of the Deliverer, the first one for Jews and the second for Christians, is a characteristic attitude of believers. In Schulz's work, the Messiah was to appear in Drohobych. Those who meet the Messiah bring the news to others who are waiting. Tadeusz Różewicz also joined the group of witnesses. What may surprise some and not others, he recognised the Messiah in a homeless man sleeping on a park bench. He described the encounter in a poem entitled *Widziałem Go* [*I Saw Him*].

The religious ABC(DE)s of Różewicz

A for aporia, i.e. pathlessness, helplessness, difficulty, contradictions in which the interpreter of Różewicz's work gets entangled. Anyone who wants to answer the question of whether Różewicz believed in God or not falls into this trap. B for Bible. Różewicz's language is steeped in the Bible. The poet has apocrypha



in his bibliography, and Old and New Testament phrases reverberate in his most famous works, for example in *Ocalony* [*Survivor*]. C for credo, which is the Christian profession of faith. The title of a poem criticising the entanglement of poetry in the mechanisms of the market and popular culture. It was included in an anthology compiled by long-time publisher and friend, Jan Stolarczyk, and inspired its title. D for dry wood. The title of a poem in which Różewicz describes a medieval sculpture of Christ carrying the cross. It ends with the words: "how this wood craves". E for epiphany, or revelation, often an intense metaphysical experience. Virginia Woolf described in *Mrs Dalloway* an epiphany captured while watching curtains dancing in the wind. For Różewicz, the carrier of epiphany could even be a fly.

Sorrowful mother. Sorrowful son

According to the Gospels, during the presentation of Jesus at the temple, the old Simeon prophesied to Mary: "And a sword will pierce through your own soul also". The figure of a sorrowful mother, standing under her son's cross or holding his dead body in her lap, is a well-known iconographic motif. Tadeusz Różewicz also uses it. In this way he portrays his mother, mourning the death of her eldest son, and other women experiencing the loss of a child. Moreover, Różewicz switches roles. He turns to the mother:

*You have lost your strength and your body
you can be picked up
like a little child
and raised to the heart*

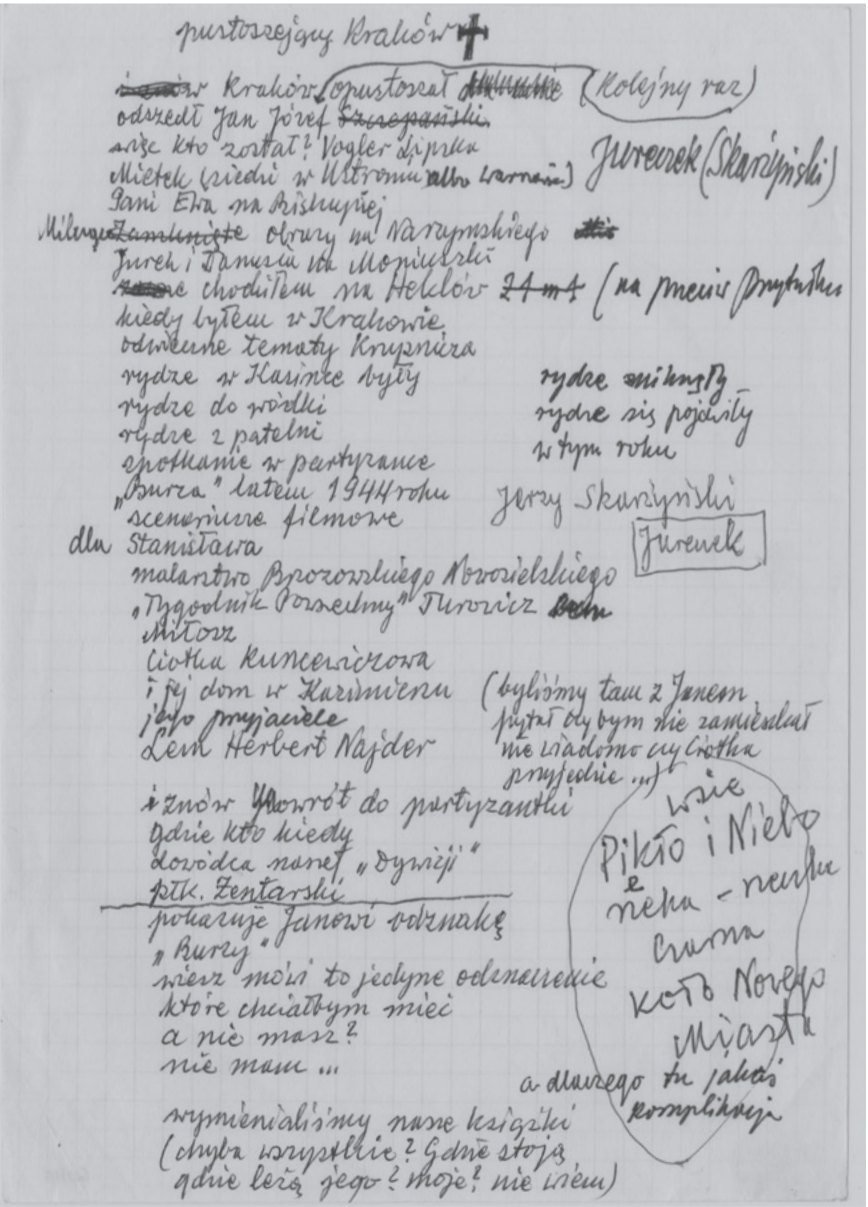
And then he mourns her death in 1957 in the volume *Matka odchodzi* [*Mother Departs*], published towards the end of his own life.

Dialogue with death

If it's art, it's about death. The poet reveals his plans

Below is an excerpt from an interview with the well-known Wrocław poet Tadeusz Różewicz conducted in 1969.

- What will your next play be about?
- About death.
- The public will not want to see or hear it.
- I know, I already feel disgusted with this subject myself.
- The audience may simply leave during the performance.
- It's possible.
- And that will not stop you from writing about death?
- No. I will write it.
- Thus boring yourself... and boring others?
- Yes. Being bored, I will write. Bored and anguished from the very first sentence.
- The public will reject the play. People are fed up with death



- I'm not sure...
- Do you care about your audience?
- I care a lot.
- So why don't you change the subject?
- But up until now I have only written about life.
- Are you playing with me?
- Probably, although it is true.
- Are you not tired of the deprivation and monotony of the subject of death?
- I am very tired.
- So why won't you throw yourself into life, movement, light, does it take more effort?
- Knowledge, skills?
- [...] Apparently, I cannot.
- [...] You have to reckon with the fact that theatres will not want to produce such a play and the public may not want to see it.
- I reckon with it.
- And you will still write it in spite of everything?
- Yes.
- Is there not a spirit of perversity in this?
- No.

