

NEW

New Books from Poland

BOOKS

2026

Introduction

As I was reading the books we're presenting in this year's catalogue of New Books from Poland, it occurred to me that their authors are all describing unusual experiences that are typical of people living in a specific time and place, but they've done it so masterfully that their personal perspectives have taken on a universal dimension. Their readers don't have to live anywhere near Poland to identify with the central figures in these stories. Audiences from a wide variety of cultures will easily relate to the novels, short story collections, essays, biographies and works of reportage that our experts have chosen for your consideration.

There are plenty of reasons why they're worth your attention, but perhaps the three most obvious ones are these: (1) they're all superbly written; (2) they give us a better understanding of the past as well as the modern world (and not just Poland); and (3) they give us insight into human lives that are complicated by history and by the present day, as the protagonists try to cope with new social challenges, redefine their identity, seek their place within a community or outside it, delineate boundaries both within and around themselves, and define new directions for cultural development.

For example, our list includes an account of the lives of medieval women from various social strata, their struggles with the patriarchy of the time, and their strategies and tactics for resistance and survival – an everyday reality that's completely different from our own in certain respects, but that also has some features with modern-day equivalents familiar to us. Here, too, we have the record of a sudden illness that struck down the author out of the blue, forcing him to change his lifestyle and to reassess his priorities, but that also equipped him with new potential for perception and understanding. In the form of both novels and documentary non-fiction we have stories from particular regions of Poland: Silesia, Greater Poland (the central-western area, centred on Poznań) and the Świetokrzyski region (the south-central area, centred on Kielce). A tram linking several Silesian cities turns out to be a vehicle for history, identity, longing and pain. The trials and tribulations of a pair of central characters illustrate the changes that occurred in the first three decades of the 20th century, influencing the shape of the north-western part of today's Poland. Elsewhere you'll find the story of a family feud strikingly similar to Shakespeare's tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, in this case set not among the aristocracy but the peasantry.

How do you live in a world buffeted by catastrophes? Why do the people of different nations so easily descend into conflict? What is the purpose of travel in a world dominated by new technology? Can you belong to several cultures while spending your entire life in a single place? To what extent do the major conflicts of today's world come to light in the experience of motherhood? How should we treat the creative work of writers who stir controversy? What social changes do we most need to prepare a better future for succeeding generations?

These are just a few of the many questions that the authors presented within our catalogue endeavour to answer in highly intriguing and inspiring ways.

Grzegorz Jankowicz

Director of the Book Institute

Translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones

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LEARN MORE

Headless

Who really took the 22 photographs at the heart of this novel?

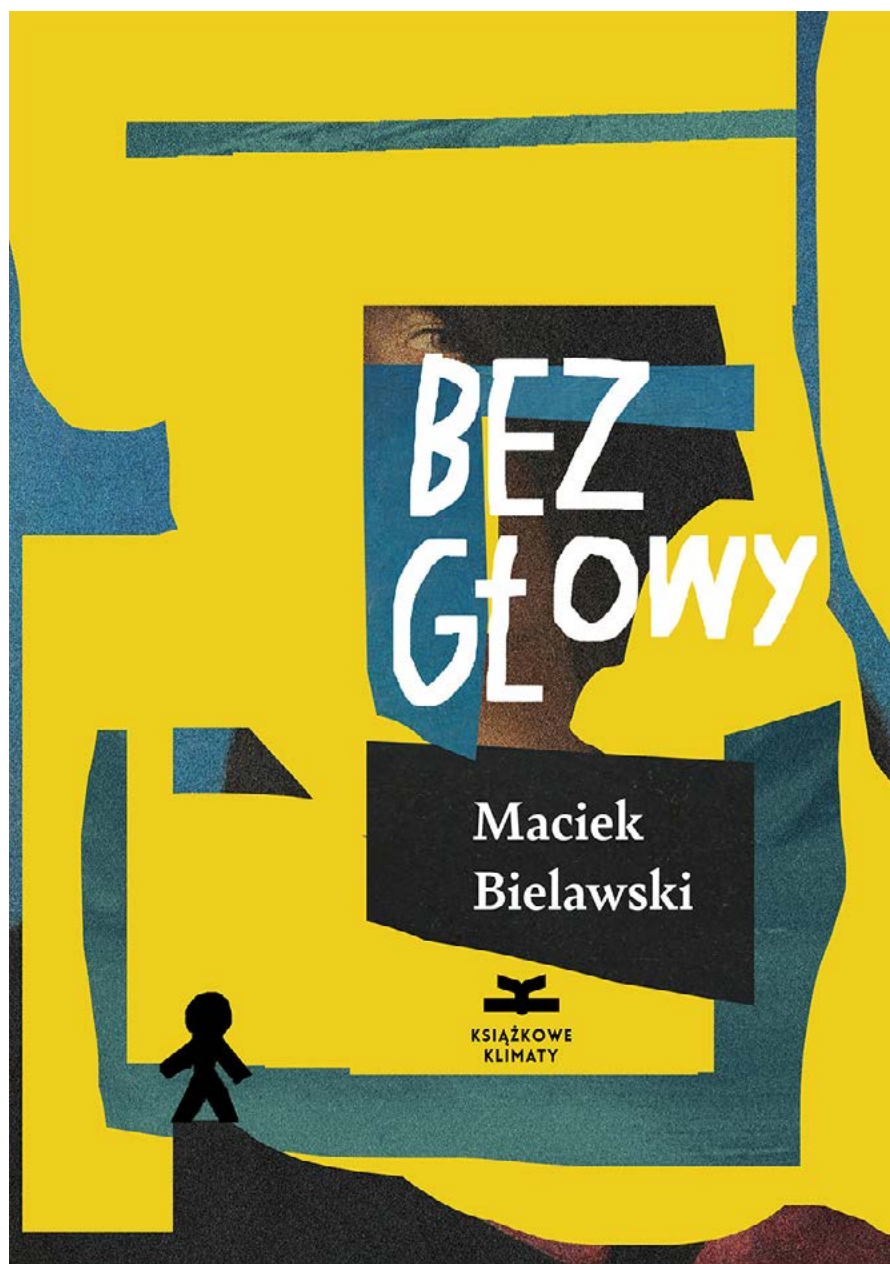
At a photography exhibition in Wrocław, an art critic unveils the discovery of a lifetime: the lost work of Artur Stadnicki, a visionary photographer murdered along with his family in 1998, in a crime that was never solved. Stadnicki's legacy is a series of portraits of anonymous people standing in front of the city's cathedral, each framed from the shoulders down. *Headless*. The art world swoons, prices climb – and someone breaks into the curator's flat.

But the photographs have another story behind them. *Headless* is told in five stylistically distinct chapters – a parody of an exhibition catalogue essay; the polyphonic babble of the crowd attending the vernissage; the biography of Marek, the bitter curator; the story of Alicja, who places a newspaper advert seeking 'people dissatisfied with a photograph taken at Ostrów Tumski'; the confession of a lonely student whose petty act of revenge becomes, without his knowledge, a masterpiece. Each chapter challenges the one before it, unravelling the lofty art-world myth surrounding the photographs to reveal the truth behind them.

Headless is the latest book by Maciek Bielawski, whose short story collection was short-listed for the EBRD Prize in English translation. The novel is about photography, fabrication, and the hunger for recognition. It poses the question of who ultimately gains the privilege of being called an artist, and how significance is imposed where none existed. Virtuoso in its shifts of register, it is a dark rumination on the art world for fans of W. G. Sebald and Thomas Bernhard.

Text by Scotia Gilroy

Maciek Bielawski (b. 1975) is a writer and photographer. Both his prose and photographs are characterised by careful observation and a keen eye for the details of everyday life. In his latest novel, *Headless*, perception merges with hallucination, and the act of composing a frame becomes not only a visual but also a literary tool. This is Bielawski's third novel, preceded by *Twarde parapety* (Hard Windowsills) (2016) and *Ostatni* (The Last Ones) (2024). His story 'Koziołek' ('Little Goat') won First Prize in the 14th International Short Story Festival in Wrocław (2017). His short story collection *Doktor Bianco i inne opowiadania* (2019) has been translated into English. The translation by Scotia Gilroy, *Doctor Bianco and Other Stories*, was published in the UK and shortlisted for the EBRD Literature Prize in 2022.



Maciek Bielawski
Bez głowy
(Headless)

Publisher: Książkowe Klimaty, 2026
 ISBN: 978-83-68640-05-2
 Number of pages: 136
 Rights: Tomasz Zaród,
rights@ksiazkoweklimaty.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Jaffa Raft

A boy grows up in communist Warsaw knowing he is Jewish, but not what that means

Jaffa Raft is an autobiographical coming-of-age novel about growing up in communist Poland in the 1960s and the protagonist's discovery of his Jewish background. The wooden raft which he builds out of a Jaffa orange crate sent by his aunt from Israel acts as a symbolic link with this heritage.

Through family history and personal anecdotes, the narrative provides insights into secular Jewish life, the lingering impacts of the Second World War and continuing antisemitism, which becomes especially virulent during and after the Six-Day War of June 1967 (Gomułka's 'fifth-column' speech), when the protagonist is 12 years old, culminating in the antisemitic campaign of March 1968; although not forced to leave Poland, the impact on his family is severe and includes his own experience of physical violence. The atmosphere starts gently but grows increasingly threatening.

Communist Poland and specifically 1960s Warsaw are portrayed more generally through the experiences of an observant child with a lively sense of the absurd. Direct references to the Party are rare, but socialist reality is convincingly conveyed by descriptions of communist-era buildings, apartments, stores and cooperatives, transport, and other aspects of daily and school life.

Memorable teachers and peers, favourite books, the first tentative sexual encounters, are elements to which readers anywhere can relate. Love of popular music is not limited to the Polish scene; a surprising number of contemporary Western bands are heard on official radio programmes. Even more universal is the framework of secure family life which provides a defence network against the hostile political environment.

Text by Ursula Phillips

Maciej Hen (b. 1955) is a writer, translator, journalist, filmmaker and photographer. He graduated from the Cinematography Department of the Łódź Film School. His books often combine elements of autobiography, non-fiction and social reflection through themes connected with identity and formative generational experience. He has published four novels: *Według niej* (*According to Her*) (2004), *Solfatara* (2015), *Deutsch dla średnio zaawansowanych* (*German for Intermediates*) (2019) and *Segretario* (2023); and a work of reportage: *Beatles w Polsce* (*The Beatles in Poland*) (2021). *Solfatara* received the Witold Gombrowicz Literary Prize in 2016 as well as many other nominations. The British edition of *According to Her*, translated by Anna Blasiak, was shortlisted for the EBRD Literature Prize. Hen's autobiographical novel *Jaffa Raft* won the Władysław Reymont Literary Award and has been nominated for the Nike Literary Award 2026.

maciej hen tratwa z pomarańczami



filtry

Maciej Hen
Tratwa
z pomarańczami
(Jaffa Raft)

Publisher: Filtry, 2025
ISBN: 978-83-68180-61-9
Number of pages: 312
Rights: Ewa Wieleżyńska,
ewa.wielezynska@wydawnictwofiltry.pl

**Winner of the Władysław Reymont
Literary Award (2026)**
Nominated for the Nike Literary Award (2026)

BOOK EXCERPT

Mishope

A tender but unnerving debut about girlhood, violence and the things we can't yet name

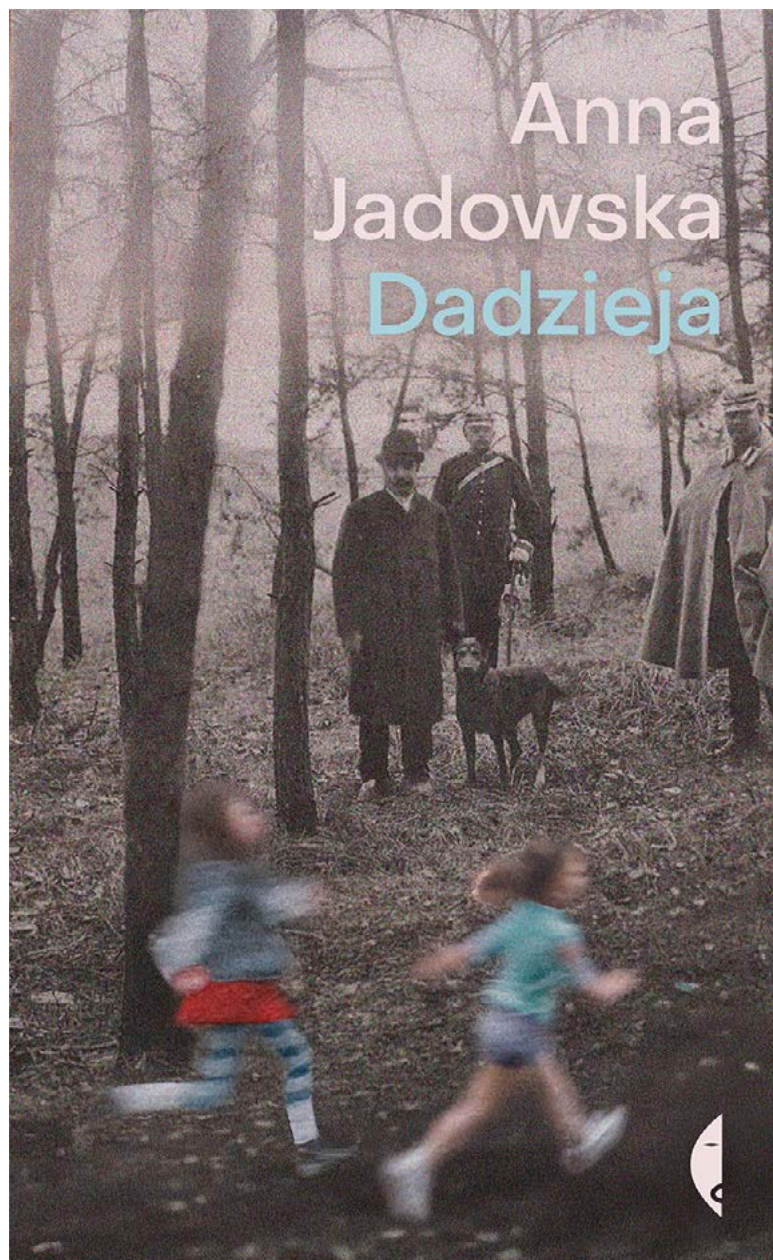
When her classmate is found dead in the forest, the young narrator feels the push and pull between the familiar and the encroaching unknown. She and her sister are curious not only about the identity of the murderer and the details of the crime, but also their absent fathers, boys and the way they (mis)treat girls, and a pornographic magazine that might belong to their mother – a likeable but mysterious figure.

Mishope – a neologism coined by the author's son and used by the narrator's sister – depicts childhood in all its magic, murk and morbid curiosity. At the novel's heart is the emotional world particular to pre-teen girlhood; the indistinguishability of dread and thrill and the way both arrive before we have words for them. Several flash-forwards into adult life tell readers something the girls don't know – they *will* survive, grow up and leave the village. Yet the high drama of the children's inner world is so potent that another tragedy seems to lie in constant wait.

While the book is filled with delightful details of life in rural communist Poland, the girls' concerns are universal. Their dawning awareness of violence against women emerges alongside their budding sexuality. Anna Jadowska's debut novel will appeal to fans of Anna Burns's *Milkman* or Fernanda Melchor's *Hurricane Season*, though it is more spacious, openly tender and welcoming to its readers, with its shorter, often dreamlike scenes and the less troubled voice that drives it.

Text by Nasim Łuczaj

Anna Jadowska (b. 1973) is a screenwriter and film director. She is a graduate of Polish studies at the University of Wrocław and of the National Film School in Łódź, where she currently lectures. Jadowska made her literary debut in 1996 in *bruLion*, and her work has also been published by *Rita Baum* magazine. Although *Mishope* is her first book, she has previously explored the subject of relationships between women through another medium: film. Since 2004, she has won numerous film awards, including a Golden Lion at the Polish Film Festival's Independent Cinema Competition for *Touch Me* (2003); a Magic Hour Award at Planete+ Doc Film Festival for *Three Women* (2013); and an Impact Award Stockholm IFF and four prizes at FilmFestival Cottbus for *Wild Roses* (2017). *Mishope* shares her films' vision of a splintered world that can only be understood through its fragments.



Anna Jadowska
Dadzieja
(Mishope)

Publisher: Czarne, 2026
 ISBN: 978-83-83962-65-8
 Number of pages: 264
 Rights: Zofia Dimitrijević,
 zofia.dimitrijevic@czarne.com.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

The Midwives: Regina

A sweeping saga centring the lives and work of midwives in wartime Poland and the decades after

The seminal stories of mid-century Poland often find their protagonists among soldiers and liberators, victims and survivors grappling with the realities of war, trauma, death, enduring oppression. In *The Midwives: Regina*, these horrors intersect with this simple fact: women give birth even in extraordinary times. The experience is universal yet singular, and here, the figure commonly relegated to performing her essential service in the background is given a rare opportunity to share her story, and those of the women she helps.

