

**MIŁOSZ - DIALOGUE - BORDERLAND**

**CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ**  
- THE CENTENNIAL  
**THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE**  
- THE OPENING  
**THE POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL**  
- ON THE EVE

**MIŁOSZ  
DIALOGUE  
BORDERLAND**

BORDERLAND



SEJNY 2012



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Map of Krasnogruda and Environs 1839.



# FOREWORD

Czesław Miłosz's life and thought are enclosed by the circle of return. It was *apokatastasis*, rendered in poetry and heading for existence. The exile shared the fate of fugitives, emigrants, and others deprived of their roots, those displaced by the winds of history, thrown into the outside world. The wanderer built his home in his mother tongue and remained true to it. He observed the world around him like *Gucio Enchanted*, the hero of his favourite children's book: first, at close quarters, immersed in his small homeland as if in the calyx of the flower, then, from far away, like a world traveller encompassing continents, languages, generations and epochs...

Just like many inhabitants of Wilno [LIT: Vilnius], the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the borderlands of Eastern and Central Europe, Miłosz lost his family home, swallowed by the "abomination of desolation." But he had a *dream of return*. (For poets and wanderers dreams are of utmost importance; they are their workshop.) So he attempted to leave the Land of Ulro, the land of disinheritance. He worked out the paradigm of return and persisted in inscribing it in the foundations of the new epoch. He would often repeat the Hegelian formula he had learnt in his schooldays: "overcome while retaining." The Returner overcame the Exile, a victory to a large degree assisted by the memory of his childhood and his stubborn refusal to accept the verdict of history as final. His oeuvre, the product of the fifty years spent in the West, contains a map priceless for those in disagreement with the place marked out for them by historical necessity. He was given the chance of returning because he lived long enough to see the demise of the ideologies and dictatorships responsible for the barbaric twentieth century. He visited the places he used to wander in his early youth: "*I forced my way through a thicket where a park was once, but I did not find the traces of the lanes.*" (from *Return*)

One of the places Czesław Miłosz returns to is Krasnogruda, the pre-war estate of his mother's relatives situated near Sejny at the Polish-Lithuanian border. Here, in the Krasnogruda Manor, he used to spend his school and university holidays, experienced his first heartaches and crises of youth and wrote poetry. He felt strongly attached to this "place of many contradictory experiences," an attachment he also expressed in his later writings. No wonder he wished to return here and used the first opportunity that presented itself in 1989.

Here, he met the founders of the Borderland Foundation who had also arrived at that time in Sejny to found a centre of multicultural practice inspired to



a large degree by the ideas they found in Miłosz's books. And they remained in close touch with each other. As long as he felt strong enough he made several journeys to Sejny and Krasnogruda at the invitation of the young Borderlanders. His returns became something more than just trips to places remembered from his youth. Following Miłosz, the young artists found themselves on the line of return. They did their best to participate in his experience and weave it into their own work. From here came their reverence for the issues of memory and place. They began the process of gaining possession of the Krasnogruda Manor with its park and the remains of the buildings, hoping to restore them physically and bring them back to life. Such was the origin of the idea of the International Centre for Dialogue, a place meant to become a workshop for the craft of building bridges between cultures and the exploration, through education and artistic practice, of the ethos of the people of the borderlands. Czesław Miłosz declared his full endorsement of the idea and agreed to support it with his patronage. Until his final days he closely followed the progress of the venture's realization. Before he passed away, he managed to acquaint himself with the plans for the manor's renovation and the design of the new buildings to be erected there. In his letter to the Borderland Foundation, he wrote:

*It is very fitting that instead of a manor house in Krasnogruda there will be a centre of international dialogue, and that Sejny will preserve the memory of what it was then, before the First World War, and even earlier, when the superb gymnasium was still here, among the graduates of which was Stanisław Kunat and other prominent activists of the post-1831 wave of emigration; the time when the shtetl of Sejny was a centre of religious thought worthy of mention in the Encyclopaedia Judaica, and Bishop Baranauskas resided here.*

*Once we were taught Hegel's formula: "To overcome while retaining." And I suppose that this is the best way of expressing our attempts at drawing closer to the past. Immersed in "now" we ought to try to transpose what was into a new dimension, so to speak, fully conscious of the fact that we are working for what is to come and that we are preparing a gift for those who are to take our place. I draw enormous joy from being able to say in my thoughts to those with whom I walk around Krasnogruda and Sejny: "You are in good hands; you are not forgotten but present." It might have been possible for the "abomination of desolation" to persist, and the fact that it has not is a sign of human good will and wisdom.*

Krzysztof Czyżewski



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Czesław Miłosz in Krasnogruda, June 1994.

**CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ ON  
KRASNOGRUDA AND SEJNY**

*(The photos just received...)*

The photos just received from Krasnogruda, taken a few months ago. The autumn park, the reeds of the lake; I can see exactly the angle from which each was taken. What would we say about a nineteenth-century man who, in 1884, remembered the days of his youth in 1830? We would say that these were two different epochs, so unlike each other, that he was too old and his memory not what it used to be. Nothing of the sort applies here. The sensation of each detail is as sharp as when I was nineteen, and this feeling comes back as though I were rowing again, pointing the prow at the alder trees on the tip of the island, or climbing the stairs leading to the manor doors on the porch: the feeling that I am here only for a moment. In Krasnogruda? On the earth? Yet never did this land of lake and stone with a cloudy sky seem like home. As for the era, the leaves on the photograph seem more important; and, since most of the people who used to walk the land are already dead, all the more permanent seems the ground, the plants, the seasons and the passing of all human affairs. And even with this great divide separating this densely populated land from those that have passed away, the shadows, from us, the living, the era, fashions and habits cease to matter completely, so that, perhaps, we may imagine the dead from all places and all centuries equal and communicating with each other.

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The extract is an entry in *Nieobjęta ziemia* (Kraków 1984), quoted after *Dzieła zebrane [Collected Works]* (Kraków 2004).

### **Krasnogruda or Krasnohruda**

It wasn't a hereditary estate of the Kunats, but only purchased from other relatives in the nineteenth century. My great grandfather, Teofil Kunat, had two sons, Bronisław and Zygmunt. The former was the heir of Krasnogruda, the latter went to study agronomy at the Main School in Warsaw, then emigrated north, to Lithuania, married Józefa Syruciówna and became my father. The photograph of him as a small boy still puzzles me. What an essence of the joy of life, and at the same time of mischievous humour and intelligence! He was a nice boy, everybody must have loved him, and his later life proved that true, too.

Bronisław Kunat was buried close to Krasnogruda, in Sejny; Zygmunt, however, was buried in Świętobrość, Kiejdany county [now Kėdainiai, Lithuania – transl.]. When he travelled to Kowno [LIT: Kaunas], the capital of independent Lithuania, in order to settle some matters in local offices, he found his name helpful, sounding sort of indigenous, *kuna* in Lithuanian stands for “body” or “power.” In fact, it was only a testimony to the fact that the Yotvingian tribes spoke some Baltic tongue, something between Prussian and Lithuanian; according to family tradition the Kunats hailed from Yotvingia. Their roots are, therefore, where the greatest number of excavations testify to the Yotvingian presence, i.e. the Suwałki region. But how it happened that the Yotvingians were exterminated during the Middle Ages, I really do not know. They never went beyond the type of organization of the American Indians, i.e. they never united as a state. Is it not, then, true that one big battle concluded with carnage was enough to put an end to their existence? And that one captive child, a son of a chieftain, was to be raised as a Pole and receive the Topór as his coat-of-arms? Somehow it smells of the history writing typical for Romanticism.

A deserted wilderness stretched between the estates of the Teutonic Knights and Lithuania for a few hundred years, only later did the Polish settlers arrive from the south and the Lithuanian ones from the north. Where was the abode of the ennobled Kunats? There was Stanisław Kunat's library in Krasnogruda; he was an economist, and after the November Uprising emigrated to France and became professor of École de Batignolles. He was born in Michaliszki, near Krasnogruda, Mariampol county.