March 1969.

Survivor indeed? Journalistic investigation of a certain zombie

There is a zombie in Polish poetry. The word means the undead, a ghoul, it originates from voodoo cults, and it has found its way to Poland through western blockbusters like the *Night of the Living Dead*. Of course, ghouls, led by Phantom Gustaw, had haunted Polish literature much earlier. A special case is Tadeusz R., a poet who made his debut with the volume *Niepokój* [*Anxiety*] in 1947, from which comes the poem *Ocalony* [*Survivor*] with its famous opening fragment: "led to slaughter I survived" [translated by Adam Czerniawski]. In the course of literary investigation, doubts have arisen as to the veracity of this statement. On the one hand, Tadeusz R. emphasises that he is "brutally alive" in contrast to his murdered peers, victims of the war. On the other hand, he completely openly defines his condition in the poem *Larwa* [*Larva*]:

*I am dead
but I've never been
so attached to life*

Sometimes the poet hides behind the figure of a dead man who (out of courtesy):

*[...] wanted to open his eyes,
but relatives with moaning and tears
closed his eyes again
with black coins.*

So you have been warned. There is a zombie in Polish poetry, Tadeusz R. can bite, infect and create an army of zombie epigones.



Social death. Why are we afraid of rejection?

Psychologists have long wondered how – from an evolutionary point of view – unpleasant emotions such as shame, resentment or fear of rejection served our ancestors. One hypothesis is that exclusion from the group was tantamount to death for primitive people, as they were unable to fend for themselves against predators and to obtain food. Therefore, to feel intense unpleasant emotions in relation to transgression of norms and negative opinions of others was an adaptive technique.

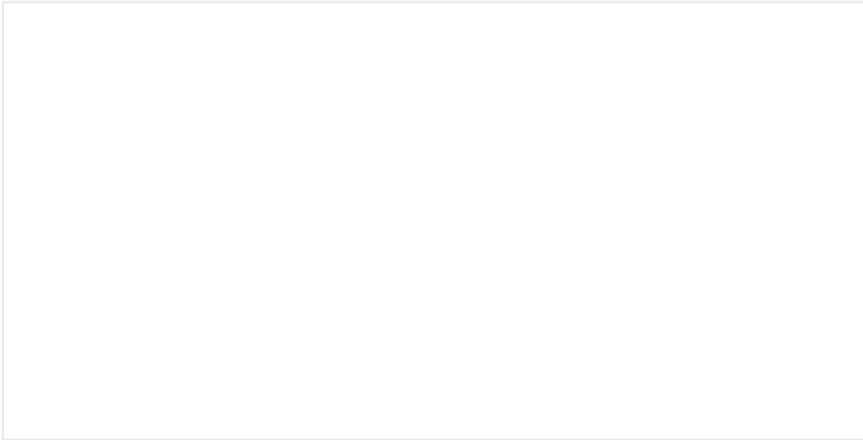
With the development of civilisation, exclusion from society ceased to be associated with an immediate threat to life, but unpleasant emotions remained. At the same time, religious and philosophical systems have developed ways to deal with these states through rituals related to the rationalisation of temporary exclusion (e.g. repentance), and the possibility of restoring broken ties through reconciliation and forgiveness.

However, not everyone takes the opportunity to work through and forget unpleasant events. For example, poet Tadeusz Różewicz is known for the fact that his poetry is inspired by traumas, the memories of which he nurtured within himself for many years. Professor Ryszard Nycz even writes about the poet's traumaturgy: "[...] Różewicz's work, in its essential part, feeds on trauma (irrespective of whether it is the result of events from universal or intimate, personal history); and the best of his works owe their extraordinary power and effectiveness to the transposition of the principles of the traumatic structure into the principles of his own poetics". It seems, therefore, that the profession of poet should also be added to the list of occupations harmful to health.

Interaction: Build a house for the dead

In Tadeusz Różewicz's poem called *Domek z kart* [*House of Cards*], the murdered ones, perhaps out of jealousy, smash the title structure built by a girl, the protagonist of the piece.

In the space below, draw their own house for them so they don't have to do this and make the girl sad.



Domek z kart is a picture of fragile happiness of those who survived the war. The couple's peace of mind is perhaps destroyed by intrusive memories of traumatic events and feelings of guilt towards those who could not be saved.

The afterlife of authors, or Różewicz's Pompa Funebri

Horace wrote: "I shall not wholly die", meaning the immortality offered by poetry, being saved in the collective memory of successive generations. A writer has the power to immortalise himself or someone to whom he dedicates a poem. Tadeusz Różewicz, declaring perversely: "I know that I shall die wholly", dedicated a number of texts to other artists whom he had had an opportunity to meet personally. He had a strong personal relationship with Leopold Staff,

who died in 1957, and to whom he dedicated his poem *Złowiony* [*Caught*]. He also remembers in his literary works, among others, Karol Kuryluk (†1967), Zdzisław Hierowski (†1967), Roman Ingarden (†1970) Kazimierz Wyka (†1975), Stefan Otwinowski (†1976), Helmut Kajzar (†1982), Konstanty Puzyna (†1989), Henryk Bereska (†2005), Zofia (†2003) and Jerzy Nowosielski (†2011), Eugeniusz Geł Stankiewicz (†2011). In the poem *Patyczek* [*Stick*], he mentions his deceased Kraków friends, Tadeusz Kantor (†1990), Tadeusz Brzozowski (†1987), Ewa Lassek (†1990), Maria Jarema (†1958), Kornel Filipowicz (†1990), to whom he also dedicated a separate poem under the title *Rozmowa z przyjacielem* [*Conversation with a Friend*]. It was sometimes easier for him to get on with his dead friends than with his living ones, especially when it came to writers.

Dialogue with poetry

Ranking of Różewicz's poems, issue 36525

In fifth place is *Przyszli żeby zobaczyć poetę* [*They Came to See the Poet*], a piece in the theme of "things used to be better", which promotes a complete relaxed approach to duties: "when I 'do nothing', I do NOTHING". However, it is better to do nothing than to do mediocre, because, as the poet states, mediocrity "is only the beginning". In fourth place is *Ocalony* [*Survivor*], which would be higher were it not for the fact that it has become a permanent fixture in Polish language textbooks, which significantly affects its popularity. Written by a twenty-four-year-old, it was an epoch ahead of other poets in terms of its maturity, and Różewicz remained so until the end. Third place belongs to *Dytyramb na cześć teściowej* [*Dithyramb to the Mother-in-Law*]. It is not clear whether it is written seriously or is a poetic joke. Mothers-in-law

take this poem seriously, people who are not mothers-in-law prefer not to comment on it. In second place is the only rhymed work in our ranking, *Drzewo* [*The Tree*], an unexpected piece for Różewicz; it is probably a poetic polemic against the poem *Wysokie drzewa* [*Tall Trees*] by Leopold Staff. In first place, invariably for many ratings, is a timeless poem describing social life in Poland, starting from a genre scene in a railway coach, namely *List do ludożerców* [*Letter to the Cannibals*]. Reminder: "let us not eat each other".