Grounded in research based heavily on first-hand accounts, the novel – a sequel to *The Midwives* (2022), due to be published in English translation by Restless Books in 2027 – continues the story of Regina Zdzieńska, a third-generation midwife raised by village midwives and now practising in Kraków. As the city plunges into war, Regina's work calls her to assist women giving birth in sterile clinics, coal cellars and brothels alike. Over the decades, we glimpse days of Regina's life – sometimes only one, sometimes a couple dozen – as the world around her changes. The occupation forces her family into hiding, their reunion leaving them grappling with unfamiliar dynamics. Medical science advances in efficiency at the cost of empathy and community. SS officers and sly monks complicate her understanding of morality while her tender care for desperate women deepens it.

Throughout, Regina's north star remains her unshakeable and steadfast advocacy for the dignity of women. What results is a powerful affirmation of sisterhood, solidarity and resilience in the face of all that works to erode it – then, and still now.

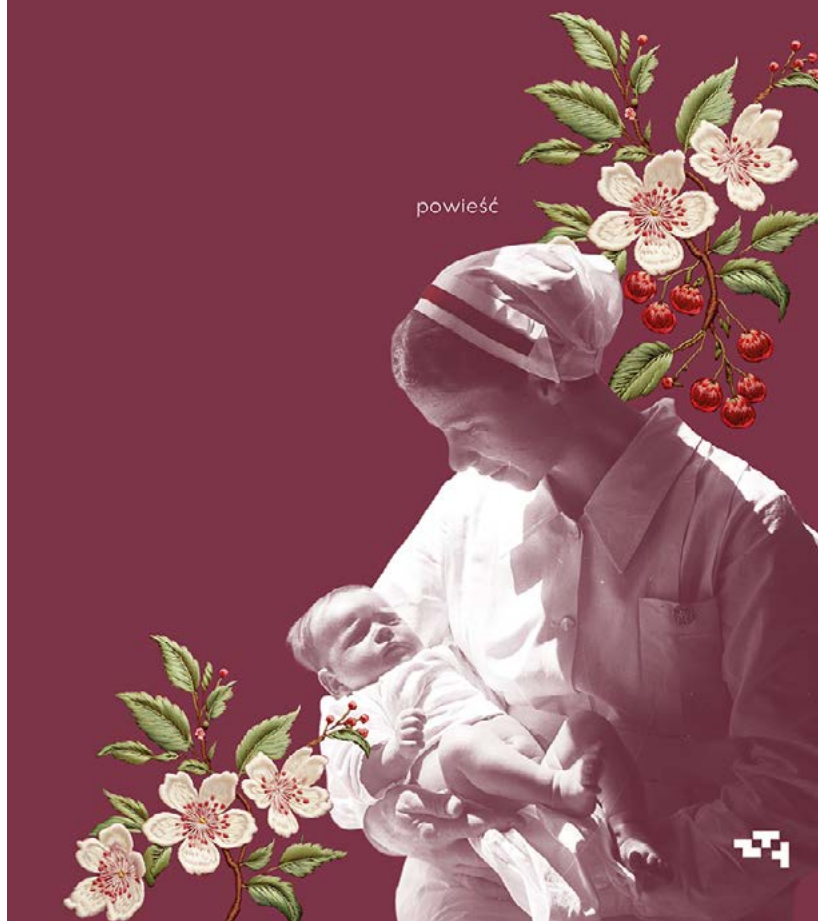
Text by Maggie Zebracka

Sabina Jakubowska (b. 1974) is a writer, an archaeologist by training, and a history teacher. A certified doula, she collaborates with the Childbirth with Dignity foundation. She holds a PhD in the humanities from the Faculty of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University; her academic work focuses on local culture, which she also incorporates into her novels. Jakubowska made her debut in 2015 with the novel *Dom na Wschodniej* (The House on Wschodnia Street), which won the Grand Prize in a national grant scheme supporting publishers of first books. She is the author of the acclaimed novel *Akuszerki* (*The Midwives*) (2022), which was nominated for the European Union Prize for Literature, the Witold Gombrowicz Literary Award and the Nike Literary Award, as well as the Kraków Book of the Month Award; film rights to the book were acquired by Agnieszka Holland. It will be published in German translation in 2026 and English translation in 2027. Translations into Italian and Macedonian are being prepared.

Sabina Jakubowska

Położne

powieść



Sabina Jakubowska
Położne
(The Midwives:
Regina)

Publisher: Relacja, 2026
 ISBN: 97-883-68228-75-5
 Number of pages: 656
 Rights: Anna Zdrojewska-Żywiecka,
 Tomasz Szwarz,
 a.zdrojewska-zywiecka@relacja.net
 t.szwarc@relacja.net

BOOK EXCERPT

Entrails

Multigenerational snapshots of one family's life, with food forming the connective tissue between the past and present

This short novel features one hundred scenes from the narrator's life. Her own memories entwine with those of her parents and grandparents as the past and present bleed into each other. Meanwhile, the visceral descriptions of food are a trail the reader can follow to navigate the love and loss that drip off the pages.

Scenes in hospital rooms are followed by descriptions of tables that bow under the weight of dishes – roasted meat and cutlets, potatoes and salads full of mayonnaise. Slices of bread thickly covered in butter; borscht and herring; the first experience of eating pizza. Cheese balls that leave traces of powder on your fingers; recollections of reading magazines and cutting out mentions of the Spice Girls.

Aleksandra Paduch's debut novel is a nostalgic and evocative collection of memories which are inescapably tied to bodies and physical sensations. Full of fears and desires and unspoken gut feelings, the chapters emphasise the ephemeral nature of family relationships and life itself. The succinct narrative style, composed of short, self-contained scenes, makes for a book that can be read in one sitting or regularly returned to. *Entrails* will appeal to readers of fragmentary autofiction and family memoir. Although the story is grounded in 1990s Poland, the emotions it elicits resonate across geographical and generational boundaries.

Text by Maya Zakrzewska-Pim

Aleksandra Paduch (b. 1985) is a writer and photographer. She completed a degree in art history at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and she also studied photography and editing. Her photographs have been exhibited at the Kraków Photo Fringe and included in the magazine *Autoportret*. She is a member of Fotoświaty, a community-driven archiving and photography project based in Nowa Huta, Kraków. Her first publications included a poem published in the literary magazine *Magazyn Materiałów Literackich Cegła*, and a piece of prose that appeared in the literary journal *Tlen Literacki*. *Entrails* is her debut novel, for which Paduch received the Kraków UNESCO City of Literature Prize and was nominated for the Gdynia Literary Prize. The book was also shortlisted for the Witold Gombrowicz Literary Award.



TRZEWIA

Aleksandra
Paduch

Aleksandra Paduch
Trzewia
(Entrails)

Publisher: Czarne, 2025
ISBN: 97-883-83961-44-6
Number of pages: 112
Rights: Zofia Dimitrijević,
zofia.dimitrijevic@czarne.com.pl

Nominated for the Gdynia Literary Prize (2026)

BOOK EXCERPT

Kasperl and Margit

An actress and a street musician cross paths in Weimar Berlin amid turbulent change on the continent

Maciej Płaza's latest novel is set in the years 1903–1934: in Poznań under Prussian rule, Berlin in the Weimar years, and then pre-war Austria. The first-person narrative alternates between Margit, whose impoverished aristocrat father awakens her passion for the theatre, and Kasper, abandoned at 10 by his prostitute mother.

As the protégé of a master thief, and also an accordion-player, resourceful Kasper learns both crafts. At 17, Margit marries a doctor and builds a successful stage career in Berlin. But her husband, emotionally crippled by the First World War, leaves her; when both her parents die, she sinks into drug addiction and pornographic performances. Meanwhile, Kasper survives the fight for Polish independence in Poznań and moves to Berlin, where he performs his songs and also works as a gigolo. One night Margit is attacked on stage and badly disfigured – Kasper happens to be there and saves her life, but she refuses to see him. She runs away to a new life with a travelling puppet show, until Kasper finds her and they continue their adventures together. But the shadow of Hitler is spreading across Germany with consequences for the couple...

Kasperl and Margit has echoes of Daniel Kehlmann's *Tyll* and *The Director*. Margit's narrative is standard literary Polish, while Kasper's is coloured by regional dialect and comical neologisms, based on combining words: drugs are *meadicaments*, and a brave person is *homeroic*. Don't be daunted by the length of the novel – Płaza skilfully carries readers through three decades of Central European history, making for a gripping and unforgettable read.

Text by Antonia Lloyd-Jones

Maciej Płaza (b. 1976) is a novelist, translator, scholar of literature. For his first published work of fiction, the short story collection *Skoruń* (Scallywag) (2015), he won the Gdynia Literary Award (2016) and the Kościelski Foundation Prize (2016). It was also shortlisted for the Nike Literary Award and the Witold Gombrowicz Literary Award. His next book, the novel *Robinson w Bolechowie* (Robinson in Bolechów) (2017), won the Angelus Central European Literature Award (2018), while *Golem* (2021) was nominated for the Capital City of Warsaw Literary Award and the Nike Literary Award (2022). The English translation of *Golem* will be published by Pushkin Press in November 2026.



Maciej Płaza
Kasperl i Margit
(*Kasperl and Margit*)

Publisher: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2026
 ISBN: 97-883-08088-84-5
 Number of pages: 656
 Rights: Wydawnictwo Literackie,
j.dabrowska@wydawnictwoliterackie.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Monolock

An idiosyncratic eulogy and a paeon to the oral tradition, centred around a barbershop

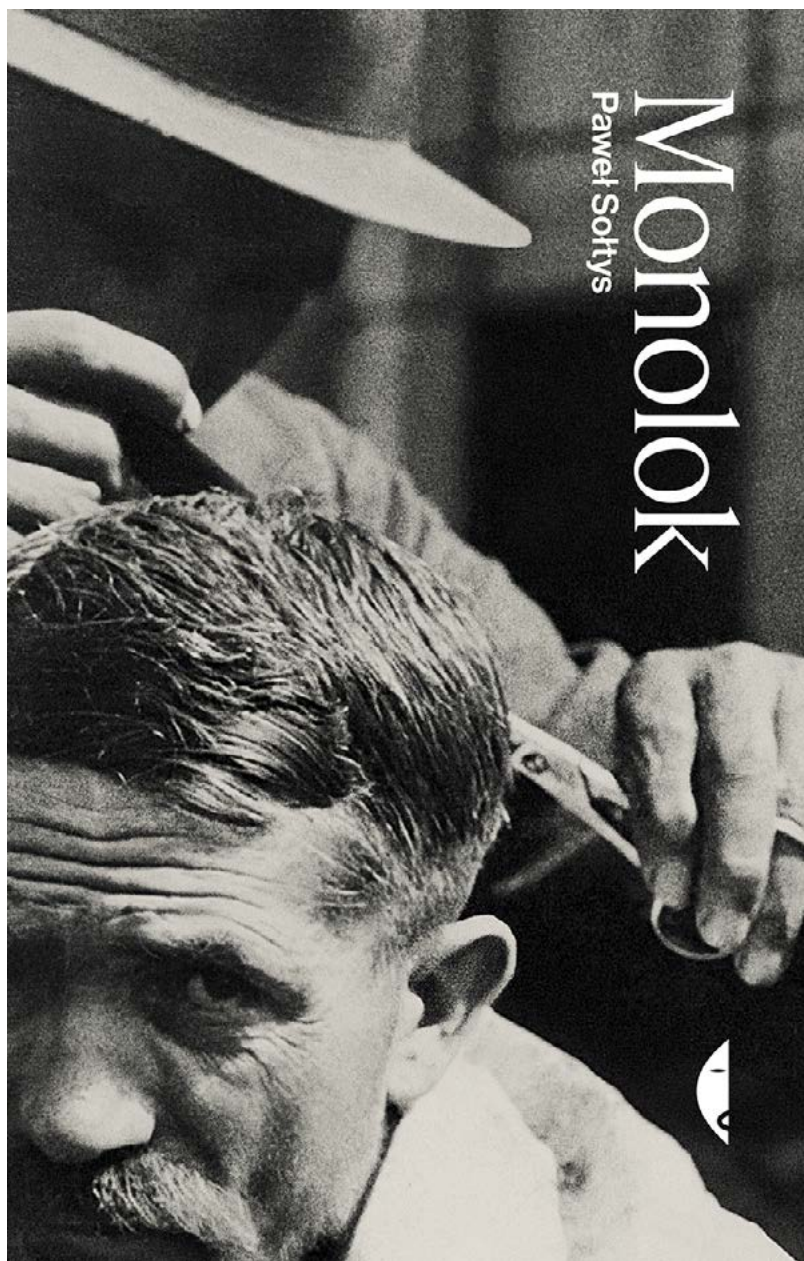
In Paweł Sołtys's fourth book, a hairdresser from Warsaw's Grochów district looks back on his life and recounts stories he has heard over the course of his career. Yet *Monolock* is anything but monovocal: as one tale flows into the next, the reader is pulled into a world of seemingly ordinary people, of men and women scarred by poverty and war, of crooks, drunks and petty (and not so petty) criminals, of barmen, fortune-tellers, old ladies and orphans.

A man builds a model of Warsaw's Palace of Culture out of matches, a group of seamstresses take revenge on a factory manager for peeping at them through a hole in the wall hidden behind a portrait of Lenin, a postman who suffers from night blindness asks neighbourhood kids to guide him, and Robert Kennedy's tie gets stolen and changes hands several times, only to end up in a puddle of blood. These punchy, often sad and very moving tales of love and death, compassion and revenge, coincidence and fate are told in poetic, colourful language that is both rooted in the local vernacular and entirely original.

In *Monolock*, the author skilfully creates an oral history and a rich mythology of an urban neighbourhood. The book will appeal to readers of literary fiction who enjoy precise, intense storytelling and narratives with a strong sense of place. Like a series of vodka shots that reveal the cruelty and beauty of life, the book confirms Sołtys as an inimitable bard and an empathetic chronicler of an era that is quickly fading from collective memory.

Text by Eliza Marciniak

Paweł Sołtys (b. 1978) is a musician, songwriter and prose writer. Under his stage name, Pablopavo, he has recorded more than a dozen albums and played over a thousand concerts. His short stories have been published in *Lampa*, *Rita Baum*, *Studium* and *Pismo*. His prose debut, *Mikrotyki* (2017), was awarded the Marek Nowakowski Literary Award, the Gdynia Literary Prize and the Witold Gombrowicz Literary Award, and was nominated for the Nike Literary Award, the Polityka Passport Award, the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Award and the Conrad Award. He is also the author of *Nieradość* (Nonjoy) (2019), which was nominated for the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Award, and *Sierpień* (August) (2024), which was a finalist for the Nike Literary Award. *Mikrotyki* is currently being translated into English and will be published by And Other Stories.



Paweł Sołtys
Monolok
(Monolock)

Publisher: Czarne, 2026
ISBN: 9788383962399
Number of pages: 120
Rights: Zofia Dimitrijević,
zofia.dimitrijevic@czarne.com.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

The Sentence

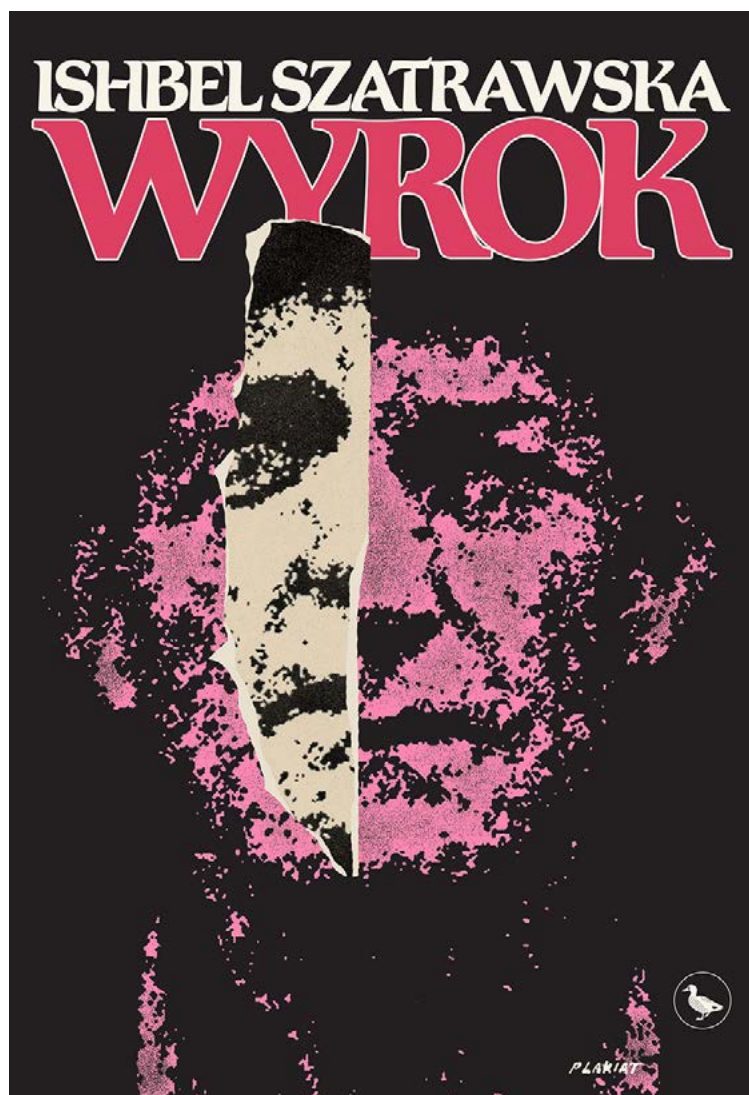
Two mistrustful crooks trudge through occupied Poland on the hunt for a collaborator

This is a short psychological thriller set during the German occupation of Poland in the Second World War. But the conflict here is not between Poles and Germans; the story centres on Strzelecki and Majda, a pair of petty crooks, long-term partners in crime. At the start of the book a powerful local gangster, involved with the partisans, orders them to carry out the assassination of Pierończyk, another criminal, who has been collaborating with the Nazi occupiers. The unscrupulous couple set out to hunt their victim, spreading a lie that they have money to return to him. They blunder across open countryside and through villages, inflicting cruelty on weaker types who might have information, but also becoming increasingly encumbered by their own fear and a growing mutual mistrust. Eventually we start to doubt who exactly is under sentence...