In the Sopot Catholic cemetery, there are graves of the heiresses of Krasnogruda, Bronisław's daughters, my cousins, Ela and Nina; also Ela's husband, Władysław Lipski and, symbolically, their son, Zygmunt, who perished in a German concentration camp. Buried there is also Weronika, Zygmunt's daughter, my mother. Her sister Maria is buried, however, in Olsztyn. This are the kind of dry data that we carry with ourselves, though civilization seems to favour less and less the memory of hazy tribal affairs.



### **Kunatt, Stanisław**

My grandfather, Zygmunt Kunat, spelled his name with a double “t” only in his youth. The custom of doubling the final consonant (Jundzill, Montwill. Radziwill) appeared probably to make the names sound more aristocratic. The tombstone of Bronisław Kunatt, my grandfather’s brother, which stands in the (Catholic) cemetery in Sejny, bears the double “t”. I have seen books from Stanisław Kunatt’s library in Krasnogruda ten kilometres away from Sejny. His name features among the notable personalities of the Suwałki region (*Biografie Suwalskie* part IV, the article titled *Konserwatywny liberal [A Conservative Liberal]* in *Biografie Suwalskie part IV*). There we learn that he descended from a Calvinist noble family, was born in 1799 in the manor of Michaliszki, Mariampol county, Suwałki region and graduated from the Sejny Secondary School in 1817. The school became famous for its renowned Great Emigration graduates: Antoni Bukaty, Heronim Kajsiewicz and Leonard Niedźwiecki.

Stanisław Kunatt studied law at Warsaw University and then, in 1820–1823, he studied economy and philosophy in Berlin and Paris. Returning to Poland he lectured on law and economy in Warsaw. He supported the liberal opposition and became a member of the Academic Guards and then a Privy Councillor and a clerk of the Parliamentary sessions. While in emigration, he remained loyal to the Hotel Lambert line. He co-founded the Literary Association and was a lecturer at the Higher Polish School.

His younger brothers were also born in Michaliszki: Mikołaj, an officer in the November Uprising, then émigré and member of the Democratic Society; and Teofil who bought Krasnogruda (from his Eysymont relatives) in 1853. He was the father of Bronisław and Zygmunt, i.e., my grandfather.

In the inter-war period Sejny was a small

Jewish town. There was also the other Sejny, the Lithuanian one, the seat of the (mostly Lithuanian) diocese. Its bishop, at the turn of the twentieth century, was Antoni Baranowski, a poet and mathematician. Here we find some complications: Baranowski hailed from Onikszy [LIT Anykščiai], Lithuania, but in the seminary he used the name Baranauskas and was a Lithuanian patriot. He chose Lithuanian to write his imitations of the descriptions of nature in Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz*, his poem titled *Anikščio Šilelis [Onikszy Forest in Lithuanian]* ranks high in the history of the Lithuanian literature. Later on, however, Baranauskas ceased to write poetry and departed from his language, writing treatises in Polish. The Sejny Lithuanians wish to erect a monument to him in front of the cathedral, which is an idea that I very much support, although it would commemorate him only in his early incarnation as a Lithuanian poet.



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Krasnogruda around 1931. Czesław Miłosz in the middle (the tallest). First left: Florentyna Kunat née Grzegorzewska, Ela and Nina's mother. Third right: Janina Niementowska nee Kunat.

## THE INHABITANTS OF KRASNOGRUDA

Ela (Gabriela) and Nina (Janina) were Bronisław Kunat's daughters. Their surname used to be spelled in the past with a double "t". Bronisław was the brother of my grandfather, Zygmunt. He is buried at the Catholic cemetery in Sejny.

Ela married Władysław Lipski, an engineer who had studied in Karlsruhe, Germany. They had one child, Zygmunt, whom they called Zaza. Nina took the surname Niementowska after her husband. The marriage, however, was a short-lived one, and her husband never visited Krasnogruda. When I came here, for holidays, Ela and Nina's mother, Florentyna née Grzegorzewska was still alive. The estate, though quite sizeable, did not produce enough profit. The person in charge of the farm was Nina. She used to wear tall boots and was an ardent horse rider. In 1919-20, she served as a private in an Uhlan regiment. Ela managed the household, i.e. the rooms for holidaymakers, mostly Warsaw intelligentsia. Władek [diminutive of Władysław – transl.] did not have any permanent function to perform, except for transporting visitors to and from Sejny and the coach station, and entertaining them; he would often sit at the piano in the living room and play music for dancing. Zaza was brought up and educated in the manor. I do not remember whether he, eventually, went to secondary school. He was a very sensitive and musical person. Together with his father, he was taken in 1939, or in the beginning of 1940, to Sachsenhausen. He was just 15 then. They included him in the group of prisoners whose task was checking the durability of footwear under increasing weight - he died in the camp after a few years. His father had an athletic build and spoke German fluently, perhaps these were the reasons he survived.

