

Despite these minor flaws, I highly recommend this excellent volume, especially for students majoring in Ukrainian literature and language. Further, it will become an indispensable tool for those specializing in English-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-English translation.

The first part of the second work, *A.H. ta inshi rechi*, consists of the writings of a certain A.H., a former Lviv resident, who finds himself in Kyiv. Neborak finds the binder with his notes. This literary technique helps the real Neborak to use all his sarcasm and humor, describing Lviv and its residents, the city public house, Ukrainian phenomenal literature, and more.

The second part of the volume is called "*Personalii*" [*Personae*]. Neborak meditates on his personal perceptions of Taras Shevchenko and Mykola Zerov, analyzes the poetic world of Myroslav Kushnir and Ihor Kalynets', and provides notes of the *pys'mennyts'kyi vel'mozha* [writers' lord] (66) Roman Fedoriv, the encyclopedic Andrii Sodomora, the enigmatic contemporary Volodymyr Iavors'kyi, the Ukrainian folklore scholar Teofil Komarynets', the seductive storyteller Iurii (Iurko) Vynnychuk, and Viktor's friend Saia (artistic designer Andrii Saienko).

Part Three is entitled "*Zamok*" [The Castle]. It consists of essays, like "*Pochatkvitsi*" [The Beginners], "*Proekt 'Literaturna agentsiia'*" [The "Literary Agency" Project], "*Literaturni vchyteli ta uchni*" [Literature Teachers and Students], "*Literaturni lytsari i damy*" [Literary Knights and Ladies], "*Ukrainci po-anhliis'ky*" [Ukrainians in English], "*Ukrains'ke slovo i ukrains'ka shkola*" [The Ukrainian Word and the Ukrainian School], and "*Postsotsializm*" [Postsocialist realism].

In Part Four, "*Z arkhivu K*" [From K's Archive], Neborak presents himself as an avid reader and interpreter of contemporary Ukrainian prose and poetry, analyzing the recent books of Andrii Sodomora, Roman Ivanychuk, Yurii Vynnychuk, Ivan Luchuk, Taras Luchuk, Mykola Riabchuk, Kostiantyn Moskalets', Oleksandr Irvanets', Vasyl' Herasym'iuk, and Ihor Rymaruk. He finds his particular vision and discovers minute but important details that other critics do not.

The next part of the volume is called "*Dvi rozмовy pro literaturu*" [Two Conversations on Literature], conversations "V. N." has with Yurii Tarnawsky and Vasyl' Habor. These reflect the contemporary Ukrainian literary process, the shrewd remarks and criticism of participants, and an optimism regarding the future of Ukrainian literature. In the final part, "*Rizne*" [Miscellaneous], Neborak deliberates on poets, politics, and readers.

Both of these books offer an excellent presentation of Neborak's diverse literary activity as a poet, prose writer and essayist. All these sides are complementary to each other, and now the English-speaking public will see the versatility of this outstanding author.

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Martin Bidney, trans. *A Poetic Dialogue with Adam Mickiewicz—The "Crimean Sonnets."* Translated, with Sonnet Preface, Sonnet Replies, and Notes. Bonn: Bernstein, 2007. 102 pp. €12.80 (paper).

The title of Martin Bidney's book immediately indicates the grand scope of his project. It is far more than a translation of the eighteen poems comprising Adam Mickiewicz's *Crimean Sonnets* (1826), the cycle which, according to Czesław Miłosz, "has been justly ranked among the highest achievements in Polish literature." Bidney has enriched the volume with a kind of critical-biographical "Preface" as well as facing-page "Replies" to each of Mickiewicz's originals, both executed (for the most part) in sonnet form. The impressive nature of this *sui generis* critical apparatus notwithstanding, Bidney's main contribution to the field is a complete and rather faithful rendering of the *Crimean Sonnets* themselves, made available in a single volume.

In general, the *wieszcz* has not been served well by his Anglophone translators, but the *Sonnets* have proved particularly recalcitrant. After an early and somewhat misdirected attempt at rendering the complete cycle by Edna Worthley Underwood (1917), translations by others have

now and then cropped up in various journals and anthologies—most notably in two collections edited by Clark Mills, *Adam Mickiewicz: Selected Poems* (Noonday Press, 1956) and *Adam Mickiewicz: New Selected Poems* (Voyages Press, 1957). Though many of these renderings have their virtues, the scattershot anthologies leave the Anglophone reader with a highly inconsistent impression of Mickiewicz's art.

In the past few years, the *Sonnets* have experienced a small-scale renaissance. Christopher Adam, for instance, has also published a complete translation of the cycle in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* (1998), and his effort provides a revealing counterpoint to Bidney's. Though the *Sonnets* shocked many of Mickiewicz's contemporaries with all manner of unfamiliar *minarets* and *namazes*, the poem's thirteen-syllable line, with a strict caesura after the seventh syllable, is entirely natural to the Polish ear. In his version, Adam preserves the sonnet form, but opts for iambic pentameter, the metrical *lingua franca* of Anglophone verse. He aims for a prosody as unobtrusive to us as Mickiewicz's was to his audience. Bidney, for his part, chooses a different route. He claims to offer a version of Mickiewicz's Alexandrine "(Or hexametric, in the English melody)" (46). That last parenthetical, by the way, is itself an example of Bidney's Alexandrine—a line that seldom rolls off the tongue. His rendering of "Thè Steppes of Akerman," for instance, contains the unscannable line "Darkening in the west—no hill, path, will appear" (54). This does not fully do justice to the syllabic original's "*Już mrok zapada, nigdzie drogi ni kurhanu.*"

But Bidney's method does produce some very fine lines, and often entire sonnets come across with a grace approaching the original's. The last lines of "View of Mountains from the Kozlov Plain," for instance, though not exact, give the flavor of Mickiewicz:

MIRZA:

[...]