The writing is extremely powerful, as the men become more desperate and the atmosphere increasingly disturbing. It has the same stifling intensity as Serhij Zhadan's novel *The Orphanage*, or Geoffrey Household's *Rogue Male*. Although the story is realistic and engaging, in a recognisable, vivid setting, it is the psychological effect that rivets and terrifies the reader. Ishbel Szatrawska's playwriting talents are apparent – written in a colloquial tone, *The Sentence* would make an excellent movie and will appeal to a wide readership for its superb literary quality as well as its thrilling narrative. An experienced translator will be needed to do justice to this precisely crafted prose.

Text by Antonia Lloyd-Jones

Ishbel Szatrawska (b. 1981) is a dramatist and novelist who also teaches creative writing. In 2021, she won a playwriting competition organised by the Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute. Her first book-length publication, the play *Żywot i śmierć pana Hersha Libkina z Sacramento w stanie Kalifornia* (The Life and Death of Mr Hersh Libkin from Sacramento CA) (2022), was nominated for the Polityka Passport Award and won the Wawrzyn Warmia and Masuria Literary Prize. In 2023, she won the same prize for her debut novel *Toń* (The Depths), which was also nominated for the Nike Literary Award and the Conrad Award. *The Sentence* (2025) was chosen as Book of the Year by *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s literary supplement, and won her new nominations for the Polityka Passport Award, the Wawrzyn and the Witold Gombrowicz Literary Prize. Critics have praised Szatrawska's ability to move freely between different narratives and linguistic registers. Her plays have been translated into German, English, Ukrainian and Danish; *Toń* has been translated into German.



Ishbel Szatrawska
Wyrok
(The Sentence)

Publisher: Cyranka, 2025
 ISBN: 97-883-67121-68-2
 Number of pages: 168
 Rights: Konrad Nowacki,
 konrad@wydawnictwocyranka.pl

**Nominated for the Polityka Passport
 Award (2025)**

**Nominated for the Wawrzyn Warmia
 and Masuria Literary Prize (2025)**

**Longlisted for the Witold Gombrowicz
 Literary Prize (2026)**

BOOK EXCERPT

Dry Streams

A winding Faulknerian tale about a self constructed and deconstructed through words

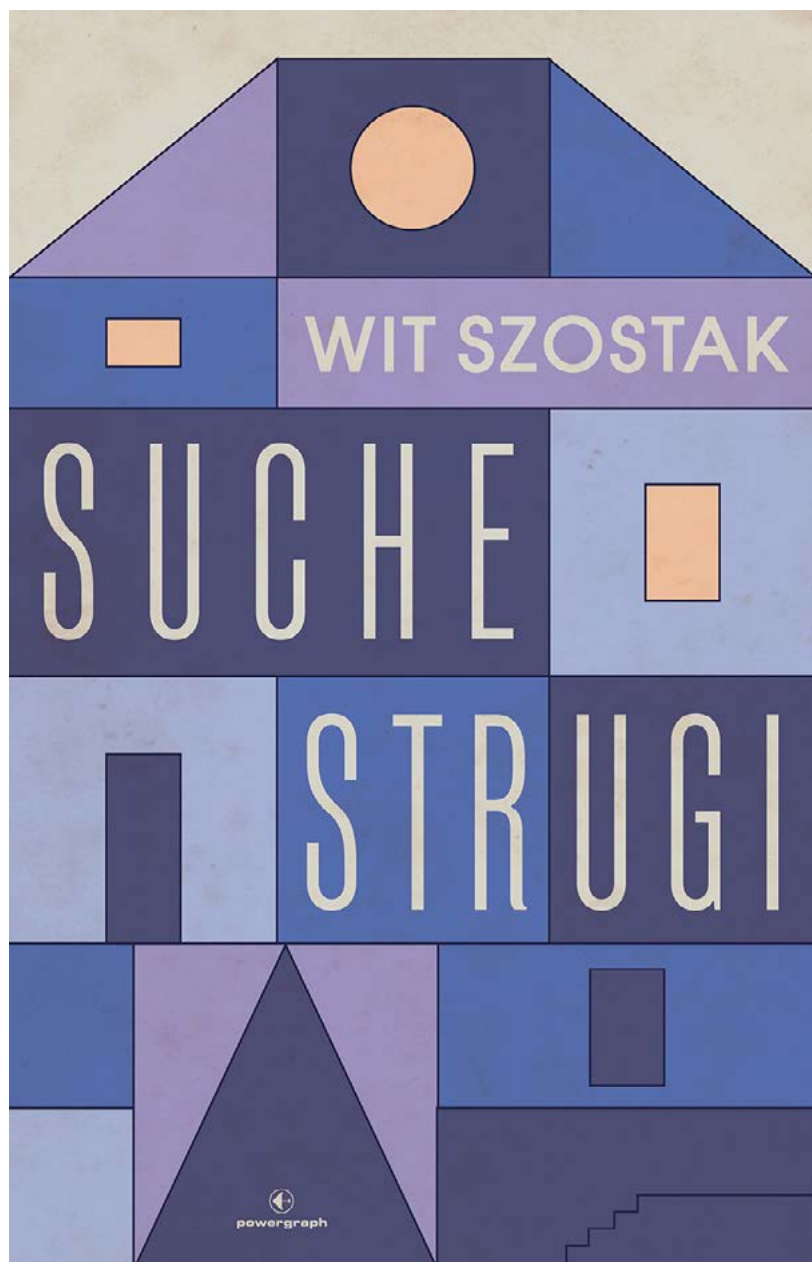
At the beginning of this complex, multilayered novel about identity, memory, storytelling and the moral choices that define a life, a woman gets off a tram to look at the one remaining wall of a building she had lived in for many years. As she tries to make sense of the exposed internal surface, with its rectangles of different paint and wallpaper, she embarks on a narrative that will build and demolish everything we know about her and her neighbours.

The narrator of the first section, Helena, is a housewife in Podgórze, across the Vistula River from central Kraków. But Helena is also the name of her unconventional, socially suspect upstairs neighbour, an editor whose real life lies beyond the river. Another neighbour, also named Helena, has been hollowed out by an unspecified horrific experience during the war and can never bring herself to cross the Vistula; she merely stares at the other bank, dissolving cubes of dry bread in her mouth. But are they really three different women, and is everything they tell us true?

Rooted in wartime trauma and spanning much of the 20th century, *Dry Streams* explores how people invent and reinvent themselves in order to survive after they have had terrible things done to them – and after they have done terrible things. Meticulously constructed and written in a mesmeric, riverine style, with repetitions that gain new meanings at every turn, the novel will fascinate and delight readers of ambitious literary fiction who enjoy cerebral, emotionally charged books.

Text by Eliza Marciniak

Wit Szostak (b. 1976) is a multifaceted, award-winning author of novels, fantasy short stories and plays. His works *Fuga* (Fugue) (2012) and *Szczelinami* (Through the Cracks) (2023) were nominated for the Nike Literary Award; *Sto dni bez słońca* (One Hundred Years without Sun) (2014) was nominated for the Polityka Passport Award. His children's book *Wylinka* (Moulting) (2025) received the Book of the Year award from the Polish Section of IBBY. His novel *Dumanowski* (2011) was adapted into a play, and in 2019 Szostak won a drama-writing competition for his first text for the theatre, *Pogłosy* (Echoes). Parallel to his writing career, he is a philosophy professor and researcher working under his real name, Dobrosław Kot. In the novel *Dry Streams*, Szostak offers a literary exploration of some of the themes he has addressed in his recent book-length philosophical essay on the meaning of rivers.



Wit Szostak
Suche strugi
(Dry Streams)

Publisher: Powergraph, 2026
 ISBN: 97-883-68599-16-9
 Number of pages: 336
 Rights: Katarzyna Sienkiewicz-Kosik,
kasia.sienkiewicz-kosik@powergraph.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Starkstones

A gripping tale of revenge that spans generations in a tight-knit community in the Polish mountains

Starkstones is a stone run, an area of naked frost-shattered rock, in Poland's Holy Cross Mountains. According to folk belief, it is a place of pure evil. The nearby village of Grabin is home to two feuding families: the Kończaks and the Cebzynyas. Family allegiances trump all other values and the honourable way to settle issues is a one-on-one knife fight in public. Only one man can survive. The rest of the village watches and then maintains a stony silence that no outsider can crack.

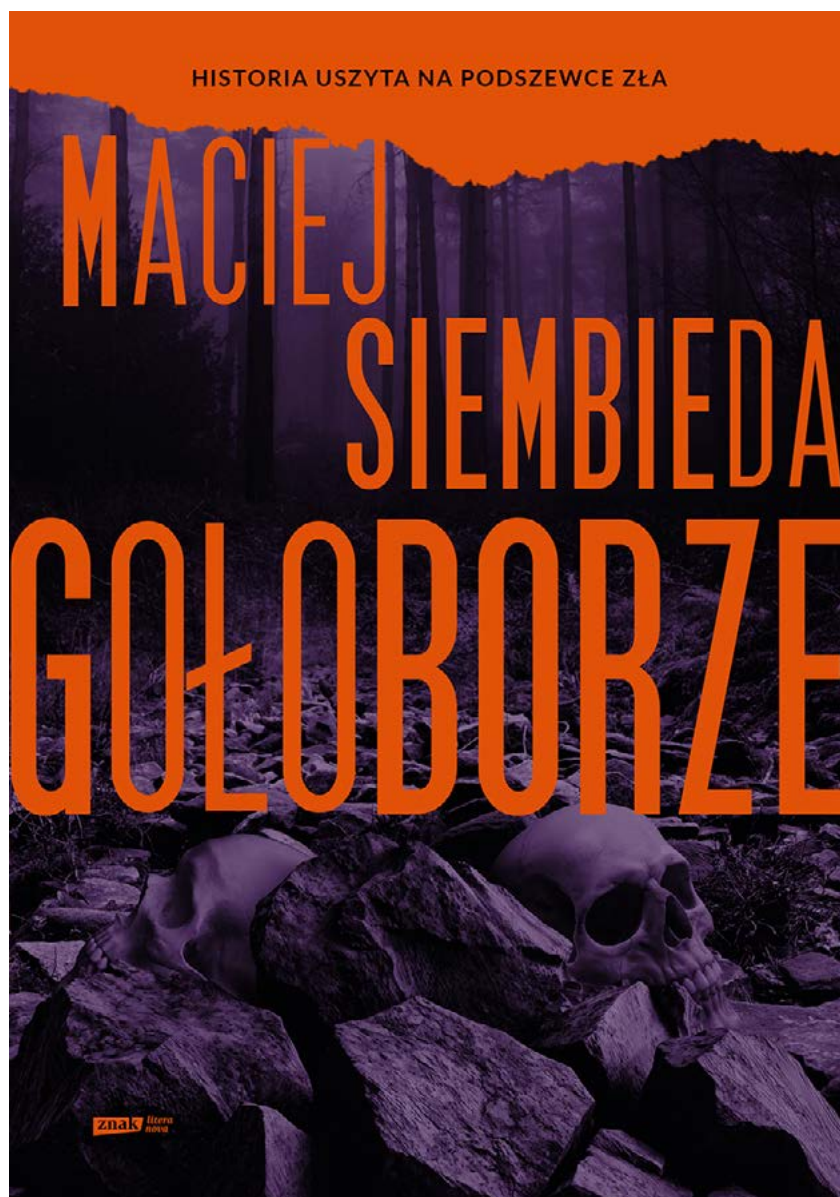
This family saga and historical thriller spans generations, depicting key periods in Polish history from the aftermath of the 1863 uprising against the Russians to the partially democratic elections in 1989. Historical events are skilfully woven into the fabric of the story by showing their impact on the villagers' lives.

Maciej Siembieda comes from the Holy Cross Mountain region and knows it intimately. One of the shocks of the novel is the author's afterword, which reveals quite how much of this fictionalised saga, including some macabre details, is drawn from fact.

Starkstones, with its gripping story and vivid setting, has become a domestic bestseller and been longlisted for this year's Nike Literary Award. It will also appeal to international readers, given Siembieda's talent as a master storyteller who lucidly yet unobtrusively leads his readers through unfolding events, allowing them to immerse themselves in the drama.

Text by Kasia Beresford

Maciej Siembieda (b. 1961) is a writer, journalist, investigative reporter and a novelist who writes fiction, based on true facts, about mysteries from the past. He has won the Polish Journalists Association Prize, known as 'the Polish Pulitzer', on three occasions for his achievements in reportage. For over 30 years, he worked as an investigative journalist and editor-in-chief for regional dailies in Poland. His work has also been published in the magazine *Polityka* and in the Parisian journal *Kultura*. His first novel, *444*, was published in 2017. In 2023, his novel *Katharsis* won the High Calibre Award Readers' Choice (a prize for crime novels). A year later, his novel *Kairos* won Book of the Year in the historical novel category of the readers poll organised by the lubimyczytac.pl website. His 12th novel, *Starkstones*, has been longlisted for the 2026 Nike Literary Award.



Maciej Siembieda
Gołoborze
(Starkstones)

Publisher: Znak, 2025
 ISBN: 97-883-83677-88-0
 Number of pages: 528
 Rights: Ewa Bolińska-Gostkowska,
 bolinska@znak.com.pl

Winner of the High Calibre Award (2026)
Nominated for the Nike Literary Award (2026)
Nominated for multiple other literary awards

BOOK EXCERPT

Resurrection Plants

Surreal, meticulously observed tales of the unexpected set in a nameless urban environment not unlike our own

In an outstanding short-story debut, Dorota Grabek leads readers through a metropolitan universe inhabited by ordinary people leading extraordinary lives, many of whom have strange obsessions and rituals. The 10 stories are filled with alienation, eccentricity and absurdity, with protagonists returning for background roles throughout the collection.

At the edge of a rubbish dump, something falls from the sky; the one man who stays to look at it decides it might have feelings and takes it home. A hairdresser stuffs a pillow, cut by cut, with the hair of a client she is falling in love with. A taxi driver sets out to beat the record for the longest period a human being has endured without sleep. In the final story, a man wanders into a museum where the exhibits turn out to be the obsessions of those we have met earlier.

Grabek has a splendid eye for the details of mundane city life and a vivid imagination that takes readers to unexpected places, making the book a treat for fans of literary fiction with an uncanny streak, who are prepared to be thrown off-balance. *Resurrection Plants* will be a delightful challenge for translators, who will need to retain the author's delicate touch in her subtly crafted sentences.

Text by David French

Dorota Grabek (b. 1990) is a writer, teacher of Czech, and author of short stories and reportage. She is a graduate of Czech studies and cultural studies at the University of Warsaw. Her work has been published in the magazine *Więź*. In 2016, she worked as a volunteer in the West Bank, and since then has regularly travelled to the Middle East. Her bold debut, the short story collection *Resurrection Plants* (2025), earned her nominations for the Witold Gombrowicz Literary Prize and the Nike Literary Award. In her writing, she examines everyday life, human loneliness and the fault lines concealed beneath the surface of ordinary events. In a nameless and timeless metropolis, Grabek has created worlds ripe with subtle dislocation and understatement, in which the protagonists attempt to build relationships with the world and other people.