At the beginning of the Nazi occupation, Nina worked as a courier crossing the border into neighbouring Lithuania. I am not sure whether Władek's and Zaza's arrest had anything to do with this, I do not think so. Their arrest resulted from the general action against the Polish intelligentsia on the territories that the Nazis incorporated into the Reich. After Władysław's and Zaza's arrest the estate came under German management, and Nina and Ela got to Warsaw and there, I suppose, survived the Uprising. After the war, they settled with Władek, who had returned from the concentration camp, in Sopot, in a villa registered under my name. The villa was haunted; the family of a German doctor committed suicide there, in a group, taking cyanide while sitting at the table. Miron Białoszewski, in one of his poems, described the ghosts haunting the house. When in America I tried to help my family, sending them parcels. Later they swapped the villa for a flat in a housing block.

Ela died in 1962, Nina in 1977 and Władek in 1978.

All three are buried at the Catholic cemetery in Sopot, where there is also a symbolic tombstone of Zaza, and in the same block there is also the grave of my mother, who died of typhoid in the village of Drennica, near Gdańsk, during the so-called "repatriation of Vilnius" in 1945.



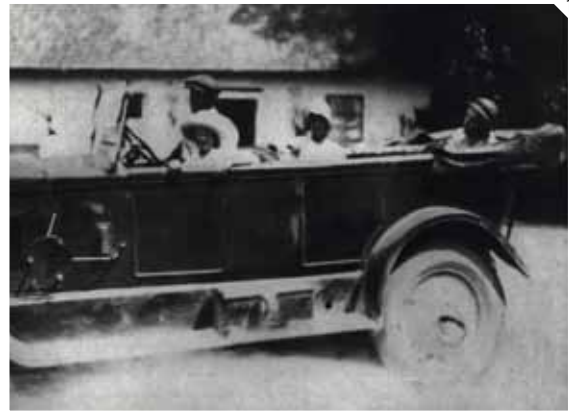
Left: Guests of the manor pension on its porch, Krasnogruda 1930s.  
At the left column: Gabriela Lipska née Kunat.

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Top: Janina Niementowska née Kunat, at the building of the so called Aviaris, Krasnogruda, July 1932.

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The text was dictated by Czesław Miłosz in Krakow on 16-30 April 2003, and written down by Agnieszka Kosińska, who sent it in a letter to the Borderland Foundation.