“I love you, Tadeusz” – love letters from readers

It is a well-known fact that the Polish Post Office could compete with the British Rail when it comes to reliability... This is not a mockery, we have obtained evidence of it, here is an address placed on an envelope: "Mr Tadeusz Różewicz. One of Poland's greatest writers and poets. Apologies, I don't know the address. GLIWICE". And the letter arrived! Although not to Gliwice, where the poet no longer lived, but to Wrocław. Bravo to the postal workers!

Many letters from admirers came to "one of Poland's greatest poets", it was easy because his address was in the phone book, people also wrote to the addresses of publishing houses and the Wrocław "Odra" magazine. Here are a few gems. For example, a letter about being given the "honourable" 24th place on the list of the most important Polish writers of the 20th century (a ranking done in Canada), or a letter demanding a meeting and an immediate discussion while writing a master's thesis on Staff and Różewicz. There were also consultations on school-leaving presentations, which a lucky few were able to follow up with the poet by telephone.

What is this nonsense, or Różewicz's marginalia

Rubbish, graphomania, wrong, banal, nonsense! These are the terms that young poets who dare to present their volumes of poetry to Tadeusz must face. They are not the only ones! Also Adam Ważyk or Roman Bratny and other, more famous authors, had the honour of being subjected to review by the poet from Wrocław. An honest, non-malicious review, for amidst the criticism there is also praise: "not bad", "interesting", "good". Short notes of this kind on the margins of the volumes of poetry filling Tadeusz Różewicz's shelves were not unusual. The poet read carefully and evaluated pieces, just as he had done in his youth, when he practised his art on Czechowicz, Przyboś or Staff, noted down his observations and tested the styles of various authors. He also used this habit on other books he read, so that today we can read his commentaries on *Ulysses* or Adam Mickiewicz's *A Course in Slavic Literature*. Many of them express disappointment: "I already wrote about this twenty years ago!"





“Like Minerva from the head of Jupiter”, or a brilliant debut

The young poet's debut took the literary world by surprise. Nothing foreshadowed the explosion of talent in the decimated post-war generation. Among such figures as Adam Włodek, Roman Bratny, Anna Kamieńska, Witold Wirpsza or Tadeusz Borowski, Tadeusz Różewicz, who settled in Kraków and began his studies in art history there, stood out. Although before the war he had already published in literary magazines and during the war he published *Echa leśne* – a volume of epigrams and patriotic poetry, it was only *Niepokój* [*Anxiety*] published in Kraków in 1947 that was truly revolutionary. Miłosz, Przyboś, Staff almost unanimously express their admiration for the poet from Radomsko. Miłosz dedicates to him the poem called *Do Tadeusz Różewicza*, poet [*To Tadeusz Różewicz, the Poet*], Przyboś becomes his mentor and guardian during his stay in Kraków, and Leopold Staff is linked to Różewicz by friendship; this elderly poet will write his last volumes clearly inspired by the poems of his younger colleague.

Dialogue with painting

An unpleasant adventure in a museum. Letter from a reader

Ladies and Gentlemen,
I take the liberty of addressing this letter to the editor in the hope that, having read it, museum professionals of all kinds will improve the quality of their work. I have spent many hours in galleries all over the world and have collected quite a few unpleasant experiences, which I now want to share – as a warning!

Firstly, the assumption that museums are accessible to all is a mistake. Visitors are mostly unprepared to contemplate beauty. For example, I once sat in the Palazzo Barberini, in front of Rafael's La Fornarina, and counted how long tourists looked at it. It turned out to be literally seconds.

“A middle-aged man stopped in front of La Fornarina for 30 seconds. It was 11.40 AM, two elderly grey-haired men stopped in front of the painting for 15 seconds, one of them then looked in the window and the other looked at the guidebook. [...] If these two gentlemen devoted half a minute to the masterful portrait and may never return to it, then we must doubt the ultimate purpose of this kind of institution. [...] Of course, no one can be forced to admire beauty, it is not punishment, it is grace.”

Poorly displayed and poorly lit images are also very frustrating.

*I hate pictures behind glass
I see myself there I remember once
noticing some Japanese
imposed on Mona Lisa's smile
they were very animated
Gioconda became fixed
in a glass coffin
after that encounter
I've never been to The Louvre*

[Francis Bacon or Diego Velázquez in a dentist's chair translated by Adam Czerniawski]

Tourists cannot behave and guides are not much better. They sometimes even have a speech impediment! I remember a situation from Venice:

*sudden silence roars of laughter
the guide has winked
a knowing eye
whispers lisps
the group surrounds him tightly*

Riddle. Recognise the imagee

Match the titles with the works of art described below.

- passes me
dignified
noble
with a target set
as clearly
as a sword*
- face with closed eyes a profile on the background
of a silver dress lips open fading red
shadow on the lips
in the orbit*



*a circle
almost at a gallop they have run past
along
to the left Bosch's Inferno
to the right Bellini's Pietà
to the left Bosch's Paradiso*

[Following the guide, translated by Magnus J. Krynski and Robert A. Maguire]

Another problem is non-authentic exhibits or copies.

*There are museums in which
the chair on which Shakespeare
did not sit
stands before the table
on which Moliere did not work*

[Notes from a museum, translated by Victor Contoski]

The Vatican Museums brought me many disappointments.

“I come up to the dazzlingly white Laocoön Group, of course there is a crowd, tours. I get through. And on the pedestal, there is a plaque: Laocconte – Calco in Gesso. Delio originale in Restaura. Yes, my dears. [...] The plaster cast obviously gives an idea of the beauty of the original. But the beauty that breathes from the original stands before us here as if devoid of that spark which the artist breathed into the original”.

The custodians of the exhibition lack vigilance.

“The unfortunate custodians of sculptures and paintings in grey uniforms yawn snooze keep their hands in their trouser pockets smile read the newspaper sweat and yawn [...]”.

For this, they are greedy for tips that are not due to them. Let me give you an example.

“The lavatories, which are located near the so-called Pinacoteca, are formally free, gratuito, but nevertheless this imposing old man in a uniform with the coats of arms of the Vatican State holds up his hand as if he is owed a fee for use of the lavatories”.

And this at a time when ticket prices are truly high. The visit to the Vatican Museums cost me a lot, there should be discounts for poets.

The ticket was very expensive and large. It was decorated with a drawing and an inscription: Musei a Gallerie Pontificie Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Lire 500”.

