

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Two New Works from the Contemporary Writers of Poland Series

reviewed by Mary E. Lanham

FLYING BETWEEN WORDS – CONTEMPORARY WRITERS OF POLAND
 Edited by Danuta Blaszak and Anna Maria Mickiewicz
Dreamlee Little City, 2015, 109 pgs.

Poetry, memoirs, and short stories fill this aviation-themed collection in the Contemporary Writers of Poland series. The series is comprised of several other titles including *The Other Side of the Screen, Legendary and On Life's Path*.

Flying Between Words pays tribute to the 100-year history Poland has with the world of aviation. The compilation examines the strong relationship the country has with this industry as well as the more dramatic and sometimes tragic events in its past. The book contains works by many writers such as Ewa Zelenay, and John Z. Guzowski. Ewa Zelenay, a poet, journalist, writer, and the head board member of the Polish Union of Literature at the time of the book's publication, worked as a flight attendant for several years. Her contribution to



the anthology is reflective of her experiences in the airline industry. A few of her poems that are included are "Ascension," "before departure," and "halfway to the stars." John Z. Guzowski has been writing and releasing his books for the past 40 years. Some of his titles include *Lightning and Ashes, Echoes of Tattered Tongues: Memory Unfolded, and True Confessions – 1965 to Now*. These take the form of poem memoirs in which Guzowski not only reflects on his own past, but his family's as well. Guzowski's parents were slave laborers in a Nazi work camp and Guzowski himself was born in a refugee camp in Germany shortly after the end of World War II. Afterwards, he and his family emigrated to the States as displaced persons and eventually ended up living in Chicago. He recently won the 2019 Skalny Civic Achievement Award from the Polish-American Historical Association.

Credit must be given to the authors and editors of *Flying Between Words* for creating an enthralling text with the somewhat esoteric theme of aviation. Each voice contributes something unique to the song: from the history of aviation, to the melody of a former LOT flight attendant, and the thunder of a plane crash. And with conductor's batons in hand, Blaszak and Mickiewicz, bring it all to-

gether beautifully. It is a truly fine collection that even the worst acrophobic could enjoy.

IN HONOUR OF THE ARTIST
 Edited by Anna Maria Mickiewicz
Dreamlee Little City, 2018, 148 pgs.

Continuing in the same Contemporary Writers of Poland series is *In Honor of the Artist*. As the title implies, the anthology of poems, essays, and prose works pays tribute to artists who have gone before. Much of the works are dedicated to writers and poets such as Milosz, Rosewicz, and Ginsberg. Though painters such as Dali, van Gogh, and Monet are also honored.

Polish, American, and British poets and essayists are included in this anthology. One poem, entitled, "Starry, Starry Night" by Moira Andrew and dedicated to van Gogh evokes the frantic energy and use of color in his paintings. A small excerpt is below:

"You know that painting you did, / the one with black cypress trees / corkscrewed against a night sky? / Not that they were black to you, / of course, nor was the vio-

lent sky. / Black, you said, is a mixture / of blue and violet, yellow and / green. How right you were."

When creatives pay homage to the creative, two outcomes are possible, those honoring their predecessors try to capture the greats' tone and voice — often failing in their masquerade of their heroes. Or they find inspiration in the pens and paintbrushes of the masters, and using their own voices and talents create new art that stands on its own, with a nod to the original creators. Thankfully, *In Honor of the Artist* is the latter of these two options. The authors add to the body of the diasporic literature by taking Polish thoughts, dreams, and ideas, and recontextualizing them to the English tongue. This Polish undertone is ever-present, even when the inspiring artist is not of Slavic origin. The historical and personal stories in this text have a subtle, creative flair, that allows you to taste the nightclub, smell San Francisco, and hear behind the walls of the Communist Bloc.

In Honor of the Artist has a morsel for every one of your Polish tastes, historical, literary, poetic, and reflective. It is a small text, but a contemplative read and worthy of the clicks necessary to acquire it.

BOOK REVIEW

Two Villages and a Forest of Polish Heroes

reviewed by Mark Dillon

WAR AND RESISTANCE IN THE WILDERNESS
 by Donna B. Galwell
Blendon Woods Press 2019, 213 pgs.

The villages of Niwiska and Blizna lie a dozen or so kilometers east of Kolbuszowa in the Carpathian foothills. Niwiska is the larger of the two, with some 1,500 residents today compared to 250 or so for Blizna. From this area comes a new novel that captures a unique global aspect of the Polish experience of Nazi terror during World War II, and the consequences of the Russian occupation that followed.

Polish-Swedish heritage author Donna B. Galwell's third book in two years focuses on her extended ancestral family and neighbors' survival in an area that, in the 16th century, was originally a holding of the noble Tarnowski and Jablonski families, and later sold to the Hupka family.