Dorota Grabek
Zmartwychwstanki
(Resurrection Plants)

Publisher: Czarne, 2025
ISBN: 978-83-8396-196-5
Number of pages: 168
Rights: Zofia Dimitrijević,
zofia.dimitrijevic@czarne.com.pl

**Nominated for the Witold Gombrowicz
Literary Prize (2026)**
Nominated for the Nike Literary Award (2026)

BOOK EXCERPT

Things You Do on Purpose

A collection of 39 (very!) short stories where intrusive thoughts and hyperfixations take centre stage

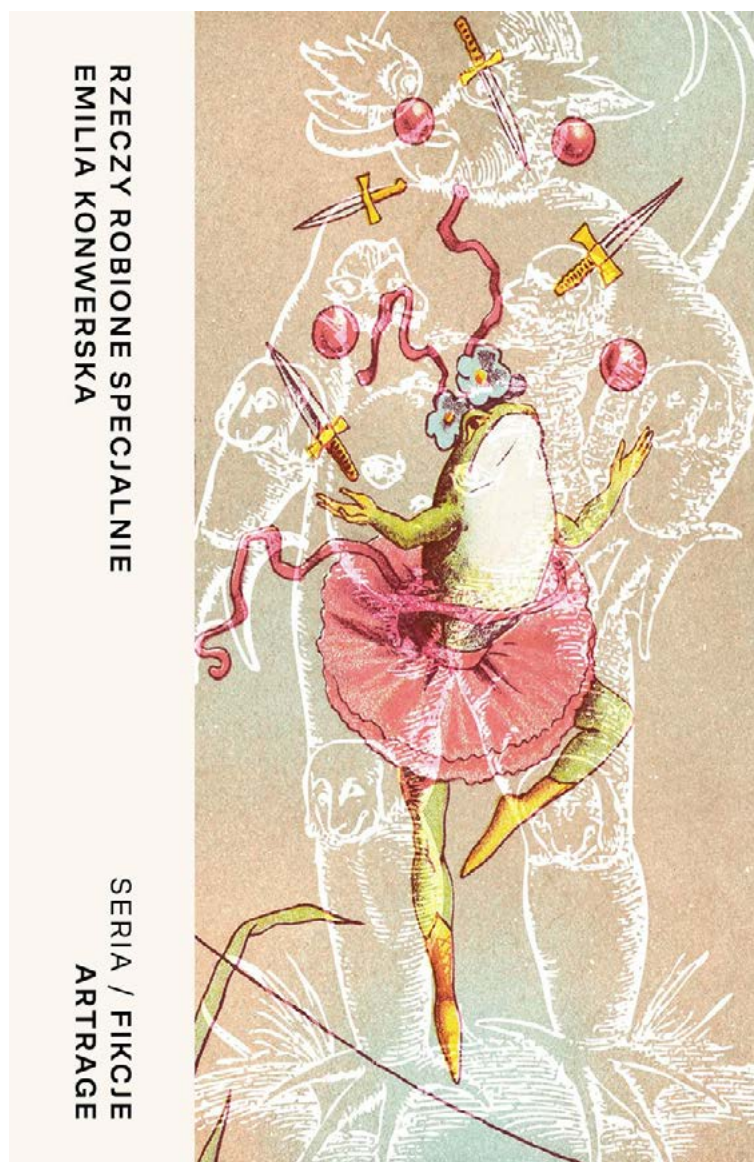
It's a sign of an expertly constructed narrative voice that even the most idiosyncratic and surreal situations read as entirely reasonable and relatable. What's it like to lead an imaginary romantic relationship with an unsuspecting coworker? What are the pleasures of eating in front of animals at the zoo? The dangers of shoulder-narrowing surgery? In *Things You Do on Purpose*, a recently divorced female narrator flexes her imagination in a series of thought experiments that boldly push the boundaries of non-conformity.

The literary critic Izabella Adamczewska-Baranowska described the collection as a 'neuro-queer manifesto'. Indeed, each brief vignette offers not only an unforgettable and often hilarious rabbit hole – as the narrator desperately tries to organise the chaos of a disassembled life – but an innovative exploration of intimacy, self-esteem, free will, social transgression and neurodiversity. Meanwhile, Emilia Konwerska's inimitable style – a blend of constrained form reminiscent of Lydia Davis and dream logic echoing Leonora Carrington – singles out the book as one of the most striking prose debuts in recent years in Poland.

Though full of specificity, both to the narrator and Poland, *Things You Do on Purpose* will speak to something all readers can recognise: the universal joy of hearing aloud what everyone else is thinking but is too afraid to say.

Text by Dawid Mobolaji

Emilia Konwerska (b. 1985) is a Polish poet, journalist and curator. She holds a PhD in literary studies, having written her dissertation on the (de)construction of corporality in the fiction of Michał Witkowski. She is the editor of the literary magazine *Notatnik Literacki* and the author of two poetry collections: *112* (2021) and *Ostatni i pierwszy kajman* (The Last and First Caiman) (2023), both of which were nominated for the Gdynia Literary Prize. Her poetry has been translated into Ukrainian and Serbian, while her prose has appeared in the influential periodicals *Krytyka Polityczna*, *Znak* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*, as well as *Vogue Poland*. Her prose debut – the short story collection *Things You Do on Purpose* – was nominated for the Empik Bestseller Award.



Emilia Konwerska
Rzeczy robione
specjalnie
(Things You Do on
Purpose)

Publisher: ArtRage, 2025
 ISBN: 97-883-68295-01-6
 Number of pages: 208
 Rights: Piotr Wawrzeńczyk Book / lab Literary
 Agency, piotr@literatura.com.pl

**Winner of the Deutsch-Polnisches
 Literaturstipendium JOSEPHA (2026)**
Nominated for the Gdynia Literary Prize (2026)
Nominated for multiple other literary awards

BOOK EXCERPT

While Sewing

Twenty-seven short essays on care, and why it is rarely noticed and never finished

Olga Gitkiewicz has been one of the standout voices in Polish non-fiction in recent years. Her focus is on the marginalised in society, particularly women, and she has made a name for herself writing about topics such as labour conditions and rural transit deserts. Gitkiewicz sees that basic issues such as these form the fabric of most people's day-to-day lives and she understands their deeply personal impacts.

In *While Sewing*, the author turns her attention to another often-invisible topic that shapes people's everyday experience: the subject of care. Care for children, for the elderly, for the ill, for the home. In a series of brief, interlinked essays, she reflects on the nuances of our concept of care and why so much of its burden falls on women. She remembers her great-grandmother carrying her around as a baby in a milk can on her back while she went about her chores. She remembers being taught that for women there is always more work to do. She analyses statistics about the division of domestic labour between women and men, and turns to philosophers and feminist critics to understand the underlying forces at work.

Gitkiewicz's style is highly accessible – reading her is like having coffee with a particularly clever and well-informed friend. Her tone is engaged, dynamic, not shy of showing emotion. The author's aim is not cool, dispassionate study, but rather to motivate us to action. This is a book for politically engaged readers looking for a deeper dive into some of the central injustices in our society.

Text by Sean Gasper Bye

Olga Gitkiewicz (b. 1977) is a reporter, editor and sociologist. She writes primarily on social history, the labour market, transit deserts and women's experiences. In her books she describes the everyday lives of people outside the main foci of politics and the media. She is the author of the reportage books *Nie hańbi* (No Job is Disgraceful), on the realities of contemporary work in Poland, and *Nie zdążę* (I Won't Get There in Time), on problems connected with public transport and transit deserts. Her work has been longlisted for such prizes as the Nike Literary Award, the Ryszard Kapuściński Prize and the Teresa Torańska Newsweek Award. She was the first winner of the Grand Press Reportage Book of the Year award. She also writes articles for the press and does academic and educational work.

olga gitkiewicz

szyjąc



Olga Gitkiewicz
Szyjąc
(While Sewing)

Publisher: Dowody na Istnienie, 2026
ISBN: 9788366778856
Number of pages: 400
Rights: wydawnictwo@dowody.com

BOOK EXCERPT

Rags

A meditation on womanhood and the changing body, told through the clothes that outlast us

Karolina Lewestam's *Rags* is neither a conventional memoir nor a straightforward essay collection, but a deeply personal meditation on womanhood, memory and the passage of time, with clothes as its quietly powerful connecting thread. Beginning as a letter to the author's daughter, it gradually becomes an exploration of her relationship with her own mother and the various women who shaped her. Old coats, worn jumpers and the world of Lower Silesian second-hand shops become tangible markers of identity, inheritance and the lives women imagine, inhabit and leave behind.

At the book's heart lies a moving reflection on the female body as it changes through life, and on the elusive boundaries between girlhood, motherhood and old age, asking why these different stages can be so difficult to understand from the other side of the boundary.

What sets *Rags* apart is its refusal to treat ageing and womanhood as abstract ideas. Instead, Lewestam grounds universal questions in everyday objects and lived experience, creating a work that is intimate, witty and emotionally resonant without ever becoming sentimental. Told in short, patchwork-like chapters that weave memories, stories and reflections together, the book is driven by language that is precise yet effortlessly light, shifting seamlessly between irony and tenderness, restraint and emotional intensity. With its exploration of family and changing perspectives, *Rags* will appeal to readers of literary memoir and essay, regardless of gender or generation.

Text by Kate Webster

Karolina Lewestam (b. 1979) is a columnist, writer, philosopher and member of the editorial team at *Pismo* magazine. An author of novels, essays and children's books, Lewestam has been nominated five times for the Grand Press Award. She earned her doctorate in ethics from Boston University. Her articles and columns have been widely published in the Polish press. In 1997, she won an award from the Polish Academy of Sciences for Best Essay. For her children's books *Silla and Strażniczka perły* (The Guardian of the Pearl), she was awarded the Hestia Literary Journey Award (2024) and the Capital City of Warsaw Literary Award (2025), respectively. Lewestam's non-fiction book *Pasterze smoków. Rodzice kontra świat* (Dragonherds: Parents vs. the World), in which she describes parenthood using both academic detachment and the full spectrum of family emotions, was nominated for the Empik Discovery Award 2022. Her latest book, *Rags*, approaches the topic of femininity in the same way.



Karolina Lewestam
Szmaty
(Rags)

Publisher: Czarne, 2026
 ISBN: 978-83-8396-295-5
 Number of pages: 168
 Rights: karolina.lewestam@gmail.com

BOOK EXCERPT

Muscles Made of Love: On Motherhood

Micro-essays that paint a probing portrait of modern motherhood through memoir and intellectual reflection

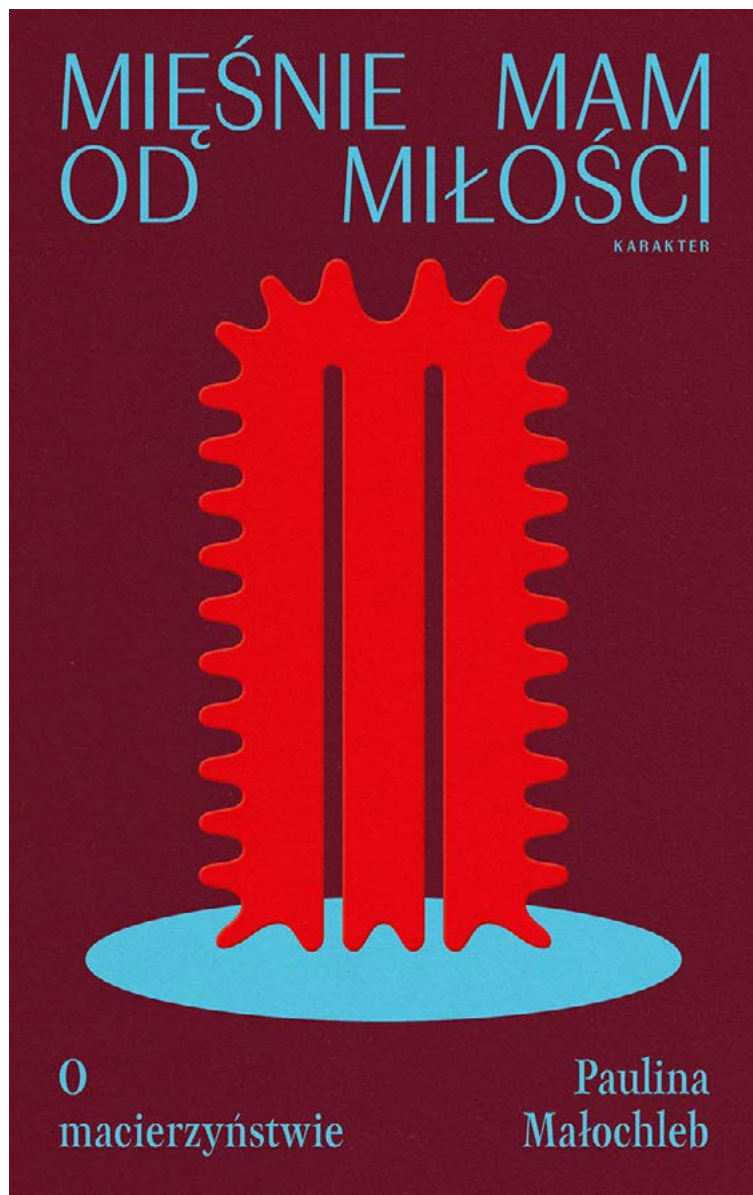
Muscles Made of Love is a powerful and intellectually rich exploration of contemporary motherhood, told through 95 micro-essays that weave together memoir, philosophy and cultural criticism. Drawing on her personal experiences of pregnancy, premature birth, breastfeeding, and balancing childcare and work, Paulina Małochleb reflects on the physical, emotional and political dimensions of care while engaging in dialogue with writers and thinkers including Virginia Woolf, Hanna Krall, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Slavoj Žižek.

The recurring metaphor of muscles captures both the literal strength motherhood demands and the resilience women must develop to navigate relentless expectations, institutional pressures and social judgement. Although rooted in the Polish context through issues such as reproductive rights and family policy, the book speaks to universal experiences of love, responsibility, identity and the invisible labour of care. Throughout the essays, Małochleb interrogates the work of creators she admires – female writers and artists who manage to portray the complexities and contradictions of motherhood.

Combining philosophical depth with sharp observation and emotional honesty, *Muscles Made of Love* offers a fresh perspective on motherhood that is at once intimate and socially engaged. Its concise, fragmentary structure makes it highly accessible. Meanwhile, thanks to the layered metaphors and interplay between personal narrative and intellectual reflection, the book is both unique and translatable across cultures. It will resonate with readers of literary non-fiction, feminist writing and memoir; while it is perhaps particularly relatable for mothers, it will also appeal to anyone interested in gender, family and contemporary society.

Text by Kate Webster

Paulina Małochleb (b. 1982) is a literary critic, literary scholar, university lecturer and writer. Winner of the Prime Minister's Award and the Kraków UNESCO City of Literature Prize, and recipient of a scholarship from the National Centre for Culture's Young Poland programme. Author of the academic monograph *Przepisywanie historii. Powstanie styczniowe w powieści polskiej w perspektywie pamięci kulturowej* (Rewriting History: The January Uprising in the Polish Novel from the Perspective of Cultural Memory) (2024) and the essay collection *Muscles Made of Love* (2026). Her work has been published in Poland's leading literary and cultural journals. Małochleb teaches courses on literary criticism and translation criticism at the Jagiellonian University. She heads the Communication Department and runs the Central European Book Club at the International Cultural Centre in Kraków, and as of 2025, she is a member of the jury for the Angelus Central European Literature Award.



Paulina Małochleb
Mięśnie mam od miłości. O macierzyństwie
(Muscles Made of Love: On Motherhood)

Publisher: Karakter, 2026
 ISBN: 978-83-68615-08-1
 Number of pages: 224
 Rights: Magdalena Hajduk-Dębowska,
 debowska@karakter.pl

Winner of the Kraków UNESCO City of Literature Prize (2026)
Winner of the Kraków Book of the Month (2026)

BOOK EXCERPT

Things that Happen on the Road

Twelve travel essays on why we record what we see, and what the record fails to hold

Krzysztof Środa's sixth book continues his distinctive style of philosophical travel reportage – what one reviewer imagined Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer might write after taking degrees in philosophy. The 12 essays collected here take readers through countries such as Iran, Georgia and Albania, vividly describing the author's various encounters, often with people who he later discovers are dead. There is the village doctor who made the best mulberry brandy in Armenia; the Moroccan butcher who survives only as a silhouette on a book cover; the blind veteran of the Chechen War who has written down everything that ever happened to him.

Together, they form an examination of our strange compulsion to record seemingly insignificant details, and of what happens between the act of looking and the act of writing. Since we cannot know which detail might prove meaningful, everything has to be caught in flight, with a pencil, even by the side of a road. Meaning may surface later, when a detail returns in a new context, or when one memory jolts another into view.