And worst of all is the closure of museums on Mondays. I will never forget how I stood

*at the door of the Metropolitan
it was December and an icy wind was blowing
the museum was closed
I was cut off from the art the buffet and the toilet
without language (Guernica screamed inside)*

Outrage! I hope that this letter will contribute to improving the level of global museums,

full of hope,
Tadeusz from Wrocław

3.
hole in a stone circle
black tongue
which popped out of the mouth
of the hanged

4.
Body pierced by arrows
face as serene as the sky
not a single drop of blood

5.
and suddenly this image
subcutaneous underground
dripping with pus cracked

rotting
slippery
hanging

Tips:
Caravaggio, *Narcissus*, 1597–1599, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome
Rubens, *The Descent from the Cross*, 1612–1614, Antwerp Cathedral
Bocca della verità, Rome
Antonello da Messina, *Martyrdom of St Sebastian*, ca. 1478, Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden
Simone Martini, *Guidoriccio da Fogliano*, 1328, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena

Like talking to a brick wall. Painting and silence

Although it seems that everyone can see what a painting looks like and that it can be described without difficulty, the more knowledgeable one is, the more detailed it becomes, but the matter did not seem so simple to Tadeusz Różewicz (a would-be master's degree in art history). By his own admission:

"[...] I have spoken on many occasions about how difficult it is to write about a contemporary painter, about contemporary painting, even about a single painting; the difficulty is that between the 'language of the literary', the 'language of the



poet' and the 'language of the painter' there is as much difference as between a sex manual and a real act of love. [...] folk wisdom says: 'it's like talking to a brick wall' [in Polish literally: a man talks to a painting but the painting doesn't talk back once]... I have often felt like that [...]."

It should be remembered that in Tadeusz Różewicz's dictionary, the term "talk" is an insult. It is easy to describe a painting by burying it under layers of unnecessary words. Anyway, there is a cult image embedded in the quoted proverb. It features a figure from the realm of the sacred, which does not respond, insensitive to man's prompting. Różewicz transfers this claim to dialogue to paintings themselves, giving them supernatural power. However, neither God (as we remember from *Wielka improwizacja* [*The Great Improvisation*]) nor paintings wants to give satisfaction to poets and remain stubbornly silent.

DIY club. Collage with Tadeusz

A collage is a good gift idea for a loved one. It does not require any special artistic skills. All you need to do is gather the right materials, old newspapers work great. We then cut out interesting pieces, arrange the composition and glue it on. Remember that a surprising and aesthetically-pleasing effect can be achieved when the pieces are well matched.

Collages entered art parlours thanks to the Cubists, Dadaists and Surrealists. Poets were also eager to use them. Wisława Szymborska is known for her witty collages, which she willingly gifted to her friends.

And if you do not feel like working with glue and scissors, you can make a poetic collage à la Tadeusz Różewicz. Choose intriguing fragments from old newspapers, divide them into short broken lines and optionally add bits of your own poetry (sometimes it's better to leave this out).

Dialogue with theatre

Primate warns – immorality on stage

Letters written to and from Tadeusz Różewicz occupy metres' worth of shelves in the archives. One may wonder, where the poet kept all this correspondence. At home? Were particularly 'valuable' or relevant letters kept separately? This category includes one sent on 1 June 1974 from the office of the Primate of Poland, signed by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński himself. An important letter on morality and art. Such correspondence unfortunately no longer happens. It is not clear whether there are too many immoral plays and authors, or whether other channels of communication have taken the place of written correspondence.

The Primate was strongly moved by the text of *Białe małżeństwo* [*White Marriage*]. His intervention was to point out that "the author should harness his talent to uphold the moral level of the youth". The cardinal referred to this matter not only in his letter to Różewicz, but also during his sermon at the church on Skalka on 8 May 1974, saying: "The abominations that are printed are then staged in theatres, and the Poles, although they talk about these shows – it's true obscenity – they go to them, pay money, sit and spit". After such words there was no need to encourage anyone, tickets for Wrocław performances of this play sold out on the spot.



Różewicz appreciated – interna- tional drama performances

Polish artists are successful abroad. Polish drama triumphs on stages all over the world thanks to a modest poet from Wrocław. Although in Poland *Białe małżeństwo* [*White Marriage*] was criticised by the highest church authorities and *Do piachu* [*In the Dust*] was attacked by veterans, Tadeusz Różewicz's plays are readily performed and watched in Sweden, Germany and Great Britain. He has become one of the leading playwrights in Europe, alongside Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco. It is a pity that in Poland *Kartoteka* [*File*], whose New York premiere took place less than a year after the Warsaw one, is the best-known piece. In the same year, 1961, it was also staged in Sweden and Germany. And yet abroad they appreciate: *Na czworakach* [*On all Fours*], *Stara kobieta wysiaduje* [*The Old Woman Sits*], or *Pułapka* [*The Trap*], which was first staged in Norway and only later in Wrocław and Warsaw. Let us hope that the next generation of directors will draw on Różewicz's rich oeuvre, and that theatres will have the opportunity to present this difficult but contemporary repertoire.

Tadeusz Różewicz



Failure of a champion? Różewicz and Łukasiński

For several decades, from 1960 onwards, Różewicz tried to grapple with a subject that finally defeated him. The impassive, though forced by circumstances, silence of Walerian Łukasiński, an independence activist from the first decades of the 19th century, although it fascinated the author of *Kartoteka*, became an indescribable subject. Despite many successes in terms of modern forms and numerous ideas ahead of the times, a drama in which the protagonist remains silent for forty years was, according to Tadeusz Różewicz, impossible to realise. In spite of many years of trying, it turned out that “a Poet is needed here”, and reflections on the value of silence were transferred into the author's poetic work. This is not the only unrealized idea of Różewicz's; in his manuscripts one can find fragments of unfinished plays and only outlines of dramas, or even just planned titles: *Circe*, *Zaraza* [Blight], *Epopeja opowiedziana przez dziurkę w kurtynie* [The Epic Told Through a Hole in the Curtain], and even the mysterious *Fotograf Mickiewicza* [Mickiewicz's Photographer]. If only these ideas had been realised, perhaps Witkacy and Mroźek would not have been considered the most popular playwrights.

“It can’t be put together” – Różewicz directs *Kartoteka*

If anyone thinks that his whole life is over because he/she has reached retirement age, he/she is profoundly mistaken. You can even make your stage debut as a director at the age of seventy. This is exactly what Tadeusz Różewicz did when

he decided to decompose and modernise his flagship work, *Kartoteka* [File]. Of course, the author had to do it in a way that is characteristic only of himself. *Kartoteka rozrzucona* [Scattered File] is not a performance that he directs on the stage, but a series of ten rehearsals during which the fabric of the show is created. Together with actors from Teatr Polski in Wrocław in November and December 1992 Różewicz presented his work on the drama in front of an audience. Although the premiere was not planned, it took place six years later in Teatr TV (TV Theatre) thanks to Kazimierz Kutz.