In mid-September 1939, as the

Battle of Modlin began near Warsaw, Niwiska manor owner Dr. Jan Ernest Hupka finds they world they know violently disrupted as a German tank column led by a strutting SS colonel confiscates his home, Galwell writes.

Nazi plans unfold to evacuate and destroy many of the neighboring farms and homes to make way for Camp Hiedelager, the largest SS training camp outside Germany, one that built the ranks of the 14th Waffen SS Galicia Division, a unit composed largely of Ukrainians.

Galwell uses the letters and papers of Niwiska residents, notably Anna and Stacia Grabiec, to recreate what happened between 1939 and 1945. It provides emotionally impactful context that:

- helps the reader's understanding the brutal environment of the period;
- illustrates how villagers were confronted daily with painful moral choices and;
- depicts how villagers' will to resist grew as the stakes grew ever

higher.

Niwiska's and Blizna's outsized roles in history are also told through the eyes of Home Army (AK) partisans such as Josef Bryk and Fr. Jan Kurek. One gets an inside look not only at villagers' role in witnessing great and deciding to resist in ways great and small, but also life and death in the Ravensbruck concentration camp for Stacia. In 1943-1944, villagers recovered parts and provided intelligence about some of the more than 100 V-2 rockets that were tested in and around the area — information that was vital to the Allied war effort.

War and Resistance builds on Galwell's first book, published in January 2017, *Travel to Your Roots*, an outgrowth of her genealogy travels to the Podkarpackie region of Poland. To her credit, she's combined both family stories with extensive research.

The result is a work that feels fully authentic, and provides valuable insight even if one's heritage is not Polish.

Polish Survivor Tale Now in Three Languages



Author Shawver with English, Polish, and Czech editions of *Henry*.

PHOENIX, Ariz. — The award-winning nonfiction biography *HENRY: A Polish Swimmer's True Story of Friendship from Auschwitz to America* is now available in three languages: English, Polish, and Czech.

This true story is both a witness to the Holocaust through Polish eyes and the story of how Henry Zguda, a Polish Catholic competitive swimmer, survives Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps by his wits, humor, luck, and friends. At times humorous, always gut-honest, this account fills a huge gap in historical accounts of Poles during World War II. Henry's story is backed by authentic documents and photos reprinted throughout the book, combined with meticulous research, that included a trip to Poland and Germany in 2013. Henry Zguda was from Kraków, Poland.

Katrina Shawver is an experienced writer, speaker, and long-time history geek. She wrote for the *Arizona Republic* for eleven years. In 2002, she met Henry Zguda and soon offered to write his incredible story. The Polish American Congress, Arizona division, awarded Shawver its 2018 Polish Heritage Award for "her contribution to the documentation of the suffering inflicted on Polish people during the Holocaust."

Shawver is a Road Scholar for

Arizona Humanities, the Arizona affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities for 2019-2021, and she served as Writer in Residence for the Glendale Public Library in Spring 2019.

Both the English and Polish editions can be ordered from any country worldwide via the online seller Book Depository at <https://www.bookdepository.com/>.

The Czech edition can be ordered from any Czech bookseller, under the author name of Katrina Shawverová.

The U.S. edition is available in hardcover, softcover, and eBook formats. It is available at most online booksellers, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and others.

Found in Translation Award Ceremony

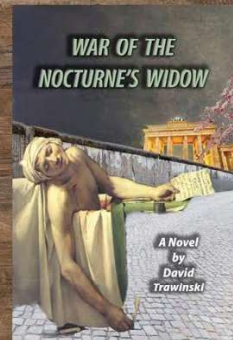
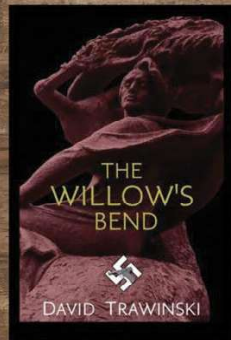
NEW YORK — In 2019, the Polish Book Institute, the Polish Cultural Institute New York, and the Polish Cultural Institute in London chose to recognize Madeline G. Levine for her translation of *Collected Stories* by Bruno Schulz, published by Northwestern University Press in 2018. The selection was the product of long deliberations. 2018 saw a range of masterful Polish works published in English and representing both the classical canon and vanguard of voices shaping Poland's literary landscape.

The translations eligible for this year's award were rendered by promising newcomers as well as experienced translators with already lauded careers. The jury chose to recognize Levine's translation for its fluency and fidelity to the rare and often elusive complexity of Schulz's prose.

An award ceremony, held Dec. 10, 2019 at the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York, was accompanied by a panel discussion on translation with laureate Madeline G. Levine and Mike Levine, former editor at Northwestern University Press, moderated by Eliza Rose, Laszlo Birinyi Sr., Fellow in Central European Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Chopin Trilogy by David Trawinski

Modern Day Mysteries based on Classic Polish History



Available on: DavidTrawinski.com

