

LISTY I LIŚCIE

Leaves and Letters

Poems in Polish and from Polish

by the students of

Oxford Spires Academy

Translated by

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From a Workshop by

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OXFORD
COMPARATIVE
CRITICISM &
TRANSLATION

creative
multilingualism

The Poetry Hub at Oxford Spire Academy are grateful for the support of Prismatic Translation, a strand within Creative Multilingualism, part of the AHRC's Open World Research Initiative programme.

The AHRC funding has supported and extended our work with individual bilingual students and has allowed us to print this pamphlet, one of a series by very gifted school students who have a second language at the root of their creativity.

Introduction

In April 2017, researchers from the AHRC's Creative Multilingualism research programme at the University of Oxford teamed up with the Poetry Hub at Oxford Spires Academy to run a Polish poetry workshop for bilingual students. Wioletta Greg, a Polish-born poet, now based in the UK, was invited to lead the workshop. What made the event even more special was that Wioletta Greg had been longlisted for the Man Booker International Prize just a few weeks before. The students enjoyed the creative exercises suggested by the poet, ranging from themed poetry-writing sessions to questions about the nature and role of poetry today. It was particularly intriguing to see how quickly the pupils became immersed in Polish as a literary language: once confronted with Polish poetry, they responded with Polish poems of their own, some of them unexpectedly mature and beautifully crafted. A couple of pupils even

combined Polish and English in their poems, which created a unique effect.

These poems are presented in this beautiful anthology. They show that that Polish can be a viable and valuable medium of creative expression, and not just a hidden, superfluous or even vaguely embarrassing language that's never spoken or heard in a classroom; they also show that mixing languages can help spark creativity. The Poetry Hub team are doing a great job of addressing the urgent and important issue of language development and national identity amongst these and other bilingual children. We hope that now that the students have been introduced to the artistic potential of their mother tongue, they will be able to embrace their bilingualism more consciously in the future.

Kasia Szymanska, Junior Research Fellow in Slavonic Languages

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Puzzle

Niektóre małe
Niektóre duże
Niektóre zielone
A niektóre żółte
Wszystkie jeden kawałek
puzzli na drzewie

Liście.

Puzzle

Some are small
Some are big
Some are green
And others are yellow
Each of them – a piece
of the puzzle on the tree

The leaves.

Binta Soumare (14)

My Past Life

I remember
The green grass
brushing against
my little toes.
The vast halls
of my mother's school
the deep flavour
of my enormous birthday cake
The fresh pears
which drop down
in summer
the times when
my granddad could walk –

Miron Bartowski

Brzoza

Brzoza jest biała jak śnieg,
Brzoza jest biała jak papier,
Którym notuję na.
Brzoza jest polska.

Birch

The birch is white like snow,
The birch is white like paper
On which I write:
The birch is Polish.

Jakub Orłowski (11)

I Come From

I come from my home in Poland,
from the smell of my favourite dog,
Saba.

I come from the smell of old buildings
hoping to be injected with nicotine
and youth.

I come from a forgotten time in my life
where my brother was nice,
my mum had red hair, and when Saba
was alive.

I live in a rainy place,
moving across the country
and being lost in the maze,
named England.

Patryk Tomczynski

Chmura,

Jedna duża chmura
Czasami jest,
A czasami nie
Chowa wszystko wewnątrz
Ale nie może tam zawsze zostać
Ona się chowa
Jak słońce wychodzi
I przychodzi inny dzień.

A Cloud,

One big cloud
Sometimes is there,
And sometimes is not
It hides everything inside
But it can't stay there forever
It hides
When the sun comes out
And another day begins.

Binta Soumare (14)

W niebie

W niebie gdzie jest Jozafat na planecie

Ja się pytam co tu robisz i

Czemu tutaj jesteś? On nie gada

Ja z powrotem do Anglii jadę!

In the Sky

In the sky where Josaphat lives on a planet

I ask what are you doing here and

Why are you here? He doesn't speak

And so I go back to England!