Unlucky *Do piachu*

The play about the Home Army had no luck in being realised. It was first shown by Tadeusz Łomnicki in 1979 at Teatr na Woli, and then ten years later by Kazimierz Kutz at Teatr Telewizji. After both premieres, heated debates broke out in the press and Różewicz received letters from outraged viewers as well as anonymous threats. Then again, there was a long break until 2003, when the play was presented by Teatr Provisorium in Lublin. Currently the play *Leśni. Apokryf*, based on Różewicz's *Do piachu* [In the Dust] directed by Marta Streker, is presented by Teatr Polski in Wrocław and seems to be less controversial. What was all the fuss about and why did it die out over time? Well, Różewicz wrote an exceptionally realistic play, which shows the evil of war, its mundanity and ugliness. The plot is built around a partisan accused of robbery and rape, the foolish Waluś. There is not much there about fighting with the Germans, but there is lice, dampness, pointless marches, waiting in the forest for orders, omnipresent dirt, unpatriotic conversations. There is no place in art for nobility and heroism known from *Czterej pancerni* [Four Tank-Men] – the veteran circles were outraged at this, today nobody is outraged anymore.

Dialogue with fame

A Nobel Prize winner without a Nobel Prize

As we do every year in October, on the occasion of Tadeusz Różewicz's birthday, we have decided to ask the poet whether he was happy that someone else had won the Nobel Prize. He replied that indeed, he was happy, and added lyrically:

*I don't know why this award triggers
such emotions among writers
it's just an ordinary award...*

Różewicz's candidature for the Nobel Prize had been under consideration since the end of the 1960s. It seems that Różewicz came closest to winning in 1980, when the prize went to Czesław Miłosz. In a letter to Prof. Joseph Trypućko the poet admitted: “he was the only one – of the living Polish poets – to whom I (if it depended on me) would have awarded the prize”. However, it was not the question of his competitor's victory that occupied Różewicz's mind, but the reaction of the Polish literary community, which later claimed that no other Polish poet, apart from Miłosz, had ever been considered. Różewicz felt the lack of support acutely at that time, admitting that only Prof. Trypućko and the Swedish PEN-Club “stood behind me – because neither the government, nor the country, nor the emigration, nor the church, nor my colleagues – were willing to help – I suppose they rather did harm”.

A Polish poet predicted the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center?

A poet predicting the catastrophic future? Such a pessimistic conclusion can be reached by readers of Tadeusz Różewicz's poem *zawsze fragment* [always a Fragment]. The poem describes Tadeusz Różewicz's visit to New York in 1973; a postscript written years later reads:

*so it's been 17 years
and some “fundamentalist”
taken into the bosom of America
exercising “the right to liberty
and happiness” wanted to blow up
the World Trade Center
maybe he didn't like the coffee
so he thought (to himself)
in the name of the just god
I will blow up this skyscraper
into the sky
with thousands of people
he is a man
who is (probably) a “firm believer”
and not some sceptic
rationalist atheist*

Here the poet refers to the 1993 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, in which six people were killed and over a thousand were injured. Tadeusz Różewicz could not have known about the tragic attacks of September 2001. One of the photographs on the cover of the volume *zawsze fragment* [Always a Fragment] features a “glass ball” with a panorama of Manhattan – a souvenir the poet brought back from his trip to the United States.

Superparody – Tadeusz Różewicz pastiches Dorota Masłowska

A game known since antiquity takes on a new face in our times, light mockery or parody has become an indispensable ingredient of almost every literary work, and imitation is gaining more and more enthusiasts. The publication *Nowe wiersze sławnych poetów* [New Poems by Famous Poets] is a great example of that. This had already been predicted by the “old poet” Różewicz, who in his volume *Szara strefa* [The Grey Zone], in his characteristic way, mocked another “old poet”, Staff. In *Kup kota w worku* [Buy a Pig in a Poke] he included a parody of a short story by his friend Kornel Filipowicz and a piece called *przy dziewczę przy* [Push Girl Push]. The latter seems to have been written by Dorota Masłowska.

Parodying parodied street speech / stream of consciousness / chavvy language? Aren't there too many layers the reader has to wade through to get to the point? Or is there no point and nowhere to get to? Masłowska's artificial creation imitating the spoken Polish language served the novel, but was itself a description of the state of contemporary language. This is what Różewicz wants to write about – about the state of our speech, about the lack of meaning and the lack of content, about the fact that all that is left is to play with form and words that have no meaning: “And so our speech is slowly falling into oblivion [...] we are left with the super-universal word cool which is replacing the philological, psychological, theological and general vocabulary”. Because it is a sad parody.





Różewicz on the wall in Leiden

In the early 1990s, the *Wiersze na murze [Poems on the Wall]* project was launched in the Dutch city of Leiden. Poetic works in various languages were written on more than a hundred buildings. The texts on the murals also include poems in Polish by Wisława Szymborska and Adam Mickiewicz. Tadeusz Różewicz also joined the authors, whose poem *Pisałem [I wrote]* from the volume *Zielona róża [Green Rose]* is on the wall of the building at 79 Oude Vest.

Różewicz’s *Hyperactive Family* in a Swedish magazine for psychiatrist

Tadeusz Różewicz's fame is spreading ever wider. Is the well-known Wrocław poet an expert on mental illness? Yes, on some of them. The Swedish professional magazine for psychiatrists, *Läkartidningen*, reprinted Różewicz's poem *Rodzina nadpobudliwych [The Hyperactive Family]*, deeming the work to be “the most precise description of the symptoms of the illness”. It is also worth taking a look at the volume *Uśmiechy [Smiles]* to see if we can also find ourselves in the descriptions of hyperactivity...

*I’ve a little granddaughter age 6
she used to be an absolute angel
but this morning she kicked me
on my knee! beg pardon my ankle
and said granny can
kiss her on the a...
I’m at the end of my tether
and have become hyperactive*

[*The hyperactive family*, translated by Barbara Plebanek, Tony Howard and Adam Czerniawski]

Old women on a monument in Helsinki

One of Tadeusz Różewicz's poems reads:

*Sometimes I worry about
being so ordinary*

While the poet worries about his ordinariness, monuments are erected to his poetry. In the poem *Śława [Fame]*, a journalist asks the poet: “[...] is it / true that at the Helsinki cemetery / a monument to an old woman / has been put up for you”. To readers eager for an answer to this nagging question, we reply that this was not quite the case. An open-air installation by Polish sculptor Radosław Gryta was erected in a Helsinki city park. On twelve boulders of black granite the following words are engraved: *Opowiadania o starych kobietach [Tales about Old Women]*. Maria Dębicz, teatrologist and the poet's close collaborator, tells us the following about this unusual installation: “There are two elements that bring this whole poem together: there is one big boulder, a kind of obelisk, and there is this poem carved in Polish, Finnish and English. And there is a ‘resting’ section of the poem, this boulder in the form of a bench on which one sits looking at the lake that is in this park”. Fragments of the poem have also been placed on a dozen blocks of granite, which are located in Siltamaani Park.