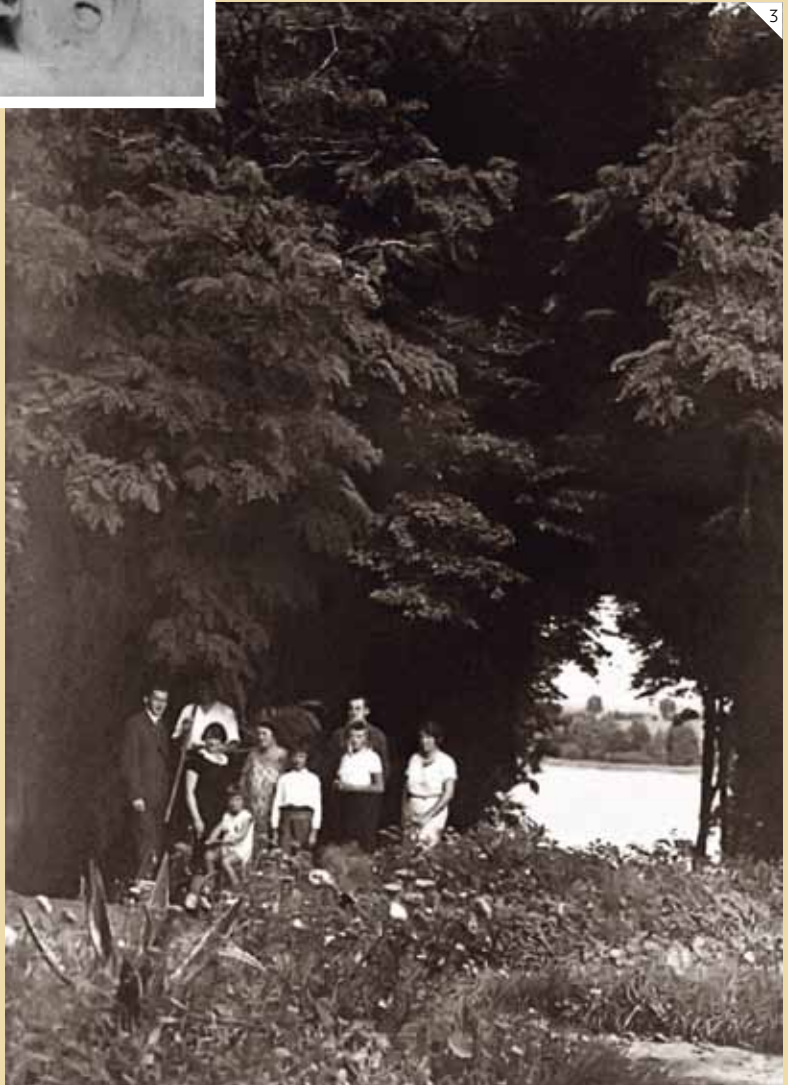
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1. Władysław Lipski's car, the so-called docart, Krasnogruda 1930s.  
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2. Gabriela Lipska in the alley of Krasnogruda park leading to the banks of Hołny lake.  
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3. Czesław Miłosz (third from right) in the Krasnogruda park, 1930s.  
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1. You could reach Krasnogruda by britzka from Grodno (Wilno route) or Augustów (Warsaw route).  
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2. Władysław Lipski on the veranda of the Krasnogruda manor house.  
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3. Gabriela Lipska in the dining room of the Krasnogruda manor house.







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The Krasnogruda  
Manor House in the  
1930s.

## THE KRASNOGRUDA HOUSE

Near the house, more or less next to the porch, stood an ancient tree, a huge linden, gone today. Next to it, there was a small outbuilding, the so called “*świronek*” [a small granary], it seems to me it was made of larch. There was no heating, in winter it was very cold, but in the summer it could offer guest rooms for holidaymakers. The house itself was two-storied, a rare thing. From the hall you entered the dining room, on the left from the living room, quite a large one. Behind the dining room there was one room occupied in winter, as far as I remember, by Nina. Who lived there in summer? - I do not know, perhaps some holidaymakers. There was a similar room behind the dining room, it seems to me, a drawing room. From the hall, the stairs led to the ground floor, to two large rooms. One of those was occupied by Władek and his family. There were different hallways there, I do not quite remember whether they connected with the kitchen on the same floor or if it was downstairs. The entrance to the kitchen, because of the uneven ground, was on the outside. From the hall you could also climb upstairs, to the attic. The whole house, as far as I remember, had a basement and was covered with plaster. Whether it was made of wooden logs or it was half-timbered -- I do not remember. The floor of the attic was covered with sand and walking across it you could reach one room that had a floor made of wooden planks. This was the room I used to stay in while on holidays.

The living room and the dining room were furnished in a quite old-fashioned way. I remember an old sofa, piano, desk, armchairs and some old wardrobe in the living room. In the dining

room, just on the right from the entrance, there was a bookcase with books belonging to Stanisław Kunat, the emigrant of 1831 and professor of l'École des Batignolles in Paris. The books were bound in period leather, and some of them, it seems, must have been written by him. At that time I had little interest in history.