The final essay offers a more discomfiting journey by entering the Ringelblum Archive (the clandestine record of life in the Warsaw Ghetto) and turning the book's own method back on itself. In doing so, it reminds us that understanding comes from returning to things more than once – this collection included. *Things that Happen on the Road* will appeal to readers of literary travel writing, and to anyone who has kept notes they never knew what to do with.

Text by Anna Zaranko

Krzysztof Środa (b. 1959) is a writer, translator, and historian of philosophy. He has been published in Polish philosophical and literary journals. His translations range from philosophical works to books on the stock market and securities. He made his literary debut in 2003, and his later books have earned distinctions in Poland's major literary competitions. *Projekt handlu kabardyńskimi końmi* (A Project for Trading Kabardian Horses) won the Gdynia Literary Prize in 2007, *Podróże do Armenii i innych krajów z uwzględnieniem najbardziej interesujących obserwacji przyrodniczych* (Travels to Armenia and Other Lands, Including the Most Interesting Nature Observations) was nominated for the same award in 2013, as was his next book *Las nie uprzedza* (The Forest Gives No Warning) (2017). The latter, along with his subsequent volume, *Srebro ryb* (The Silver of Fish) (2020), was also nominated for the Nike Literary Award.



Krzysztof Środa
Rzeczy zdarzające się
w podróży
(Things that Happen
on the Road)

Publisher: Czarne, 2025
 ISBN: 97-883-83961-65-1
 Number of pages: 128
 Rights: Zofia Dimitrijević,
 zofia.dimitrijevic@czarne.com.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Weather for Revolutionaries: How to Change the World at a Time of Catastrophe

A galvanising history of how ecological catastrophe has repeatedly opened the door to social transformation

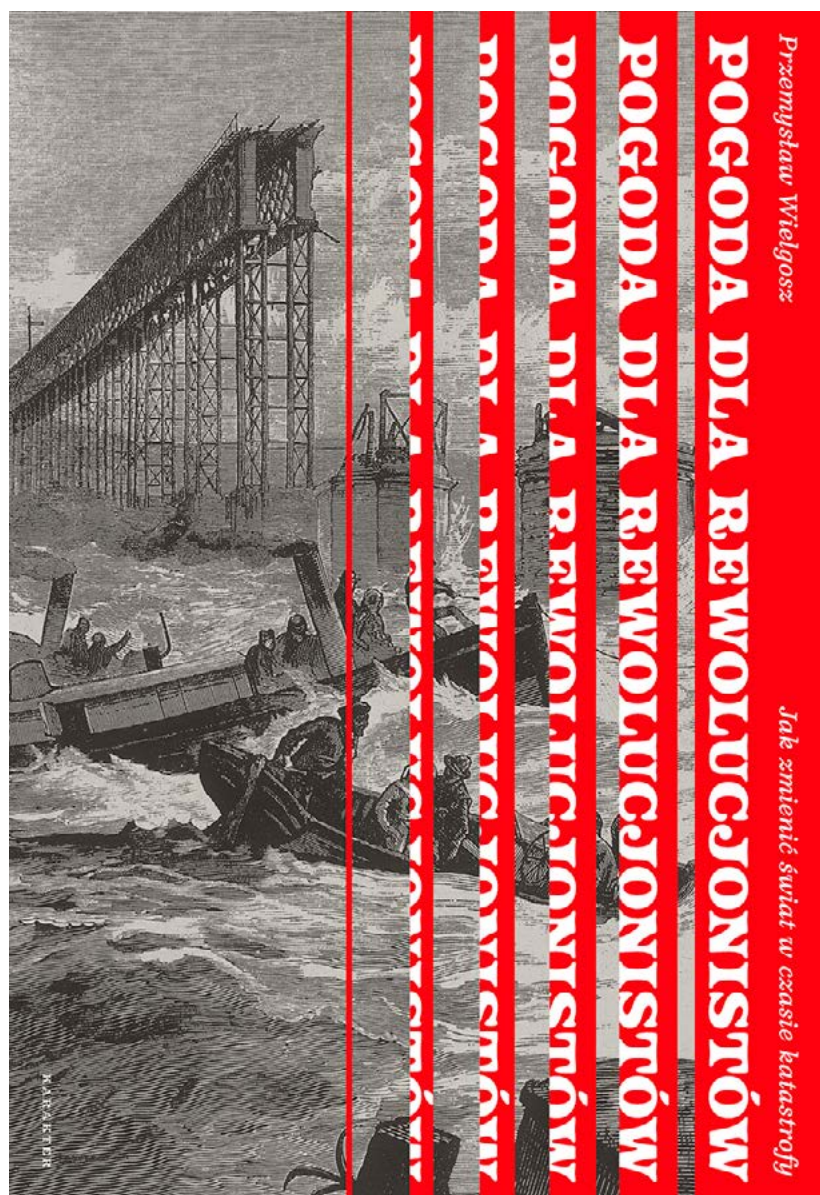
In *Weather for Revolutionaries*, Przemysław Wielgosz offers a provocative reinterpretation of the climate crisis, arguing that environmental and social catastrophes should be understood not only as threats but also as moments of political possibility. Drawing on a wide range of historical case studies – from late medieval Europe and 17th-century China to the American Dust Bowl – the book demonstrates how ecological upheaval has again and again exposed the limits of exploitative economic systems while creating opportunities for collective action and far-reaching social change.

Rather than treating climate change, the cost-of-living crisis, energy, housing and democracy as separate issues, Wielgosz unites them within a single, compelling framework, suggesting that greater social and economic justice can become a pathway towards mitigating environmental collapse. This timely and optimistic perspective sets the book apart in a field often dominated by apocalyptic narratives, offering readers a bold vision of systemic transformation grounded in historical evidence.

Written from an engaged left-wing perspective, the book combines intellectual rigour with an accessible style, bringing complex political and economic ideas within reach of politically aware general readers, as well as those interested in climate, history, economics and contemporary social debates. *Weather for Revolutionaries* will appeal to international publishers seeking original, thought-provoking non-fiction that reframes one of the defining issues of our time through an unexpected and hopeful lens.

Text by Kate Webster

Przemysław Wielgosz (b. 1969) is a journalist, publisher and curator, editor-in-chief of the Polish edition of *Le Monde diplomatique*. His work has been published in *The Guardian*, *Aspen Review* and *Freitag*, among others. He has authored numerous books, including *Opium globalizacji* (The Opium of Globalisation) (2004), *Witajcie w cięższych czasach* (Welcome to Harder Times) (2020) and *Gra w rasy. Jak kapitalizm dzieli, by rządzić* (The Race Game: How Capitalism Divides to Rule) (2021); the latter earned him a nomination for the Nike Literary Award (2022). Wielgosz edited and co-authored the books *Koniec Europy, jaką znamy* (The End of Europe as We Know It) (2013), *Realny kapitalizm. Wokół teorii kapitału monopolistycznego* (Real Capitalism: On the Theory of Monopoly Capital) (2018) and *Ekonomie przyszłości* (Economies of the Future) (2021). He has also curated the series 'Economies of the Future' at Biennale Warszawa, 'A People's History of Poland' at Strefa WolnoSłowa, 'Histories of People Without History' at Teatr Ósmego Dnia, and 'Transformations' at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.



Przemysław Wielgosz
Pogoda dla rewolucjonistów. Jak zmienić świat w czasie katastrofy
(Weather for Revolutionaries: How to Change the World at a Time of Catastrophe)

Publisher: Karakter, 2026
 ISBN: 97-883-68059-96-0
 Number of pages: 368
 Rights: Red Rock Literary Agency,
 Renata Kasprzak,
renata@redrockliteraryagency.com

BOOK EXCERPT

The Gogol Riddle

A biography of Gogol that examines the disputes surrounding his life and legacy

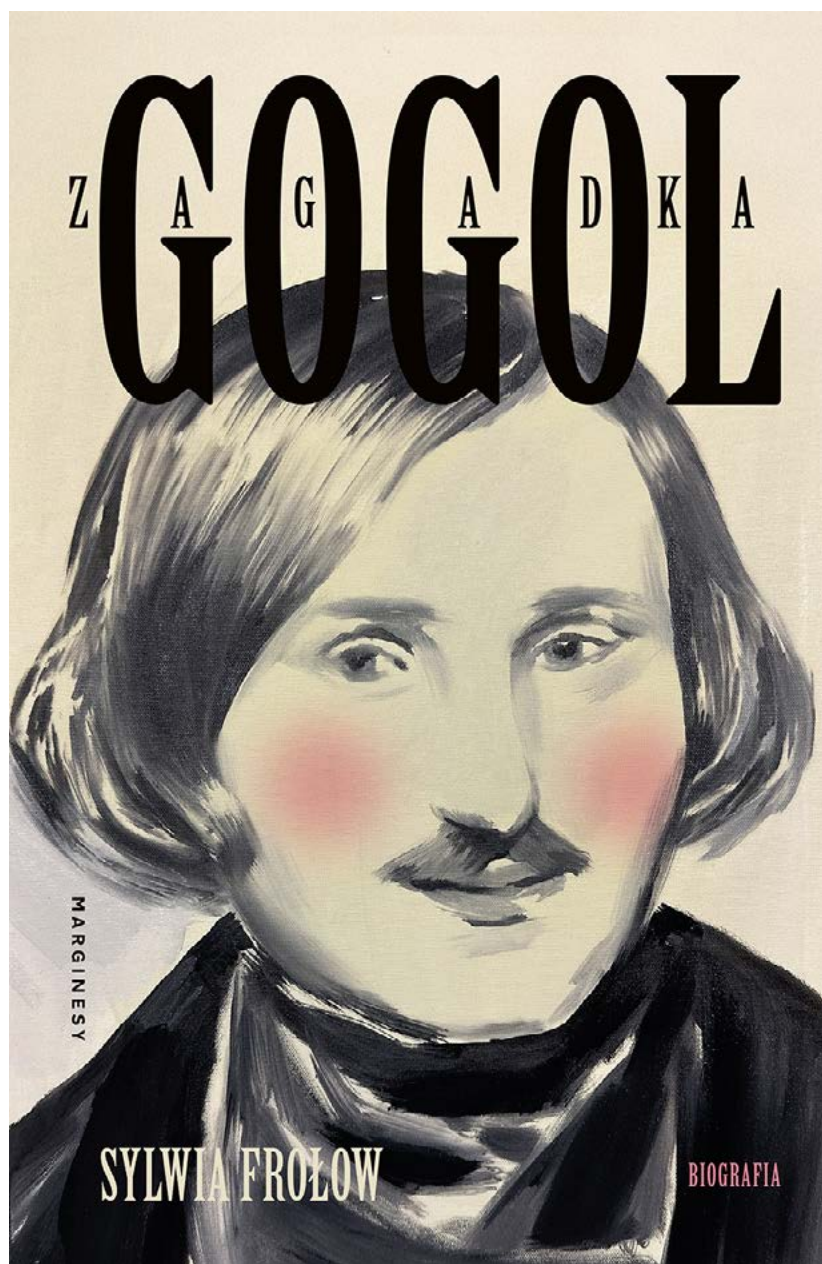
A timely biography of Nikolai Gogol, a Ukrainian literary titan whose life and work continue to confound scholars, historians and readers in Russia, Eastern Europe and beyond. The book is a welcome addition to the existing body of work on the author, as it offers a detailed and lively account of Gogol's life, as well as his reception in the wake of Russia's war against Ukraine.

Sylwia Frołow, an author of several biographies and a journalist specialising in Eastern Europe and Russian imperialism, breathes new life into the crossover genre of the artist's biography; above all, *The Gogol Riddle* reveals her ability to fit a diverse range of primary sources into a highly readable narrative. In the book, she tackles unavoidable questions concerning Gogol's nationality, his choice to write in Russian, his sexuality, his mental health, his religious convictions, and his disturbing final days. Each of these explorations considers pre-existing sources and adds new, at times surprising, conclusions. Frołow also introduces the reader to less well-known aspects of Gogol's life, such as his childhood friendships, his relationship with his family, his forays into expat communities in Italy and France, and his rather eccentric funeral.

Readers' reviews consistently tout Frołow's stylistic finesse and her skillful deployment of sources, while the newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* called the book 'more than a biography [...] a behind-the-scenes look at Ukrainian, Russian and even Polish history'.

Text by Jess Jensen Mitchell

Sylwia Frołow (b. 1965) is a writer and editor whose books blur the boundaries between biography, history and literary fiction. A regular contributor to the highly respected periodical *Tygodnik Powszechny*, she is the author of five book-length works of non-fiction: *Dzierżyński. Miłość i rewolucja. Biografia intymna* (Dzerzhinsky or Love and Revolution: An Intimate Biography), *Bolszewicy i apostołowie* (Bolsheviks and Apostles), *Antonówki. Kobiety i Czechow* (Anton's Pink Ladies: Women and Chekhov), *Nasz biedny Fiedia. Kobiety i Dostojewski* (Our Poor Fedya: Women and Dostoyevsky) and *The Gogol Riddle*. She has also written two novels: *Spojrzenia* (Glances) and *I dusza, i seks* (Sex and the Soul, Too). In her work, she studies historical figures through the lens of private experiences, relationships and emotions. Combining historical research with literary acuteness, she reveals new insights into the lives of well-known figures and cesura-forming events.



Sylwia Frołow
Zagadka Gogol
(The Gogol Riddle)

Publisher: Marginesy, 2026
ISBN: 978-83-68549-92-8
Number of pages: 448
Rights: Anna Rakoczy,
a.rakoczy@marginesy.com.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Milan Kundera: Life Behind a Curtain

A biography of the elusive Czech novelist who defined Central Europe for the West

Milan Kundera was among the most widely read European novelists of the 1980s. He helped put the idea of 'Central Europe' and European self-identity on the map, and was among the first to articulate his generation's engagement, and later disillusionment, with the project of 'socialism with a human face'. Four of his books appeared in English in Philip Roth's 'Writers From Another Europe' series, and the film adaptation of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* ensured his lasting visibility in bookshops across the world.

Yet no full biography of Kundera has appeared in English, a gap that Aleksander Kaczorowski – an expert on Czech culture and biographer of Václav Havel and Bohumil Hrabal – is well placed to fill. *Life Behind a Curtain* follows the novelist from his childhood in Brno, through Communist Party membership at the age of 19 (and expulsion at 21), to emigration, French citizenship and the 1983 essay that handed the West the phrase 'the tragedy of Central Europe'.

Kundera gave no interviews for four decades and asked his friends for silence. Kaczorowski spent 30 years interviewing them regardless and builds the book from those conversations, moving between reconstructed scenes, reportage and literary essay. The result is a vivid portrait of the man who spent his career writing about the entanglement of the individual in history. *Life Behind a Curtain* will appeal to readers of literary biography and those interested in the literature and politics of Europe during the Cold War.

Text by Anna Zaranko

Aleksander Kaczorowski (b. 1969) is a writer, journalist and translator of Czech literature. *Milan Kundera: Life Behind a Curtain* is his fifth biography profiling a major contemporary Czech figure. His earlier books have received numerous prizes, as well as two nominations for the Nike Literary Award. His book *Havel. Zemsta bezsilnych* (Havel: Revenge of the Powerless) also earned him the title 'Ambassador of New Europe' and a nomination for Newsweek's Teresa Torańska Prize. Kaczorowski has brought out collections of essays including *Praski elementarz* (A Prague Primer) and *Ballada o kapciach* (A Ballad About Slippers), as well as the reportage *Czechy. To nevymyslíš* (Czechia: You Couldn't Make It Up). In 2025, he published a book-length interview with the former Polish president Aleksander Kwaśniewski. He is editor-in-chief of *Aspen Review Central Europe*, published in Prague, and a winner of the Václav Burian Prize for his contribution to Central European dialogue.

MILAN KUNDERA

ALEKSANDER KACZOROWSKI



ŻYCIE ZA ZASŁONĄ

Aleksander
Kaczorowski
*Milan Kundera. Życie
za zasłoną*
(*Milan Kundera: Life
Behind a Curtain*)

Publisher: Muza, 2026
ISBN: 97-88-328735-61-3
Number of pages: 320
Rights: Wydawnictwo Muza,
m.mielke@muza.com.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

The Year I Didn't Die

A writer known for recording other people's testimony turns his sharp eye, and wit, on his own

In March 2024, Mikołaj Grynberg was in Białystok collecting an award for his searing best-seller *Jesus Died in Poland*, about the migrant crisis on Poland's eastern border. That night he suffered a heart attack that was disastrously misdiagnosed. The next day, in excruciating pain, he and his wife drove to a hospital in Warsaw, not knowing whether he would survive. These harrowing scenes mark the beginning of *The Year I Didn't Die*, Grynberg's dark and funny memoir of his heart attack, treatment and recovery.