The form of the monument illustrated the main idea of the poem, which reads: “old women are / indestructible” – just like stone statues. The Helsinki monument is also an example of the fact that one does not always erect a monument to important and distinguished figures, sometimes it can be a so-called ‘ordinary person’, in this case it is equally important, anonymous, old women. In his work, Różewicz often refers to anonymous heroes or even anti-heroes.

A living poem in front of the metro. Happening for the poet’s 90th birthday

“I share the youngsters’ conviction that art, poetry is important, necessary” – this is how TR commented on a happening organised by Warsaw secondary school students to mark the poet's 90th birthday. One hundred and sixty secondary school students lined up in front of the Centrum Metro station, holding banners with letters to form a “living poem” by Różewicz, entitled *Można [One Can]*:

*I remember that in the golden days
poets used to write “poetry”
one can still write poems
for many many years
one can also do
many other things*

We know what the poet takes from young readers, and what do young people find in Różewicz's poetry, and what connection does this have with the Legia Warszawa team? One student explains: “He had some contribution to the fight for the freedom of our country and as a supporter of the Legia Warszawa team – we remember about such people and try not to forget them”. The happening was organised by the National Centre for Culture and the Pomost Association. A teacher from the Zbigniew Herbert Secondary School explains where the idea for the “living poem” came from: “For young people, this is a way to see what poetry can look like and how poetry can appear in such a public, urban space in a form completely different from that of a Polish language lesson”. The students and teachers wished the Poet a long life and inspiration to create wonderful works.

Did the Nobel Prize deserve Różewicz?

Although Tadeusz Różewicz's name has appeared for years on lists of nominees for the Nobel Prize for Literature, the poet has still not received the award. Among literary critics and historians alike, a discussion has therefore arisen: does the Nobel Prize deserve Różewicz? We are now putting this question to our readers, please send your answer and a short justification to the editorial team until the end of October. The most interesting responses will be entered into a prize draw to win autographed volumes by the would-be Nobel Prize winner.

Tadeusz Różewicz

*My best poem
has not yet been written*

*it sounds like a promise
and a threat to
Warsaw poets*

*but I can comfort them
that my worst poem
has not been written yet either*

*meanwhile I read
old newspapers
and I sit in the kitchen*

poet emiritus

Dialogue with Wrocław

Polski or Współczesny? Tadeusz Różewicz’s Wrocław theatres

A dispute has arisen in Wrocław: which theatre, Polski or Współczesny, deserves to be called Tadeusz Różewicz's favourite? It is known that plays by the author of *Kartoteka* have often been staged both at Wrocławski Teatr Współczesny and Teatr Polski. The venues outdo each other in Różewicz-related events: the first presented the play *Stara kobieta wysiaduje* back in 1969, followed by the Polish premiere of *Pułapka* directed by Kazimierz Braun in 1984. Braun is the author of nineteen stagings of Tadeusz Różewicz's plays, above all at Wrocławski Teatr Współczesny, of which he was director between 1975–1984. During his tenure as a director, starting with the opening of the first season of *Białe małżeństwo*, Różewicz became the theatre's most important dramatist. In 2011, on the occasion of the poet's 90th birthday, WTW organised the Różewicz rozrzucony Festival, during which performances based on Różewicz's dramas were staged, his works were read out publicly and debates devoted to his work were held. In 1992, on the Chamber Stage of Teatr Polski, the poet made his debut as a director. The result of ten open rehearsals with actors and audience was the play entitled *Kartoteka rozrzucona*, which Różewicz described not as staging of the original *Kartoteka*, but as its deconstruction. He enjoyed coming to rehearsals for his and other plays. When the flood of a century devastated Wrocław in 1997, Różewicz came to Teatr Polski to see the drying props and stroked the wet dogs from *Pułapka* and posed for a photo. In 2001, on the occasion of the poet's 80th birthday, Teatr Polski organised a week-long festival devoted to his work. Well, we still have to wait for this passionate dispute to be resolved.





Wrocław publishes Różewicz

Many publishers wondered how to get hold of Tadeusz Różewicz. After Ossolineum, the next Wrocław publishing house to publish Tadeusz Różewicz's books was Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, and later Biuro Literackie. During his cooperation with Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, which lasted several years, many volumes of the poet's works were published, including the twelve-volume *Utwory zebrane [Works collected]*. WD co-founder and editor, Jan Stolarczyk, recalls that the beginnings of this collaboration were not easy. The first telephone attempt to persuade Różewicz to publish with WD ended with the poet's refusal: "I don't need any new publishing house or promotion at my old age". Stolarczyk did not let it go: "I then wrote him a long letter, listing a whole list of proofreading and publishing errors in his previous books, which sometimes even changed the images in his poems. I sent it and... I got scared of what I had done", recalls the editor. The letter persuaded Różewicz, who called a few days later and said: "Well, OK then". The last publishing house was Biuro Literackie, headed by Artur Burszta, which published Różewicz starting from the volume *nauka chodzenia [learnig to walk]*, published in 2007.

A tourist in his own city

Do our readers still sometimes go sightseeing in the city they live in? Wrocław seemed never to bore its famous resident Tadeusz Różewicz, who, although he lived here for more than forty years, was often photographed in places typical of tourists who dropped in for a day or two. During these urban sessions the poet was often accompanied by photographer Adam Hawalej. In the photographs, Różewicz poses against the background of the Town Hall, at Bonhoeffer's monument, with a white tiger in the Wrocław zoo, in the botanical garden, at the Wrocław airport, on the balcony of Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie publishing house with Paris-like

panorama in the background, in Jatki at the monument "In Honour of Slaughtered Animals" on all fours with a goat, and also during a walk around Ostrów Tumski. These places were often reflected in his work. Różewicz wrote about the monument to Pope John XXIII in Ostrów Tumski in his poem *Jest taki pomnik*: "dream vision God faith / in Wrocław there is / a stone monstrosity // but in my heart / you have / the most beautiful monument in the world".

In his poem *Gawęda o spóźnionej miłości [A Story about Late Love]*, the poet immortalised the zoo affected by the great flood: "through the streets of Wrocław / flowed rushing mountain / streams rivers torrents / [...] the Gucwińskis built an ark / for their animals / rescued elephants giraffes lions and butterflies".