Wiktoria Siwinska (12)

April

The dark, grey sky is moving slowly
The colourful trees swishing side to
Side as the leaves fall down.

That's what you see when April arrives:
Flowers on the grass and mushrooms
On the roof. Colourful buildings and

Schools with busy students and teachers
looking outside the window to see
what the world is really like.

Wiktoria Siwinska (12)

Drzewa, drzewa

Wszędzie drzewa
sosny, brzozy i inne!
Od lat rosną (to zależy)
Są piękne i duże
Można na nich się wspinać i
też zbudować domek na drzewie
Ale przyjdzie zima liście opadną
Przyjdzie wiosna liście kwitną
Przyjdzie lato, drzewa się robią
Piękne.

Tosia Świerkot (12)

Trees, Trees

Everywhere trees

Pines, birches and other trees!

Growing for years (it depends)

They're beautiful and tall

You can climb them and

Also build a treehouse

But winter will come leaves will fall

Spring will come leaves will grow

Summer will come, trees become

Beautiful

Tosia Świerkot (12)

Ja chcę być ptakiem

Ja chcę być ptakiem:

Chcę zobaczyć cały świat,

Z góry.

Chcę zobaczyć świat inaczej

Jako ptak, który nie ma słowa,

Ale widzi, jak ludzie mówią.

I'd like to be a bird

I'd like to be a bird:

I'd like to see the whole world

From above.

I'd like to see the world afresh

As a bird who doesn't have a word,

But can see people speak.

Jan Jakub Borysiak (12)

Błada ściana

Kobieta patrzyła w bladą ścianę.

Nic nie widać, ale ona widzi wszystko.

Ona widzi światło, którego nikt inny nie widzi,

Ona widzi nadzieję, w którą nikt inny nie wierzy.

Bo ona umie myśleć jak nikt inny nie umie.

Ona, ona widzi wszystko.

The Pale Wall

A woman looking at a pale wall.

You can't see anything, but she sees everything.

She sees light that nobody else can see,

She sees hope that nobody else believes in.

Because she can think like nobody else.

The woman, she sees everything.

Jan Jakub Borysiak (12)

Kobieta

Tańczysz w szafirze.

Ruszasz dłoń jakby nie było ciebie

Oglądasz wodę, błyszczy pod czerwieniem

Gonisz wodospad, jej ciemność bieli

Śpiewasz do muzyki,

Twoje dłonie to są róże, pod wiatrem

Muzyka to

Refleksja twojego tańca, błysku, róży, miłości

Patryk Tomczyński (15)

Woman

You dance in sapphire
Moving your hand as though you weren't there

You watch the water, it glitters red
You chase the waterfall, its white darkness

You sing along to the music
Your hands are roses, under the wind

Music is
A reflection of your dance, shine, rose and love

Patryk Tomczynski (15)

Torun

I come from Torun,
from the ancient landmarks,
the bakeries which release
their odours onto the streets.

I come from the damp rainy
days which flood England.
I come from a grandfather
who is not related yet I
call my own.

I come from the tunes
of an accordion all the way
from Poland. I come from
the meowing and moaning of my cats,
from the loving of my mum and dad.

I come from the car fumes
which corrupt your lungs.
I come from the vast blue sky
which eats your eyes as you stare at it.
I come from Poland.

Miron Bartowski

Mama

Mama – kobieta jakich wiele,
Lecz ta jedna, szczególna,
Jak zawsze, najlepsza, moja mama,
Mało jest takich na świecie,
Tyko jedna, i jedna na wiele.

Mum

Mum – one woman among many,
But she's a special one,
As always, the best of them, my mum,
There aren't many like her in the world,
Just the one, one among many.

Tomasz Zogota (16)

Duża brzoza

Brzoza duża liście ma,
Na tych liściach krople wody małe są
Dom wiewiórki małej.

The Tall Birch

The tall birch has got leaves
There are small drops of water on those leaves
The house of a little squirrel.