Grynberg is best known for his non-fiction books of interviews focused on post-Holocaust Jewish life and memory in Poland. In recent years, he has turned to fiction on the same theme, including with strongly autobiographical elements. This is his first true memoir. Written in his trademark spare, deadpan style, it gives a patient's-eye-view of the foibles of medical treatment and the peculiar characters that populate hospitals and physical therapy clinics. Grynberg's book is at once very funny and very serious. He shows profound emotional depth, reflecting on the experience of losing his own parents and wondering what he would leave behind for his children. His jokes make us laugh, then make us think.

The result is a touching and entertaining book that will prove relatable to anyone who's experienced a health crisis or provided care for a loved one. Grynberg is a singular voice in Poland and has met with increasing recognition abroad. This latest work deserves a wide readership.

Text by Sean Gaspar Bye

Mikołaj Grynberg (b. 1966) is a writer, reporter, photographer, film director. Grynberg addresses issues of memory, identity and Jewish experience after the Holocaust, life in the shadow of history, and modern forms of exclusion. His work is a literature of dialogue and witness. His 2017 short story collection *Rejwach* was nominated for the Nike Literary Award and the Angelus Central European Literature Award. The American edition, *I'd Like to Say Sorry, But There's No One to Say Sorry To*, translated by Sean Gaspar Bye, was shortlisted for a National Jewish Book Award and the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature. His book of reportage *Jezus umarł w Polsce* (*Jesus Died in Poland*) (2023) won the Wiesław Kazanecki Literary Award and was longlisted for the Nike Literary Award. Grynberg's work has been translated into English, German, French, Italian, Hebrew and others.



Mikołaj Grynberg
Rok, w którym nie
umarłem
(The Year I Didn't Die)

Publisher: Agora, 2025
 ISBN: 978-83-83802-67-1
 Number of pages: 144
 Rights: Magdalena Kosinska,
 magdalena.kosinska@agora.pl

Winner of the Wielkopolska Readers'
Literary Award (2026)
Nominated for Book of the Year
(Lubimyczytać.pl; Fiction category) (2025)
Nominated for the Władysław Reymont
Literary Award (2025)

BOOK EXCERPT

Patient Genevieves, Shameless Magdalenes: A Guide to the Lives of Ordinary Medieval Women

The lives of 50 medieval women, pieced together from documents that survive

Margaret of Beverley defends the walls of Jerusalem against Saladin's army (1187); Celie Rebbe is a successful moneychanger in Ghent (1352); Agnieszka from Krościenko Wyżne acts as village head and buys and sells land (1417); Katelijne Michiels, maker of black pudding in Leuven (1461), and Tryngen Ime Hove, silk manufacturer in Cologne (1462), battle for recognition by their local guilds.

Drawing on scholarly research published over the past 30 years, itself based on court records and other original sources, Anna Brzezińska brings to life the experiences and careers of 50 medieval women between the late 9th and late 15th centuries by reconstructing their worlds in short narratives written for the general reader. Her vignettes focus on individual personalities, some with unconventional relationships or colourful sexual proclivities.

The women come from regions prominent in Europe during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance – Italy, France, Spain, Flanders, Burgundy, Germany, some from Poland and England – and represent different social classes and walks of life. Self-aware and headstrong, emerging as complex individuals, they contradict assumptions that medieval women were submissive in private life and invisible in public. They were answerable to fathers, husbands, brothers for many aspects of their lives, and constrained by the mores of the time, but nevertheless found ways to assert their rights: social convention, the Church and the law were not as inflexible as we might imagine. The book demonstrates how the issues affecting women's lives (childbirth, abortion, claiming alimony, fighting for professional recognition, domestic violence and rape) were as topical then as they are today.

Text by Ursula Phillips

Anna Brzezińska (b. 1971) is a medievalist, author of fantasy fiction and of historical novels and essays. She is a graduate of the Institute of History of the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) and of the Central European University in Budapest (now located in Vienna). She has received the Janusz A. Zajdel Award, the most prestigious Polish prize for fantasy and science fiction, three times. Two of her novels *Woda na sicie* (Water in a Sieve) and *Mgła* (Fog) won the Jerzy Żuławski Literary Award and were nominated Polish Book of Year by the magazine *Nowa Fantastyka*. Her first historical work appeared in 2017: *Córki Wawelu. Opowieść o jagiellońskich królewnach* (Daughters of Wawel: The Story of the Jagiellonian Princesses). This was followed by a further book on influential Renaissance women, this time other Europeans, entitled *Zmierzch świata rycerzy* (Twilight of the World of Chivalry). She also publishes historical essays on her Facebook page, where she attracts an audience of 15,000 followers.



Anna Brzezińska
Cierpliwe Genowefy,
bezwstydne Mag-
daleny. Przewodnik
po średniowieczu
zwykłych kobiet
(Patient Genevieves,
Shameless Magda-
lenes: A Guide to the
Lives of Ordinary
Medieval Women)

Publisher: Marginesy, 2026
 ISBN: 978-83-68753-23-3
 Number of pages: 528
 Rights: Anna Rakoczy,
 a.rakoczy@marginesy.com.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Silence Over the Steppe: Kazakhstan and the Memory of Russia

A work of reportage on Kazakhstan, its Soviet inheritance and the silence it has chosen to keep

Joanna Cieczcott is one of Poland's sharpest observers of the post-Soviet space. Now she turns her attention to Kazakhstan: a country larger than Western Europe with a population smaller than North Korea's. The last republic to declare independence from the Soviet Union is now the leading economic power in Central Asia. Its diversity, among the greatest in the world, is the product of Russian colonisation, Stalinist mass deportations and a vast network of Soviet prison camps.

It is these contradictions in modern Kazakhstan that create a great silence at its heart: a country that looks forward, as an advanced country and global energy power, but with one wary eye on the former superpower over its northern border. Kazakhstan has sought to build an independent, multiethnic identity without peering too deeply into the shadows of its past.

In *Silence over the Steppe*, Cieczcott seeks out those who remember these dark chapters and dare to speak about them, such as the descendants of gulag prisoners in Karaganda, or women imprisoned for being married to dissidents. Writing in a classic Polish reportage style, she peels back the layers of history, visiting rag-tag local museums, talking to surviving eyewitnesses and trying to understand the society these crimes built and left behind. The result will be fascinating for those interested in history and the politics of memory in this region that sits at the centre of the 21st century's balance of power.

Text by Sean Gaspar Bye

Joanna Cieczcott (b. 1979) is a journalist, political scientist, reporter, writer. Her first book was *Macierzyństwo non-fiction. Relacja z przewrotu domowego* (Non-Fiction Motherhood: Accounts of a Domestic Revolution) (2012). As one of the founders of the Cosmos for Girls Foundation, she led the work on launching a magazine for empowering girls, which she ran as editor-in-chief (2018–2022). Her book of reportage *Petersburg. Miasto snu* (Petersburg: City of Dreams) (2021) won the Warsaw Literary Prize and the Kościelski Foundation Award, and was shortlisted for the Ryszard Kapuściński Prize. *Silence Over the Steppe* (2025) was shortlisted for the Grand Press Award, the Ryszard Kapuściński Prize, the Ambassador of New Europe competition, and was longlisted for the Angelus Central European Literature Award.



Joanna Cieczott
Cisza nad stepem
Kazachstan i pamięć o Rosji



Joanna Cieczott
Cisza nad stepem.
Kazachstan
i pamięć Rosji
(Silence Over the
Steppe: Kazakhstan
and the Memory
of Russia)

Publisher: Czarne, 2025
ISBN: 978-83-83960-58-6
Number of pages: 448
Rights: Zofia Dimitrijević,
zofia.dimitrijevic@czarne.com.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Settling Accounts: A Political History of Money

An entertaining journey exploring the history of money, how it is created and who controls it

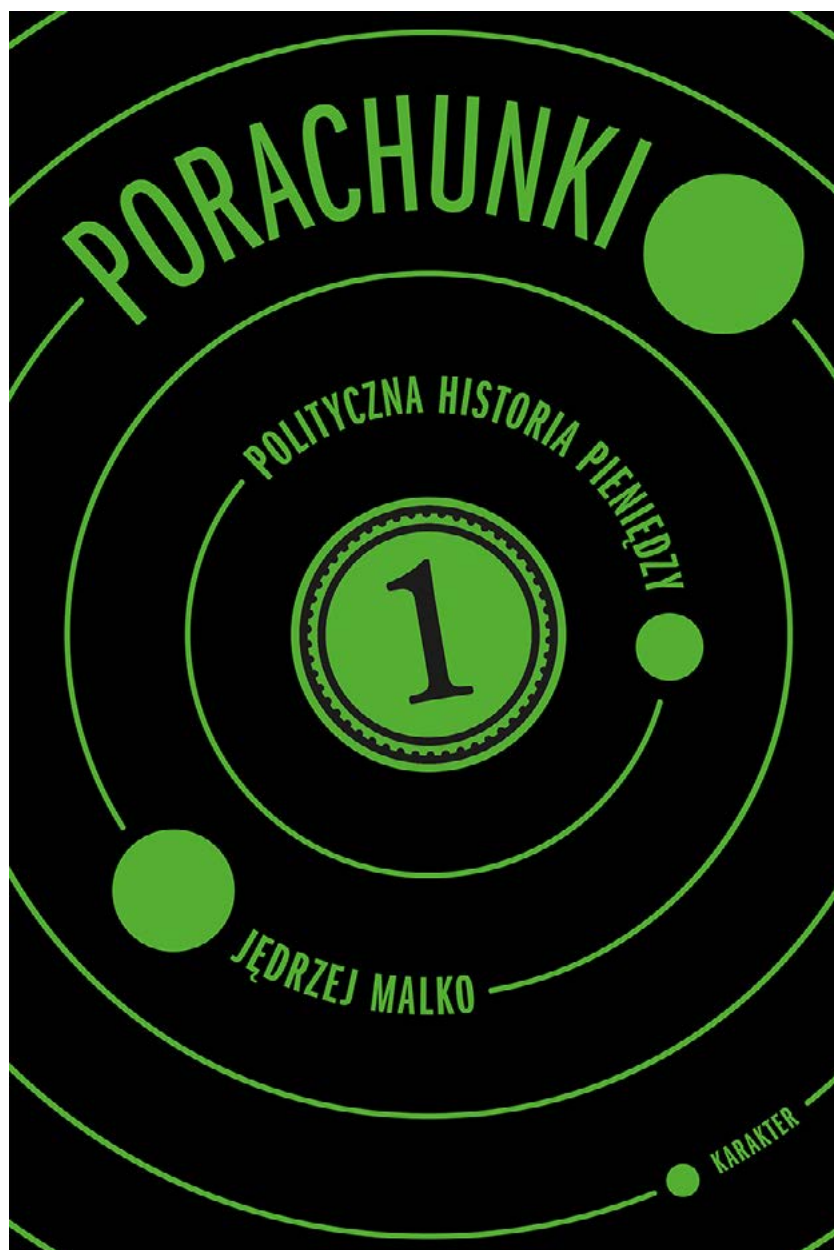
Ask people what a bank does and, according to a British survey, a third will say it keeps their savings safe, six in ten that it lends other people's savings on, and 90% that the money in their account belongs to them. All of them are wrong. Banks are money factories: the vast majority of money in circulation is created the moment a bank approves a loan, when a clerk opens an account, types in a figure and presses enter.

It is from this opening that Jędrzej Malko begins his comprehensive voyage through the history of money and the uses governments have made of it. He asks who today's money benefits, whether money has ever been free of politics, how modern money was born, why some people saw in it a devilish invention, and how a single currency came to wrap itself around the world.

Settling Accounts is thoroughly researched and moves at pace, combining hard data with intriguing, unexpected anecdotes – Isaac Newton sending counterfeiters to the gallows, the potato crop worth more than the precious metals looted from the Incas, and the New York widow told in 1972 that women have no need of a house. Malko writes with verve and wit, making for an accessible read. The book will suit those unacquainted with economics, specialists who want the historical context, and anyone who has ever looked at the banknote in their hand and wondered where it came from.

Text by David French

Jędrzej Malko (b. 1989) is a historian of ideas, as well as an economist and columnist. He is the author of *Economics and Its Discontents* (2016) and *Settling Accounts* (2026). Malko combines the perspective of an academic with the writing skills of a man of letters. His work has been published in the magazines *Pismo*, *Kontakt* and *Krytyka Polityczna*, among others. He launched and curates the Skirmish Project – a campaign focused on public debate, aimed at accommodating varying points of view between five ideologically different communities that all share a readiness to engage in creative dialogue. Malko is the originator of the concept known in Poland as 'universal credit' – a public line of credit available to every citizen. He is also the author of a series of novels known collectively as the *Donkiszoteria warszawska* (Varsovian Quixotism) trilogy.



General non-fiction

Jędrzej Malko
Porachunki.
Polityczna historia
pieniędzy
(Settling Accounts:
A Political History
of Money)

Publisher: Karakter, 2026
ISBN: 978-83-68615-06-7
Number of pages: 464
Rights: Magdalena Hajduk-Dębowska,
debowska@karakter.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

The Little River: A History of Disappearance

An activist's journey along a disappearing stream becomes a lesson in the power of the small

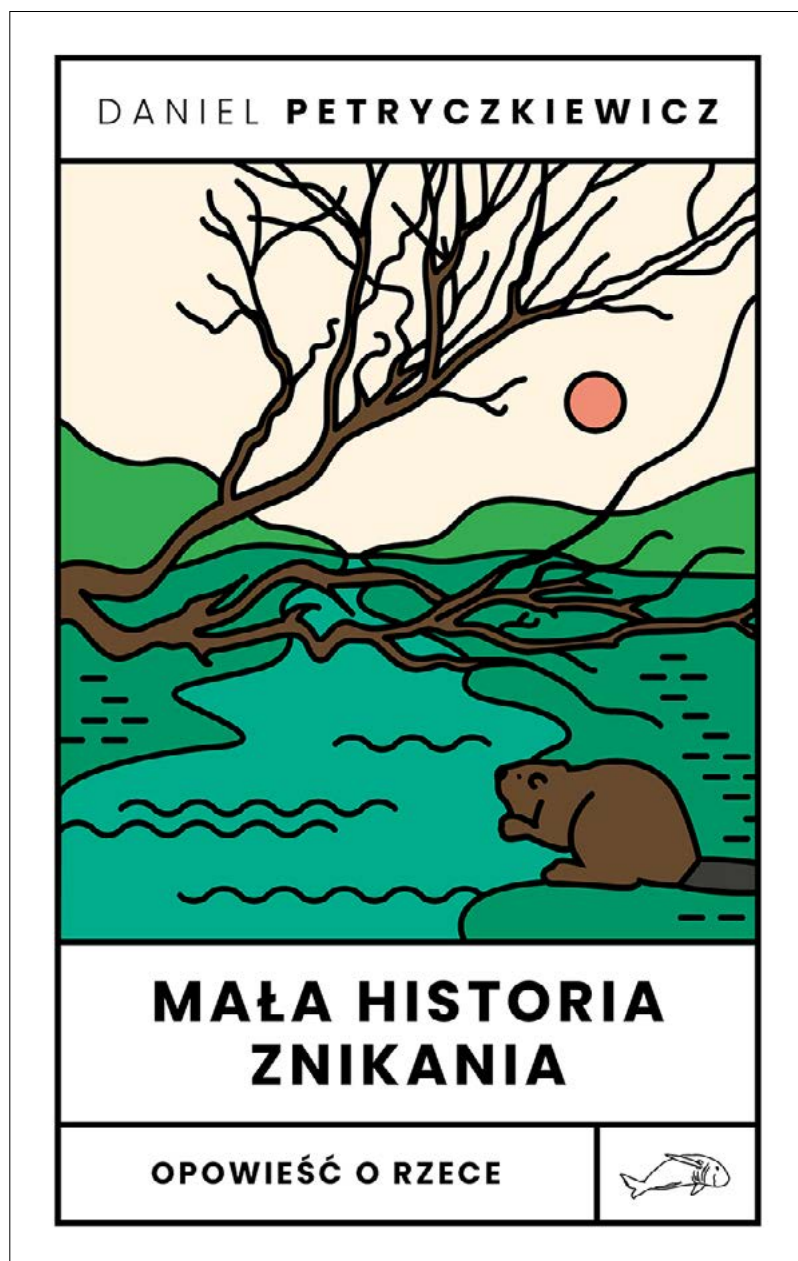
What, or who, is a river? What challenges does it face? What can it teach us? In answering these questions, the activist, writer and photographer Daniel Petryczkiewicz focuses on the Mała (meaning 'Small'), a stream on the outskirts of Warsaw. Drying up and largely forgotten by the local population following decades of injudicious river regulation, sewage discharge and the destruction of beavers' dams, the stream reveals what is broken in the way we treat and perceive the natural world.