You were more likely to meet him in a park than in a pub – Tadeusz Różewicz's Wrocław paths

Was Wrocław unfriendly to Tadeusz Różewicz? The housing troubles of one of the city's most famous residents could testify to this. The poet moved to the capital of Lower Silesia in the late 1960s, and although it was his last city, he was reluctant to participate in the local literary life. The poet's first Wrocław address – a ground-floor apartment in Gliniana Street – was also tiring: "children were looking through my window, even coming in". Just like in the drama *Kartoteka*, where the street and random people pass through the protagonist's room. Różewicz complained in a letter to Helmut Kajzar: "around the corner of the house (10 m away) they have started building a skyscraper... so again the drills, the hammers... the clanking of the trams and the screaming of the children in the doctor's surgery behind the wall seem like music to me – when that drilling started yesterday (through the cotton wool in my ears) to penetrate my brain".

Różewicz also wrote about the nuisance of living in a block of flats in his poem *Decybele*: "by the window on the beater / little girls in blue / and red panties / spinning around / shrieking".

After seven years in the "horrible flat" in Gliniana Stree, the Różewicz family moved to a much quieter area in the Borek district. The tenement house in Januszowicka Street is located in the vicinity of South Park. However, due to the neighbours' endless renovations, the apartment in Januszowicka Street was also not a haven of peace and quiet, nor did it accommodate the poet's huge archive. It was not until 2003 that Różewicz, as an Honorary Citizen of the City, received from the authorities a pre-war house in Promień Street. Here, at last, he breathed a sigh of relief – the renovated villa provided much more space, and the garden and the nearby Szczytnicki Park offered peace and respite... Although perhaps not entirely, because even here Różewicz complained about neighbours peeping in on him.

Poet seeks peace

Although Tadeusz Różewicz was a resident of Wrocław for over forty years, he found the city very tiring due to its vastness and noise. In search of his longed-for silence, he would go to creative work studios or visit Wrocław parks and gardens. He could often be found in the botanical garden, where he liked to stop by the statue of Linnaeus, and in the zoo, where he welcomed the beginning of each season. After moving to Januszowicka Street, the poet's favourite place for morning walks became the nearby South Park. It was there that he would meet with Professor Janusz Degler, with whom he had long conversations about Witkacy. Degler recalls: "I listened with bated breath to his stories from his partisan days, as well as insightful, irony-lined comments on what was happening around him". The poet refers to South Park, among others, in a poem written in 1982: "I wanted to describe / the fall of leaves / in South Park // five white swans / standing on the misty glass surface / of the water". From these walks, the poet would bring back various treasures, such as pinecones, later artistically processed in the studio of graphic artist Eugeniusz Get Stankiewicz. Różewicz had many artistic projects in common with the Stankiewicz brothers, and the poet was also a frequent guest at Domek Miedziorytnika (Engraver's House), Get's studio, located in the Jaś tenement house on the Wrocław Market Square. Get recalled that one day the poet brought a plastic bag containing a small plastic frog bought for one złoty and eighty grosz in the botanical garden in Wrocław. It inspired them to fund the "Frog Statue" in South Park. It was to be a frog lying on its back in 1:1 scale. After moving to Biskupin, the poet's closest place for walks became Szczytnicki Park. Różewicz was often photographed in the garden of the house by Janusz Stankiewicz, Get's brother.

Poet in the bins

A few days ago, passers-by in Januszowicka Street in Wrocław were surprised by an unusual sight. An elderly man walked between the bins, rearranging some things and throwing away others, which in itself is nothing special, but the attention of observers was drawn to the fact that the whole situation was being photographed in detail by another man. Our journalistic investigation has revealed that the whole incident was a happening, and that the elderly gentleman turned out to be the eminent Wrocław poet Tadeusz Różewicz, while the photographer was Adam Hawalej. Różewicz used to call himself the "bard of rubbish bins" and from the very beginning of his work he tried to direct his poetry towards life, towards the "rubbish bins" of reality, because, as he wrote in one of his poems: "The poet of rubbish bins is closer to the truth / than the poet of clouds / rubbish bins are full

of life / and surprises". Hawalej told us about the circumstances of this unusual photo shoot: "He called me and just said: "Come over and bring the camera". When I entered his apartment in Januszowicka Street, he was just getting dressed. He had two different shoes, with his trouser leg tucked into one. He buttoned his coat askew, slipped two different gloves on his hands – a leather one and a knitted one. I realised it was a kind of theatre. He picked up waste containers and a paper bag with the State Publishing Institute print. He went between the bins, dumped the contents of the containers, pulled something out. I photographed him, we didn't speak to each other. Then he sat down on a bench and we started laughing about it". The editorial team has not been able to establish whether the Poet segregates waste. Readers interested in exploring the rubbish bin motif in Tadeusz Różewicz's work are encouraged to read not only his poems, but also the drama *Stara kobieta wysiaduje*.

Secret Super-Editor – Tadeusz Różewicz and “Odra”

Is Tadeusz Różewicz a secret agent? How did the famous author of *Niepokój* come to Wrocław anyway? And finally: how is it all connected? Tadeusz Różewicz moved to Wrocław thanks to, among others, the persuasions of Zbigniew Kubikowski, who was the Editor-in-Chief of the "Odra" monthly. Soon TR became a regular contributor to "Odra" and his columns were published as the series called *Margines, ale... [Margin, but...]* and *Kartki wydarte z dziennika [Pages Torn Out from a Diary]*. Current Editor-in-Chief of the monthly, Mieczysław Orski, recalls: "Many of his most important poems and short dramas were first published in for the first time in 'Odra'. He suggested topics, authors, but he never wanted to be part of the editorial team". Różewicz stood up for the monthly with the city authorities when the magazine was threatened with liquidation. A special issue of "Odra" was released at the time, in which "Secret Super-Editor" was added under Różewicz's name. That is the secret.



Dialogue with pop culture

“A project without rhymes doesn’t sit right” – how to rap Tadeusz Różewicz

Our editorial team has just received the latest CD with Tadeusz Różewicz's works – *Różewicz – Interpretacje [Różewicz – Interpretations]*. This is not a debut of the Wrocław poet, who has already recorded numerous recitations of his own poems. This time, however, the author blazes completely new trails – he boldly reaches for raw, ambient and hip-hop arrangements. He draws on the talents of leading Polish rappers: Sokół (TPWC/ZIP Skład) and Hades (HiFi Banda), who were musically supported by the producer duo, Sampler Orchestra. The choice of texts harmonises perfectly with the music layer: heavy, overwhelming sounds intensify the dark and slightly introvert message of Różewicz's poems. The album also includes songs that touch on autothematic issues of literary creativity characteristic of hip-hop culture – i.e. on writing poems and song lyrics – such as *Nie śmiem [I Wouldn't Dare]* and *Pisałem [I Wrote]*. What stands out in the album is the excellent and very poignant arrangement of the song *Powrót [Return]*, with a phrase repeated several times by the vocalists at the end, which speaks of man's aggression towards others. This makes the poem even more painful and dramatic.