To the right of the porch, which still exists, there were paths at the same level leading into a small orchard, below these paths a few park alleys led towards the lake. There was an alley running along the lake, close to the shore, to the right of the jetty for boats up to the swimming hole far left, near the rushes. From the swimming hole you could swim across the lake to the opposite shore (which I did once or twice), to the Hołny Manor belonging to the Meyers. You could reach Sejny from Krasnogruda either through the forest, in the direction of the village of Ogrodniki and further down the road, or via forest roads, first to the village of Żegary and then another forest road led to the town.

It seems to me that Krasnogruda used to be a large estate with a big forest of which little has remained. Almost the whole area between the manor and Lake Gaładuś, approximately 2 miles, was covered with forests and I suspect that the wood cut from these forests served to satisfy some aristocratic whims, such as trips to the West. Nowadays, there are only fields between Lake Gaładuś and the manor. I know little about the relations between the manor and the neighboring villages: Ogrodniki, it seems to me, had a mixed population, Żegary was purely Lithuanian. The Lithuanian border, tightly locked as you know, ran a few kilometres away from the manor, and I never heard about any border crossing in Ogrodniki.



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1. The Krasnogruda manor park before the war.  
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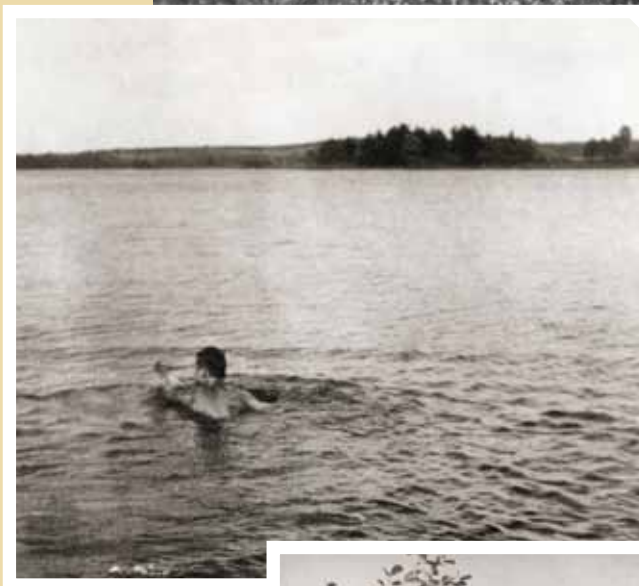
2. The dining room of the Krasnogruda manor house in 1927. At the piano: Władysław Lipksi. First from right: Aleksander Miłosz and Janina Niementowska.

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The text was dictated by Czesław Miłosz in Krakow on 16-30 April 2003, and written down by Agnieszka Kosińska, who sent it in a letter to the Borderland Foundation.



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1. The Krasnogruda Manor House in 1935.

2. Czesław Miłosz swimming in Lake Hołny, 1930s.

3. Guests of the Krasnogruda manor pension on Lake Hołny.

## MY CONNECTIONS WITH SEJNY - CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ IN CONVERSATION WITH SEJNY YOUTH

Bożena Szroeder: For many years now, we have been conducting work with the younger generation on the memory of Sejny and the multicultural heritage of our region. In cooperation with our youth, we have prepared a book and a theatre performance of the *Sejny Chronicles* based on recorded tales of the elderly inhabitants. Our team is composed of young Poles, Lithuanians and Old-Believers, also present here with us. We have dreamt for a long time to have this opportunity to talk to you.



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The team of the Sejny Chronicles with Czesław Miłosz in his Krakow flat at ul. Bogusławskiego 24, on April 26, 2002. First row, from left to right: Rita Kalinowska, Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska, Weronika Czyżewska, Magda Meyza; second row: Magda Andruczyk, Ewa Adukowska, Paulina Lewandowska, Czesław Miłosz, Ilona Jodzis, Bożena Szroeder; top row: Michał Gryguć, Adam Adukowski, Kacper Szroeder, Dariusz Miszkiel, Tomasz Wcisło.