Using the Mała as a point of departure, Petryczkiewicz delves deep into Poland's outdated and harmful environmental laws and management practices. Though preoccupied with the local, the author identifies the Mała's gradual disappearance as part of a global problem, compounded by the climate catastrophe. He meanders between crash-courses in deep time and the stars, global movements to grant rivers legal rights, and ecological thought, from Arne Næss to Byung-Chul Han.

Above all, the book is an account of how closeness to nature – in this case, one man's relationship with a small stream – can transform a life. The Mała teaches Petryczkiewicz to savour everyday encounters with nature at its most unassuming, which he communicates with lyrical, detailed descriptions. There is also humour in the author's earnestness, as he tries to construct a dam worthy of a beaver, or walks his paddle board down a largely absent stream. *The Little River* is a moving call to pay attention to what's in front of us. Otherwise we won't even notice it disappear.

Text by Nasim Łuczaj

Daniel Petryczkiewicz (b. 1976) is a writer, photographer, ecological activist. His environmental protection work is focused especially on the valley of the river Mała and its wetlands. This place became a point of departure for his reflections on the relationship between nature and humans as described in the book *The Little River*. Petryczkiewicz's writing and photographs have been published in the influential periodicals *Krytyka Polityczna*, *Dwutygodnik* and *Pismo*, as well as the environmental monthly *Dziki Życie* and the reportage website *IR2*. He promotes the general protection of local, often neglected natural areas and has initiated a number of photography and community projects in connection with this. He won the Gazeta Wyborcza Readers' Stolek Award in 2022 and was awarded a Badge of Honour for Merits in Environmental and Climate Protection by the Polish Minister of Climate and Environment in 2025.



**Daniel
Petryczkiewicz**
Mała historia znikania.
Opowieść o rzece
***(The Little River:
A History of
Disappearance)***

Publisher: Wydawnictwo Krytyki
Politycznej, 2026
ISBN: 97-883-68267-85-3
Number of pages: 400
Rights: Patryk Walaszczkowski,
patryk.walaszczkowski@krytykapolityczna.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

This House Is Not Haunted Anymore: Reportages on Jews, Poles and Fate

A reportage on war-time crimes against Jews, and the descendants left with half the story

This House Is Not Haunted Anymore is the latest book from the accomplished Polish reportage writer and journalist Paweł Piotr Reszka, winner of the Ryszard Kapuściński Prize. In it, he returns to the theme of Polish-Jewish relations by examining the memory of crimes committed against Jews during the Second World War, issues of inherited guilt and trauma, the conspiracy of silence and fatalistic beliefs. The author revisits old crimes, family stories and local legends, which he sets against archival materials. He collects stories about Jews who paid Poles for their help – for a hiding place under the floorboards, in the barn or the pigsty. And about Poles who gave those Jews away, or even killed them.

Reszka talks both to the descendants of Jews and to the relatives of those who were involved in war-time crimes against them. He looks for stories that did not end with the war but seem to still affect people; stories that were purposefully kept hidden, silenced. The author shows how history can continue to impact the descendants of those who participated in the events, all the while avoiding easy judgement and foregrounding multiple perspectives.

This House Is Not Haunted Anymore is written in a simple, almost raw language that is simultaneously lively and dynamic. It will appeal to readers of historical reportage and non-fiction, as well as those interested in Polish-Jewish relations and the history of the Holocaust, and more broadly in memory, trauma and generational responsibility.

Text by Anna Błasiak

Paweł Piotr Reszka (b. 1977) is a writer, journalist, editor and reportage writer. For many years, he was associated with the Lublin branch of the *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily; he now writes for its reportage supplement *Duży Format*. He won the Ryszard Kapuściński Prize for his literary reportage *Diabeł i tabliczka czekolady* (The Devil and a Bar of Chocolate) (2015). He was also nominated and shortlisted for, among others, the Nike Literary Award, the Gdynia Literary Prize and the Angelus Central European Literature Award for his reportage *Płuczki. Poszukiwacze żydowskiego złota* (The Washers: Seekers of Jewish Gold) (2019). He is the author of *Białe płatki, złoty środek. Historie rodzinne* (White Petals, Golden Centre: Family Stories) (2021) and numerous other award-winning reportages. In his work, he focuses mainly on the themes of historical memory, Polish-Jewish relations, social exclusion and the experience of trauma. He combines a thorough reportage method with a deepened reflection on history and the present.



General non-fiction

Paweł Reszka
W tym domu już nie straszy. Reportaże o żydach, Polakach i fatum
(This House Is Not Haunted Anymore: Reportages on Jews, Poles and Fate)

Publisher: Agora, 2026
ISBN: 97-883-83805-33-7
Number of pages: 232
Rights: Wydawnictwo Agora,
magdalena.kosinska@agora.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Aglo: On a Streetcar Around Silesia

A ride on the number seven tram becomes a tour of Silesia's history and culture

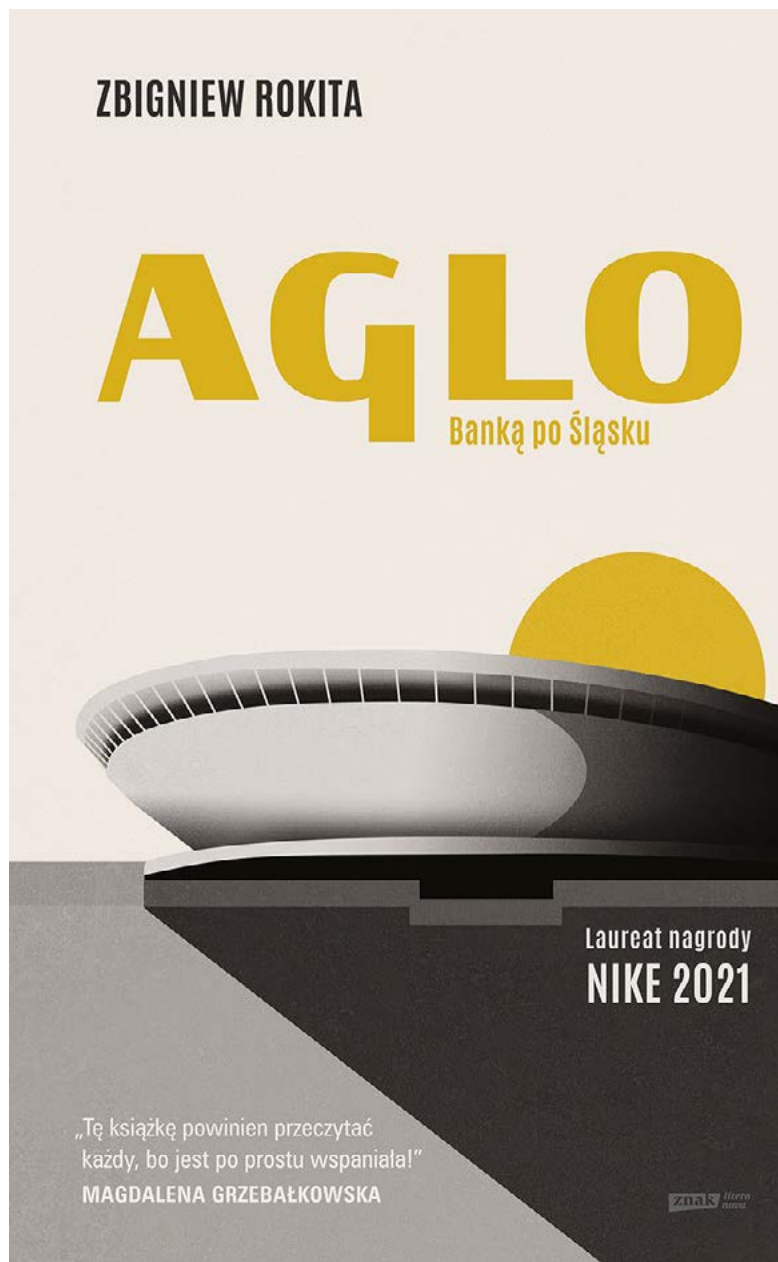
A contemporary, real-life journey across Upper Silesia, one of Europe's most fascinating – and contested – regions. In this work of narrative nonfiction, Zbigniew Rokita, a Nike Literary Award-winning author, journalist, playwright and local activist, guides the reader around the Katowice agglomeration, or the Aglo.

Boasting a population of over two million residents, the Aglo is the beating heart of Upper Silesia, a borderland region once divided between Poland, Germany and Czechia. Rokita invites the reader to join him on streetcar number seven, a line that traces a large swath of the author's homeland and his favourite haunts. Along the way, Rokita contextualises important historical and contemporary landmarks, just as he talks to regional experts about topics ranging from history, personal experiences and football, to the local hip hop scene. Ultimately, these meetings reinforce the author's assertion that Upper Silesia remains the site of multicultural encounters and tensions, an area that is 'one of the few places where the present day is more interesting than the past'. The book likewise includes fragments from Rokita's plays, contributing another layer to his discussion of Upper Silesian identity.

In his review of the work, prominent literary critic Wojciech Szot praised Rokita's skillful prose styling and highly memorable turn-of-phrase. Although focused on a specific region of Central Europe, *Aglo* will likely appeal to fans of down-to-earth, yet informative non-fiction, as well as history buffs the world over.

Text by Jess Jensen Mitchell

Zbigniew Rokita (b. 1989) is a writer, reporter and journalist best known for his work on Upper Silesia. A graduate of the Institute of Russia and Eastern Europe at the Jagiellonian University, he edited a journal about the region from 2012 to 2018. His 2018 debut, *Królowie strzelców. Piłka w cieniu imperium* (The Kings of the Strikers: Soccer in the Shadow of Empire), reveals the historical relationship between football and politics in Eastern Europe. His second book-length reportage, *Kajś. Opowieść o Górnym Śląsku* (Kajś: A Tale of Upper Silesia) was nominated for the Angelus Central European Literature Award, and it received both the Nike Literary Award and the Nike Readers' Choice Award. Rokita is also a playwright, having written four plays since 2021. *Aglo* is a rumination on his travels on tramcar number seven, a line that crosses much of the Katowice agglomeration; it was nominated for the Ryszard Kapuściński Prize. Rokita's work has been translated into Ukrainian and Silesian.



Zbigniew Rokita
Aglo. Banką przez
Śląsk
(Aglo: On a Streetcar
Around Silesia)

Publisher: Znak, 2025
ISBN: 97-883-83674-44-5
Number of pages: 320
Rights: Ewa Bolińska-Gostkowska,
bolinska@znak.com.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Slimy Tentacles and Shadowy Forces: A Conspiracy Theory History of America

American history as imagined by those who believe in secret societies, hidden powers and invisible empires

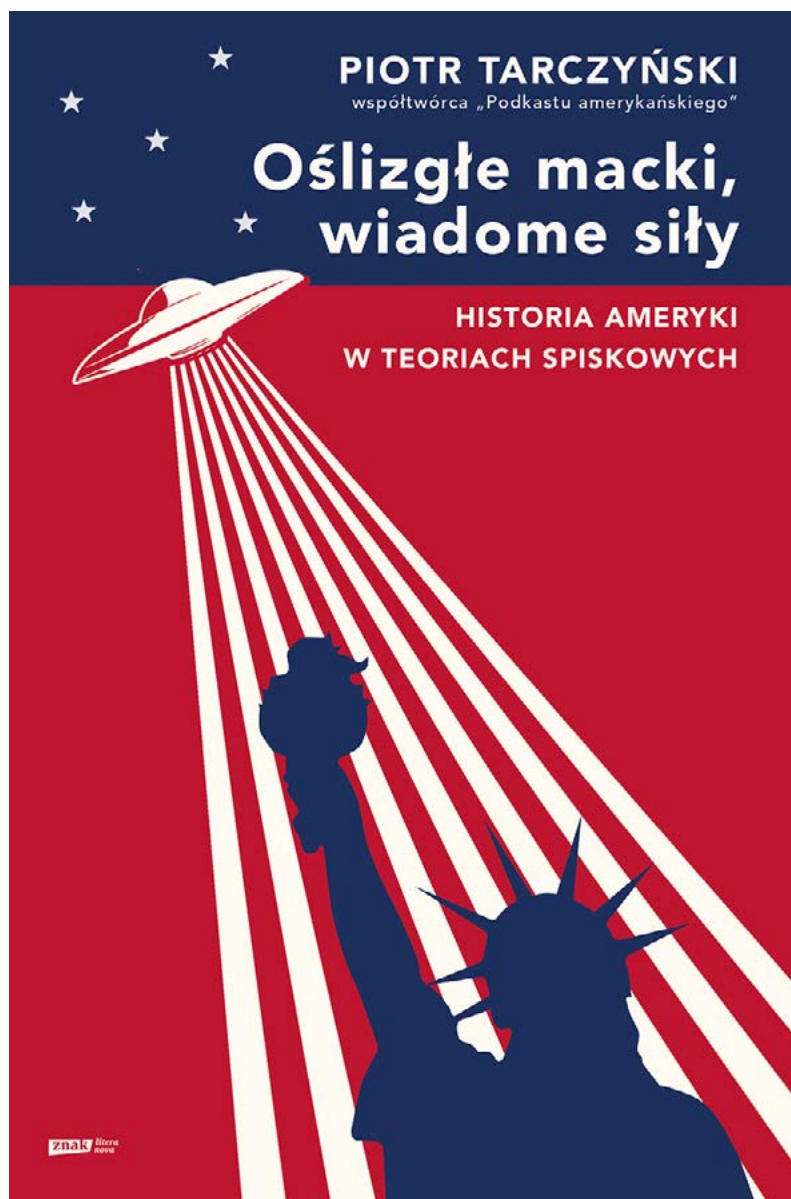
Piotr Tarczyński takes readers on a fast paced journey through three centuries of America's conspiratorial imagination. Moving from colonial fears of royal tyranny through Illuminati panics, anti-Masonic crusades, Cold War paranoia, and today's narratives about deep states, UFOs, reptilians and QAnon, the author shows how conspiracy theories have shaped American politics, culture and identity from the nation's founding to the present.

The book blends scholarly precision with narrative energy, tracing how the idea of an 'invisible government which like a giant octopus sprawls its slimy legs over our cities, states and nation' – to quote the New York City mayor in 1922 – has resurfaced again and again. It offers essential insight into why the United States in particular has been such fertile ground for new anxieties, cultural myths and political legends. Rather than mocking conspiracy believers, Tarczyński shows how their narratives have influenced elections, fuelled movements, toppled careers and entered the national imagination.

Rich in examples, sharply written and thoroughly entertaining, *Slimy Tentacles and Shadowy Forces* reads like a guided tour through the shadow side of American history. It will appeal to readers of narrative history and political non-fiction, and to anyone trying to make sense of where the present mood emerged from.

Text by Mark Ordon

Piotr Tarczyński (b. 1983) is a columnist, historian and American studies scholar, holding a PhD in social sciences in the field of political science. He is the author of books on the history and politics of the United States, including *Rozkład. O niedemokracji w Ameryce* (The American Breakdown: On the Absence of Democracy in America) and *Slimy Tentacles and Shadowy Forces*. As a translator of English-language literature, he has been nominated for the Gdynia Literary Prize (2023). He has brought into Polish the work of writers including William Faulkner, Adam Hochschild, Anne Applebaum, Michael Chabon, as well as Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. His academic and journalistic writing focuses on the history, culture and politics of the United States, as well as on issues of democracy, historical memory and contemporary social phenomena. Together with Jacek Dehnel, he co-authors a series of crime novels set in Kraków at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, published under the pen name Maryla Szymiczekowa.