Adam Hryceniak (13)

Grandmother

When I burst open a plump plum
covered with chocolate
the sweet mix of juice and rich cocoa reminds me
of zesty lemons, the juice flying everywhere
on the old table,
in the old house,
in the wooden village

Or the plumph when I close
a leather-bound book
reminds me
of her loving hands,
frail hands,
but always there,
always warm.

Or when I wrap up first
in a fluffy winter coat
I'm drifting down the river,
gently,
passing tiny daisies –

And the soft hands are sweet
And the heavy dust
When I turn the page
Means the world,
And the daisies
Have warm hearts.

Jan Jakub Borysiak (12)

Flower

A beautiful and tempting flower,
But don't get too close to her,
She will use her thorns,
She will use them to stab you in the heart,
And her stem will wrap around you,
Choking you, piercing your skin,
All this for her beauty.

Aleksandra Szurek (15)

Lusterko...

lusterko, małe, okrągłe,
srebrne i białe
odbija świat z każdej strony.
lusterko, małe, okrągłe.

A Little Mirror...

A mirror, little, and round,

Silver and white

Reflects the world from all sides.

A mirror, little, and round.

Julia Drapala (12)

Wiewiórka

Ja bym chciała być wiewiórką

Skakać po drzewach

Patrzeć na widoki

i też się chować

Zobaczyć świat powoli

Jeść szyszki i inne rzeczy

Ale denerwujące to jest, że

ludzie by mnie gonili, krzyczeli

Squirrel

I'd like to be a squirrel

I'd like to jump up a tree

Look at the views

And also hide

See the world slowly

Eat cones and other things

But it would be annoying that

People would chase me and shout

Tosia Świerkot (12)

Planeta Ziemia

Mieszkamy na planecie.

Jest 4 razy mniejsza.

Tutaj czasem ciepło.

A czasem mamy zimno.

Planet Earth

We live on a planet.

It's four times as small.

Sometimes it's warm here.

And sometimes it's cold.

Adam Hryceniak (13)

Ponglish

Rowerem przechodzę obok **people**,

On a bike, I go past ludzi

Presyzion **is not my greatest** cechą

Precision nie jest moją **strength**

A man listening to muzyka

Wyskoczył pan słuchający **music**

jumped out of nowhere

I screamed, 'Look out!' I went **past** jego

Krzyknąłem: 'uważaj', przeszedłem

obok **him**

He grabbed me and looked round. **Romeo,**

Złapał mnie i się obejrzał. 'Romio

You saved mnie.'

Ocaliła me.'

Ponglish

On a bike, I go past people,

Precision is not my greatest strength

A man listening to music jumped out of nowhere

I screamed, 'look out', I went past him,

he grabbed me and looked round. Romeo,

you saved me.

Patryk Tomczynski (15)

Days

Days grow longer like the summer;
The oak bursts out of the
ground like a vein,
its patterned branches reaching
For the sky, layers of leaves
like clothes.

With the last seconds of
my breath I will
be thankful for the swift
wind wrapping around me,
For the trees reaching high
Which will be
left as ash.

Miron Bartkowski (15)

Ulica Sosnowa

Jak widzę, że wujek trzyma Zuzę blisko
Siebie, to myślę jaka mała jest.

Patrzę na grzyby w ogródku i myślę, że
One też mają życie, też mają dziecko, też
Mają uczucia

I potem patrzę na wielką sosnę, jak one patrzą
Na nasze dzieci, patrzyły na nas jak byliśmy mali,
I one wiedzą, jak żyjemy, jak myślimy, jak
Czujemy.

Jan Jakub Borysiak (12)

Pinetree Street

When I see my uncle holding Zuza tight
I think about how little she is.

I look at the mushrooms in the garden
and think that
They also have a life, a child, and
feelings just the same.

And then I look at the tall pine trees,
how they look
At our children, as they used to look
at us when we were little,
And they know how we live, think, and
How we feel.

Jan Jakub Borysiak (12)