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C.M.: In my student years, I used to spend my summer holidays in Krasnogruda, about 10 kilometres from Sejny, right on the Lithuanian border, in the estate belonging to the Kunats. Grandfather Kunat was born in Krasnogruda. My grandfather's brother, Bronislaw Kunat, is buried in Sejny, in the Catholic cemetery, although the Kunats were originally Calvinist, at least according to an eighteenth-century list of the Calvinist nobility. How it happened that they became Catholic, I do not know, but one way or another, in the nineteenth century they were Catholic. My grandfather was born in Krasnogruda, but as a younger son he had no right of inheritance. He studied agronomy at the Main School in Warsaw. These were the times of positivism. Later, he emigrated north, i.e. to Lithuania proper, north of Kaunas, and there he got married to Józefa Syruć, my grandmother. I visited Krasnogruda most often in my student years. With the economic decline of the landed gentry, my relatives Ela and Nina Kunatówny (you modified the names for married women) set up a pension to somehow bolster the financial situation of the estate. These are my connections with Sejny. And to Sejny, we would travel every few days. I do not know how you envisage the Sejny of that time. At the end of the market, i.e. on the other side from the Synagogue, on the right, there used to be Mama Fligieltaub's restaurant. Have you ever heard about such a restaurant?

Yes. We have.

C.M.: And, more or less opposite the restaurant, something extraordinary used to happen at the coach station. It was a big coach, starting at the market with a terrible racket. It would attract crowds all around! Even its roof was packed with various baskets with poultry etc. usually on market days. And so, the packed coach would start towards Suwałki. I don't know, is such a picture familiar to you? The coach belonged, of course, to a Jewish company and the customers were, first of all, Jewish traders who brought various merchandise to Sejny. My cousins were not very pious. Very tolerant, but not very religious. They hardly ever travelled to the church in Sejny. And as for grandfather Kunat, I wrote a poem about him. I do not know whether some of you are familiar with it?

Yes, we read it.

C.M.: Grandfather Kunat was a very tolerant man. And these were the times when it was quite difficult to be tolerant, there was a lot of ethnic tension, especially between Poles and Lithuanians, and our family, on both my father's and my mother's side, spoke Polish. So, there were occasional conflicts, not only with the Lithuanians, but also with our neighbours who accused my grandfather of Lithuanian sympathies, i.e. that he acknowledged the rights of the Lithuanians to exist as a separate nation. In Szetejnie, where I was born, the school was about one kilometre from the manor. Before the First World War, my mother used to run a small school where she taught reading and writing. In what language did she teach? In Polish, of course. At that time, Polish was regarded to be the language of culture, and Lithuanian to be the language of peasants. So she taught in Polish. As a small boy I would go with my mother on a tour of the neighbouring villages and then we were met cordially by her former pupils. But, there was also someone else at the school who taught in Lithuanian, and it seems it was my grandfather who paid that person. That's the way things went then.



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Obviously, my grandfather never got into any conflict with the Jews from the local township of Kiejdany. Perhaps it was the matter of his Calvinism, ecumenical tendencies in our family were always there.

And my brother, Andrzej, he, in turn, and it is a colourful story, saved the life of an unknown person chased by the Nazis. The man turned out to be the chief of the Soviet partisans operating in the adjacent forests. His troops were composed mostly of the Jews from the town of Kiejdany. Andrzej helped them, sending them food for which they paid back by supplying him with a proper certificate that allowed him later on, in the Soviet times, to avoid deportation to the camps. I must add here that my father worked for a few years as County Engineer in Suwałki. Sejny belonged to the same district.

You, naturally, have many questions you would like to ask, I'll be glad to answer them. I'm not going to lecture, so you are welcome, let's make the most of our meeting.

Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska: Did you ever travel with your father in our borderlands?

C.M.: Yes, I sometimes travelled with my father to different places in Suwałki county. So I might say I know it pretty well. I could tell you colourful stories from the war years. When the Soviet troops took Wilno I crossed the border illegally running away from Lithuania. It was 1940. Summer. The border was then the Soviet border, i.e. newly traced and agreed-upon between the German occupants and the Soviet empire, it ran north of Wізajny and Szypliszki. There were three of us, we walked all night through the bogs that were, more or less, waist-deep. And we made it, we reached the border. But then it turned out that there was one more border to be crossed, the one running near Raczki. The Nazis multiplied all possible borders, but that is another story...

B.S.: Do you remember anybody from pre-war Sejny, from the times when you spent your holidays here?