The Return

*Suddenly the window will open
and mother will call
it's time to come in*

*the wall will part
I will enter heaven in muddy shoes*

*I will come to the table
and answer questions rudely*

*I am all right leave me
alone. Head in hand I
sit and sit. How can I tell them
about that long
and tangled way.*

*Here in heaven mothers
knit green scarves*

flies buzz

*father dozes by the stove
after six days' labour.*

*No – surely I can't tell them
that men are at each
other's throats.*

[*The Return*, translated by Adam Czerniawski]

We do not know what the author of the poem would have thought of this modification. However, he himself constantly reworked his own works, often went to rehearsals of his own plays and changed their texts. He also used to say that when he listened to his poems read by others, he got the urge to improve them – in this case, the vocalists did it for Różewicz.

Listeners' responses to the latest album *Różewicz – Interpretacje* are extreme. From admiration from the fans of the Wrocław poet, the disturbing content of his work and the heavy, dark sound, to extreme criticism aimed at the lack of rhymes or “weird lyrics”. The significance of this musical venture is therefore twofold. On the one hand, it shows how the vocalists, for the purposes of melodeclamation, faced the challenge of making their own versification (and interpretation) of Różewicz's poetry, different from that used by the author in the original texts. On the other hand, the album reveals how conservative contemporary hip-hop culture can be towards poetic text. Commentators on Hades and Sokół's project complained that “a project without rhymes doesn't sit right”. It turns out that Różewicz not only changed poetry, but also contributed to a considerable ferment in the music community.

Interestingly, Tadeusz Różewicz did not pay much attention to the sound layer in his plays. He thought mainly in visual images, space, text and words. “I am very much connected with painting, with music not so much”, he recalled. The stage directions for his dramas, featuring little guidance for sound directors and composers, can be a testimony to this. Nonetheless, the poet has a new hip-hop album, inspiring and revealing of his past literary work, which is hard to pass by indifferently.

The *Różewicz – Interpretacje* album can be bought in good music shops and book-shops, including the Pan Tadeusz Museum.

Tadeusz Różewicz vs. mass culture

We present a subjective selection of quotations from Tadeusz Różewicz's works, in which he refers to the contemporary world: the media, mass culture, pop culture. The poet's words are not affirmative. At the same time, they prove that the aforementioned phenomena were an object of fascination for him, not of simple rejection and condemnation. The works raise more questions than they answer. We do not know whether in a post-modern world, which has experienced war and sweeping change, a culture other than popular, or in the extreme, mass culture, is possible. For Różewicz, the symbol of culture in general becomes the rubbish bin, the dump. The poet tries to rescue from it the words wiped of their meanings, used by: history, politics, newspapers, television. To save singularity. Of man.

The new man

*The new man
that's him there
yes it's that
sewage pipe
which lets through
everything*

[*The new man*, translated by Adam Czerniawski]

Shallowly quicker

*I feel desire
he said
unfortunately he has no soul
the soul has gone
burst out laughing
the young waitress
her shape was such
one could soulless
with her create
a new man*

*honest her arse
is more finely moulded
than
the dome of that famous
cathedral – he thought –
a splendid vessel
temporarily closed*

*the souls must have been snatched up
by previous generations
and now one has to live
as best one can
shallowly
quicker*

[*Shallowly quicker*, translated by Adam Czerniawski]

For some time now

*dead poets
pass away faster
living ones
are throwing up
hastily
new books
as if they wanted the paper to fill
a hole*

Falling

*mumodern man
falls in every direction
simultaneously
downwards upwards sideways*

[*Falling*, translated by Marcha Brochwicz]

Newspapers like drugs – confessions of an addict

Nobody is perfect and free from addictions. This is proven by Tadeusz Różewicz, who is addicted to... reading newspapers. The poet confesses: “I flip through posters, newspapers on newsstands, bookshop displays; I read in my room, on a trip, on a walk, at lunch, breakfast, dinner. I read before falling asleep and when I wake up. For me, a newsagent is something like a butcher's shop for a dog. Just as many publications there are, there are as many types of meat and sausages. I take pleasure in inhaling the smell of fresh sheets of newspaper. I am potentially ready to buy up all the newspapers and publications, only considerations of my family and living arrangements dissuade me from doing so. However, volumes



of weekly and monthly magazines are gathered in cupboards and by the walls like geological layers". Różewicz's passion causes him many difficulties: "My room is a repository of old paper. I am probably an 'addict'. Without a morning portion of two or three newspapers, I feel unwell; I fidget and spin around restlessly, I search for something, I even feel hungry and anxious... Only after I've swallowed my portion of printed paper with the latest news (it's alright if it's out-of-date news; I've often read newspapers from the past year and I didn't even notice the difference), so only after I've swallowed a huge pill of newsprint do I get down, calmed down, to 'creative' work".

You have to admit that, ultimately, addiction to the press is better than to other, much more dangerous stimulants, such as cigarettes or alcohol, from which Tadeusz Różewicz is free.

“Instead of thinking about the salvation of my soul I read newspapers”

The beginning of a new year is good for making big resolutions, making plans, wanting to change (usually for the better). At the end of the previous year, we are usually disappointed that, once again, nothing has changed and all intentions have simply surpassed us. However, let us not be too hard on ourselves, unrealised plans are the everyday reality of many famous people, and poet Tadeusz Różewicz also experiences similar disappointments, as we read in his poem *Od jutra się zmienię* [*Tomorrow I Will Change*]:

*instead of reading the Ghost King
I watched Dynasty*

*instead of thinking about the salvation of my soul
I read newspapers
it seems to me
that I will not change
until I die*

*because it's already the first days
of the summer of 1993
and I... (that's a secret of mine)*

And by the way – let's also not feel bad that we do not write poems about such disappointments, let's leave that to poets.



Pan Tadeusz Różewicz

permanent exhibition
opened on October 9, 2021



Pan Tadeusz Museum
Ossoliński National Institute
Under the Golden Sun tenement house
Rynek 6, 50–106 Wrocław

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Janusz Stankiewicz: pages 10, 17
Jerzy Olek: page 18
Sokół, Hades, Sampler Orchestra, Różewicz – *Interpretacje*, Prosto production 2015: pages 23
Ossoliński National Institute: page 9
List of sources:
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