Piotr Tarczyński
Oślizgłe macki,
wiadome siły. Historia
Ameryki w teoriach
spiskowych
(Slimy Tentacles and
Shadowy Forces:
A Conspiracy-Theory
History of America)

Publisher: Znak, 2025
ISBN: 9788383677569
Number of pages: 544
Rights: Ewa Bolińska-Gostkowska,
bolinska@znak.com.pl

BOOK EXCERPT

Dolphins and Beelzebub

Reportage from the Ukrainian front line, told through the people rescuing the animals left behind

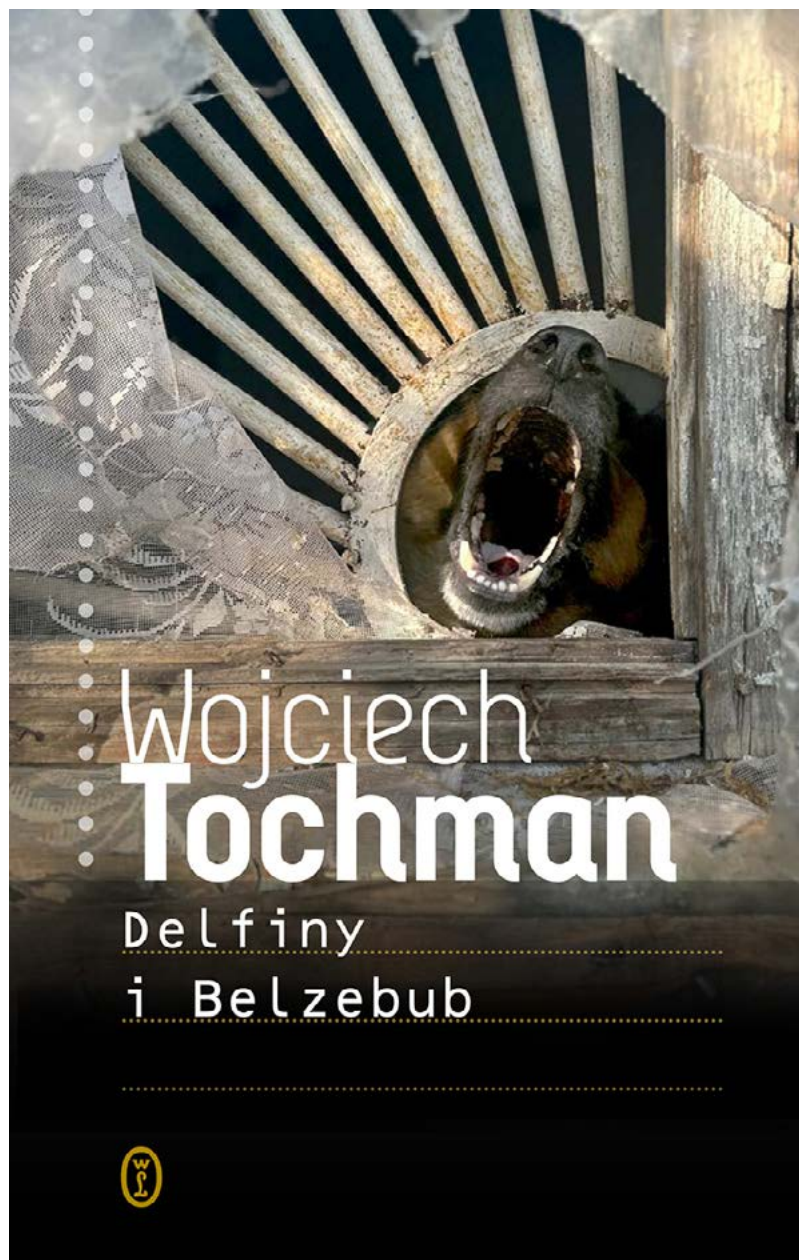
Wojciech Tochman is well known for his powerful works of reportage about the aftermath of genocide in Bosnia, Rwanda and Cambodia. His new book details his experiences in eastern Ukraine, where he has been actively helping to evacuate animals from zones close to the front lines. He gives a voice to the individuals running animal shelters and rescue operations, who describe their encounters with the occupying Russian forces and their efforts to keep their animals – and themselves – alive. The helplessness and innocence of animals amid war accentuates the vulnerability of their human owners; inevitably the book is about how ordinary people's lives are affected by invasion and conflict.

In short episodes, *Dolphins and Beelzebub* describes the experiences of a range of rescuers, some threaded through the whole book, and some reading as stand-alone stories. The succinct narrative is written without frills, but with poignancy. Among the many books documenting the war, this account is exceptional for viewing it through people's relationships with animals, and from the perspective of an activist. Tochman is one of only 10 people (and the only author) who regularly enter frontline combat zones to rescue abandoned animals; his research work with Animal Rescue Kharkiv soon led him to volunteer for the 12 Vartovkyh [Guards] Foundation, whose humanitarian work includes sterilisation missions in de-occupied zones where stray animals have multiplied.

As Tochman himself puts it: 'This is a book written from the very heart of both animal and human suffering. From the very heart of the war itself.'

Text by Antonia Lloyd-Jones

Wojciech Tochman (b. 1969) is a writer and reporter, among Poland's leading authors of literary non-fiction. He specialises in reporting from recent war zones. Without passing judgement, Tochman allows the facts and the affected individuals to speak for themselves. From 1990–2019 he reported for the *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily. In 2009, with Mariusz Szczygieł and Paweł Goźliński, he co-founded the Reportage Institute. Three of his books have been shortlisted for the Nike Literary Award (2001, 2003, 2020), and his work has won prizes including the 'Témoignage du Monde' awarded by Radio France International (2004) and the Angelus Central European Literature Award (2011). In 2015 he received the 'Pen of Hope' award from Amnesty International, and in 2016 the Italian Premio Kapuściński. His work has been translated into many languages including Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian.



Wojciech Tochman
Delfiny i Belzebub
(Dolphins and
Beelzebub)

Publisher: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2026
ISBN: 97-883-08089-03-3
Number of pages: 200
Rights: Monte Charge Culturel, Brigitte Bouchard,
brigitte@montechargculturel.com

BOOK EXCERPT

Women Creatives: The Untold Stories of Polish Female Graphic Designers 1945–1989

A richly illustrated portrait of the often-overlooked women who shaped Polish graphic design under communism

Women Creatives is an overview of 27 designers whose professional activity largely coincided with the era of communism in Poland. They have been overlooked not only because of their gender, but also due to the commercial nature of their output: they worked as poster creators, book cover artists, designers of logos, packaging and advertising materials. They are omitted even in recent Polish publications, to which Alicja Kobza's book is a corrective.

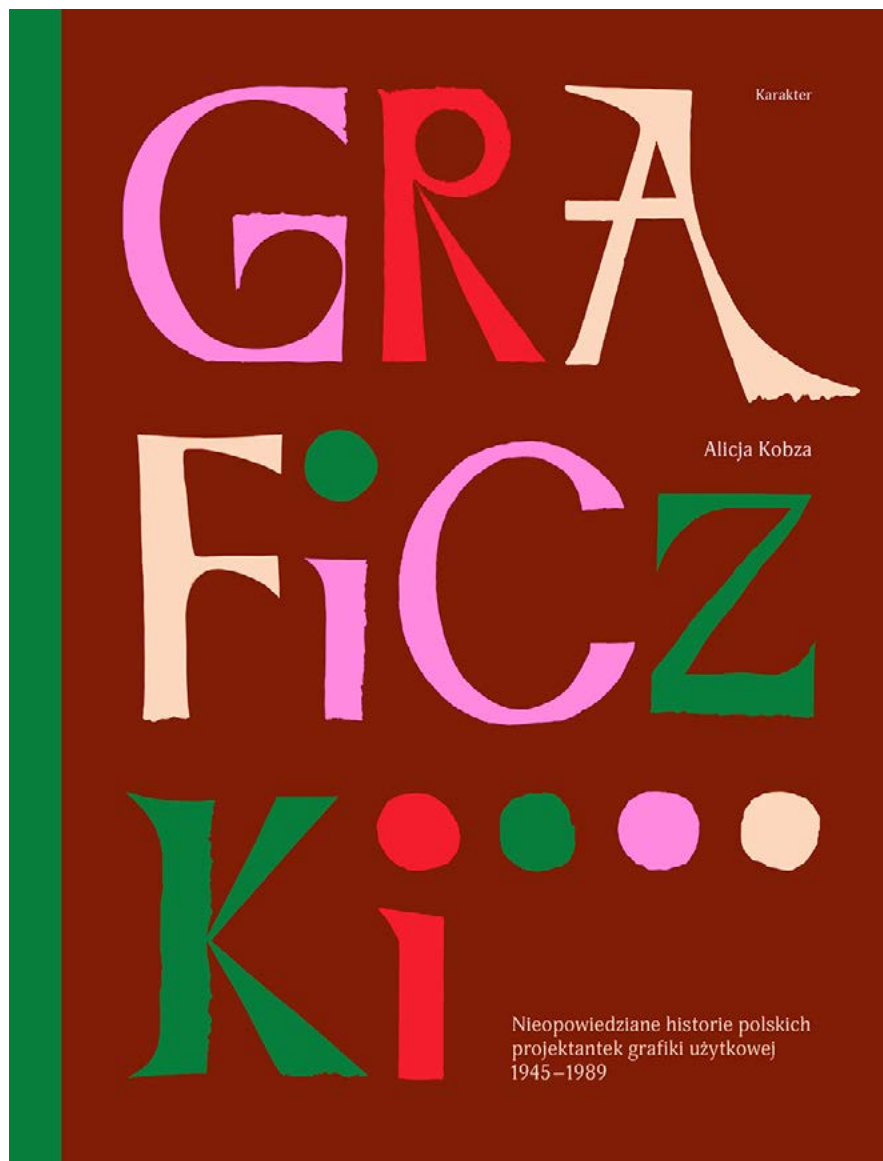
The text is not technical; interviews with the artists themselves, or people who knew them, are combined with what is known of their biographies and educational and creative backgrounds, as well as some accessible commentary on their work. Their stories encompass political exile, war, famous husbands, childcare, material shortages and international awards.

The publication's main asset is the incredibly rich, full-colour illustrative material, sourced from the artists, the author's own extensive collection, and private collections, much of it previously unpublished. It is a comprehensive, diverse and inspiring visual resource.

Here is a book for people interested not only in design and art but also in the mechanisms which lead women to be excluded from collective memory, and the circumstances due to which their careers were truncated. Kobza is often the first person to discuss her subjects' career with them: they are unused to speaking about it, especially in positive terms. The author is to be lauded for reviving the designers' universally appealing artistic achievements.

Text by Marta Dziurosz

Alicja Kobza (b. 1984) is a graphic designer, writer and researcher, who graduated from the Faculty of Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. She has worked with cultural institutions including Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, the Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko and the Kunstmuseum Luzern. Kobza is the creator of the graphic layouts for publications about artists including Mirosław Bałka, Roee Rosen, Guy Ben-Ner and Stefan Gierowski. In 2020, she initiated a research project about the forgotten female graphic designers of Poland's communist era, accessible on Instagram (@polish.female.designers). She received a scholarship from the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and won the Special Award at the Design of the Year competition organised by the Association of Applied Graphic Designers (STGU) for her awareness-raising work.



Alicja Kobza
Graficzki. Nieopowiedziane historie polskich projektantek grafiki użytkowej 1945-1989
(Women Creatives: The Untold Stories of Polish Female Graphic Designers 1945-1989)

Publisher: Karakter, 2026
 ISBN: 97-883-68615-05-0
 Number of pages: 344
 Rights: Magdalena Hajduk-Dębowska,
 debowska@karakter.pl

Nominated for the Kameralne Bookshops' Literary Prize (2026)

BOOK EXCERPT

Temple and Toilet: Architecture for Living

Equal parts astute and charismatic, universal and personal, these socially conscious essays champion the value of everyday architecture

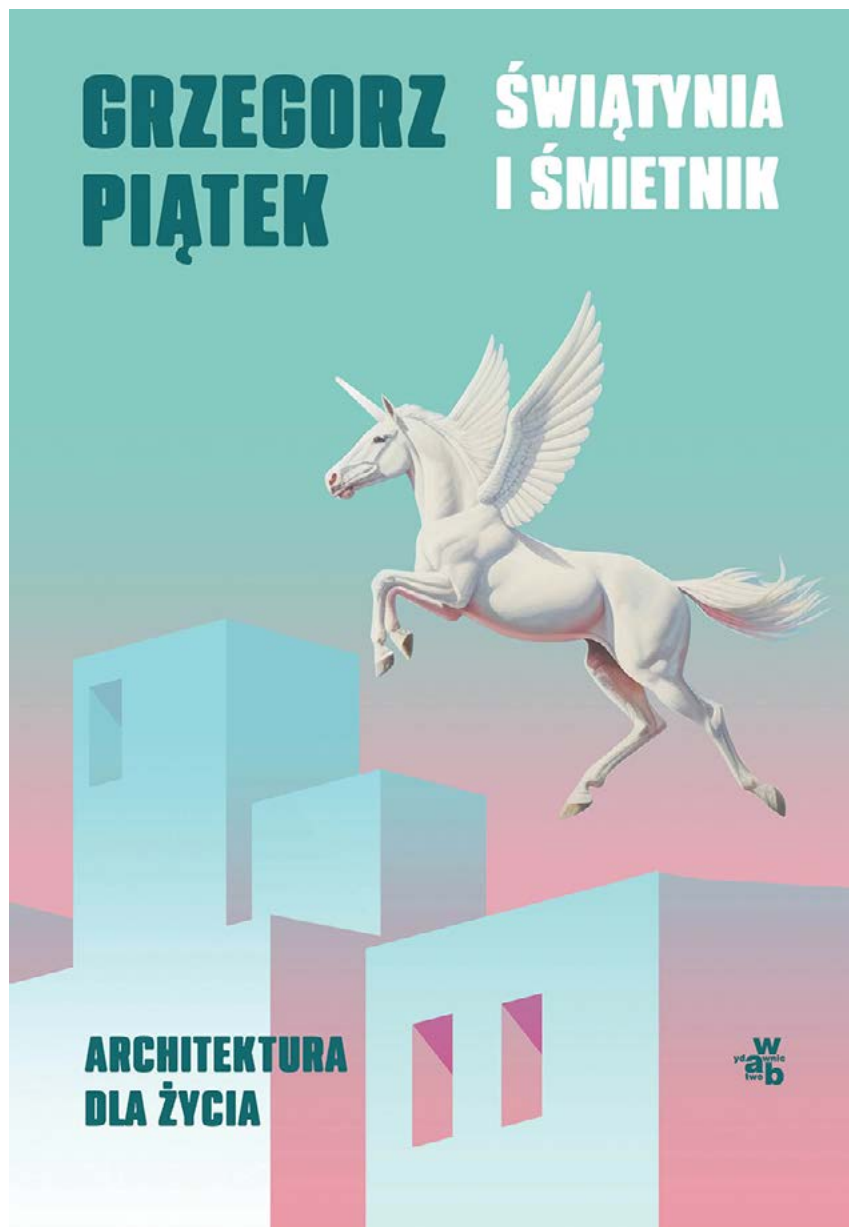
Grzegorz Piątek opens with two superficially similar structures. The first is an early-19th-century garden house in Warsaw's famous Łazienki Park, designed in the style of an ancient temple. The second is a roofed enclosure for storing bins outside an apartment block near the city centre. Although they are both white and of comparable dimensions, they are polar opposites in what they represent. For Piątek, all buildings fall somewhere on this spectrum: between what is typically celebrated as architecture – represented by impressive, large-scale, historic projects – and mere construction – often meaning social housing, public toilets, schools or tram stops. In *Temple and Toilet*, he passionately defends the latter.

Across 12 meticulously researched chapters, he explores the different aspects of 'ordinary' architecture, from accessibility, equality, care and comfort to the issues of modern urban planning and the housing crisis. The eminent Polish architect Halina Skibniewska emerges as the book's guiding spirit, imbuing it with her ideals of practical, unostentatious architecture whose strengths are experienced from within rather than seen from the street. All the while, Piątek wears his expertise lightly, guiding the general reader through the technical, historical and political dimensions of architecture with his signature charm and clarity.

Thanks to this confident blend, *Temple and Toilet* will appeal not only to readers of popular non-fiction on specialist subjects, but also to those who enjoy creative essays built around a personal narrative. However, as one of the architects interviewed puts it, everyday architecture naturally affects all: everyone should find a piece of their own day-to-day experience here.

Text by Dawid Mobolaji

Grzegorz Piątek (b. 1980) is a Polish writer, journalist and curator – one of Poland's most decorated contemporary essayists. He graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology. His work explores urban planning, the sociology of space, and the history and development of Warsaw. Before making his literary debut, he worked as a successful art curator, receiving the Golden Lion prize at the 11th Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2008. In 2023, his third book *Gdynia obiecana. Miasto, modernizm, modernizacja 1920–1939* (Promised Gdynia: City, Modernism & Modernisation 1920–1939) won three of Poland's most prestigious literary awards: the Polityka Passport Award, the Gdynia Literary Prize and the Nike Readers' Choice Award. In 2024, he received the Bronze Gloria Artis Medal for Merit to Culture. His writing has appeared in translation in English, Russian, French, German and Spanish.



Grzegorz Piątek
Świątynia i śmietnik.
Architektura dla życia
(Temple and Toilet:
Architecture for
Living)

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 Number of pages: 384
 Rights: Piotr Wawrzeńczyk,
 piotr@literatura.com.pl

Nominated for the Cyprian Kamil Norwid
Award (2025)

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The Book Institute promotes Polish books by organising literary programmes at international book fairs, appearances by Polish writers at literary festivals, and participating in many other programmes designed to promote Polish culture worldwide. Besides its annual catalogue, *New Books from Poland*, the Book Institute also publishes cultural journals dealing with literature and theatre (*Akcent*, *Dialog*, *Literatura na świecie*, *Nowe Książki*, *Odra*, *Teatr*, *Teatr Lalek*, *Twórczość* and *Topos*).

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FROM

POOLS AND



Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
Republic of Poland