Where eagles lose their way, where even clouds need rest,

I passed cloud-cradled sleeping thunder. One who seeks

Above his turban finds a lonely star, at best.

That's Tchatyrdah!

PILGRIM:

A-ah!

Here, Mickiewicz pushes the Petrarchan structure to its breaking point, challenging the sonnet's lyric integrity by framing it as a dialogue, extending it to fifteen lines, and postponing the *volta* until the final syllable. The Pilgrim's concluding interjection is a Mickiewiczian tour de force, an early example of what Miłosz called "that pure poetry which verges on silence." Very few translators have fully preserved the sonnet's idiosyncratic form, and Christopher Adam's shorter lines force him to constrain the original's melody. Bidney must be applauded for his fidelity.

Bidney approaches his subject with professional care, and his notes reflect a broad engagement with Romantic scholarship. He makes intriguing and often insightful use of various theoretical frameworks, grounding both his verse and prose commentary in the aesthetics of Burke, the psychoanalysis of Kay Redfield Jamison, and (of course) the "elemental" phenomenology of Gaston Bachelard. Aware that the landscape and folklore of the Islamic world is central to Mickiewicz's cycle, Bidney draws interesting parallels with the work of Beckford, Coleridge, and Pushkin, but disregards the problematic nature of this orientalist discourse. He notes, too, that the *Sonnets*' "cultural mix [...] reminds [him] refreshingly of Goethe's *West-East Collection* (*West-östlicher Divan*)" (101)—as well it should, since the cycle carries an epigraph from "Chuld Nameh."

Bidney's "Replies" are a curious mélange of partial explication and pathos: "Romanticism calls for all intensity / To rush into the heart that wants to live, to live!" (73). They are, in part, an admirer's diary, replete with quaint confessions such as "Finishing that rendition brought me close to tears" (59). This kind of thing is somewhat awkward both prosodically and tonally—benefitting a Sentimentalist novel more than a Romantic sonnet cycle. Above all, Bidney is anxious

to persuade the reader of Mickiewicz's significance, and thereby to justify his own efforts. To that end, each "Reply" announces the corresponding Crimean sonnet's most laudable quality. "The thing [he] most admire[s]" in "The Tomb of Potocka," for instance, is the poet's "heartfelt willingness / to blend in thought with doomed Maria [...] without a worry that he will be deemed too weak, / Hymning himself as a woman" (69). Such glosses strike me as somewhat unsophisticated. We must recognize that Maria Potocka serves as an emblem of both Poland's and Mickiewicz's fates; whatever the function of sympathy may be, here, it isn't to showcase the poet's "heartfelt willingness" to identify across gender lines. Lastly, the suggestion that Mickiewicz, friend of George Sand and Margaret Fuller, should "worry that he will be deemed too weak" for extending sympathy to a female implies more about Bidney than it does about the poet.

Despite occasional lapses in taste, and the limited scholarly utility of the "Replies," Bidney's collection offers reliable translations that frequently convey not only the sense, but also the spirit of Mickiewicz's lyric masterpiece. It is hard to deny Bidney's dedication to the material, and harder yet to resist his infectious exuberance. Students of Polish literature, and those interested in translation in general, will find this volume both useful and entertaining.

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Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz. *The Birch Grove and Other Stories*. Trans. Antonia Lloyd-Jones. Intro. Leszek Kolakowski. Budapest: CEU Press, 2002. xvi + 270 pp. \$16.95 (paper).

Jerzy Pilch. *His Current Woman*. Trans. Bill Johnston. Evanston, IL: Hydra Press and Northwestern UP, 2002. 131 pp. \$15.95 (paper).

Although published seven years ago, these two translations of twentieth-century Polish prose remain so far the only works by these writers available in English. The two volumes represent some of the best writing of interwar and of post-Communist Polish literature, respectively: Iwaszkiewicz's short stories come from the 1920s–1930s, and Pilch's novel was published in 1995. Interestingly, these two translatorial choices focus on fiction that either preceded the Communist period or appeared after the fall of Communism, thus framing and contextualizing the literature of 1945–1989. Both of these projects fill a need for English-language editions of contemporary literature, as well as for older texts that have been omitted when constructing the Modernist Polish canon in English. Both translations help to broaden the range of what "Polish literature" means to readers and students alike in Anglophone countries.

Well known as a writer and public figure in his native Poland, Iwaszkiewicz (1894–1980) never had the English-language "career" of Bruno Schulz, Witold Gombrowicz, or Czesław Miłosz, who were also publishing in the 1930s. One may argue that Iwaszkiewicz was not translated because, quite simply, his writing was not on par with that of these giants of Polish letters. Yet Iwaszkiewicz's prominence on the literary and political scene of Communist Poland positioned him in such a way that recognition in the Western world would have been impossible to attain. Apart from being a writer, journalist, and editor, he was a long-time vice/president of the Polish Writers' Union, his last term being 1959–1980. Iwaszkiewicz was also a member of the Parliament for several terms, and a recipient of various Polish government awards as well as of the 1970 Lenin Peace Prize, which he received in Moscow from the hands of the Soviet government. He was condemned by many as part of the Communist establishment, although he served in the Polish pre-war government and diplomatic service and created a hub of underground activities in his house *Stawisko* during the Nazi occupation. In 1991, posthumously, Iwaszkiewicz received the "Righteous among the Nations" award, given by the State of Israel to those who saved Jews during the Holocaust. He remains a controversial figure, whom philosopher Leszek Kolakowski defends in his introduction to the volume as a man of high integrity.