C.M.: I remember only my aunt, or Mama Fligieltaub, only...

M.C.: But you visited her pension?

C.M.: Yes.

Magda Meyza: Did you come to Sejny for the fair? Do you remember the Cloth Hall?

C.M.: Yes, I do. Dimly, though.

M.M.: Can you remember some pictures from the fair?

C.M.: No, no, I believe I must have been engrossed in doing other things then. It seems to me that only later at an older age, one asks himself: why didn't I watch more carefully the world around me then? When you are young you have plenty of worries, experiences. And you concentrate much more on yourself. It is a plague today. The plague of young Polish poetry, writers writing exclusively about themselves. Everybody is writing about themselves, only later regretting that you

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did not look back, regretting that you did not take notice of what was going around you. I was concerned only about the two routes you could take from Krasnogruda to Sejny. One ran along the road and was quite boring, the other one ran through the forest, Żegary, and then back through the forest to Sejny. I followed that trail many times, I associate it with horses, carriages, riding etc.

B.S.: Did you visit the bookshop in Sejny then?

C.M.: There was no bookshop then, I do not remember.

B.S.: There was a bookshop belonging to Franciszek Nawrocki. He also published postcards of Sejny.

C.M.: Aha, I don't remember. Opposite the synagogue?

B.S.: No, no, just next to the Cloth Hall. There is a greengrocer's there today.

K.S.: Has Suwałki remained in your memory, somehow?

C.M.: Yes. Yes. It has. I didn't go to school in Suwałki, though. My brother went to gymnasium [grammar school] in Suwałki, he took his *matura* [state-mandated general examinations] there. So my brother is more connected with Suwałki. Not me. When my father became County Engineer I just continued my studies in Wilno, at the King Sigismund August Gymnasium.

M.C.: So, your parents decided you should continue there?

C.M.: Yes.

Tomasz Wcisło: Did you live in Wilno alone or in lodgings?

C.M.: I lived in lodgings. Has anybody been to Wilno?

Yes. Yes.

C.M.: Are you going to study at Vilnius University?

M.C.: No, not everybody. The language barrier. Those who come from Lithuanian families speak both Polish and Lithuanian. But those who come from Polish families do not speak Lithuanian.

C.M.: I am in favour of the Polish studies in Vilnius, such studies open new and different opportunities. First of all: the research in the libraries. You can find documents there that are few and far between in Poland, Or they are unknown and not easily accessible.

Weronika Czyżewska: Is there a place in Wilno that you particularly liked?

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C.M.: Wilno for me, means, first of all, the university that, as you know, has an extensive labyrinth of courtyards and backyards of sorts. They say there are yards that no man has ever trod. It is a very intense experience for me, particularly now, to see the Polish Department and the Polish Studies Association located more or less at the same place that it used to be in the past, i.e. Wielka Street, on the side of the University courtyards. It is probably the most important place for me. Apart from that, all the hills surrounding Wilno, the Three Crosses, and those slopes we used to ski. Also the Wilja [Neris], a different river now, after the regulation, it used to flow so wide...

M.M.: What did the Krasnogruda manor house look like?

C.M.: It looked the way it looks today, although it was a completely different building. Now it is some sort of reconstruction. But it looked the same, even the porch was more or less the same. Have you been there?

Yes. Yes.

C.M.: And, there was the park. Of course, not so wildly overgrown as today. When I was there last time -- still, I don't know what it looks like at the moment -- so, when I was there last time the places we used to go to bathe were overgrown. You went down, to the right, and there was a bathing place, you swam behind the reeds and rushes into the lake.

Adam Adukowski: What did you like best in Krasnogruda?

C.M.: I liked the lakes best, especially Lake Holny, on which Krasnogruda is situated, and also the other one, Lake Gaładuś. There used to be a forest between the lakes in the past. When they cut it down, I don't know. But it was a long time ago. Sometimes, I hunted ducks, even around this island in the middle of the lake, almost on the Lithuanian border. And there is a Lithuanian farm along the lake, Dapkiewicz's, I visited it on my return here. Young Dapkiewicz, who welcomed me warmly, was very happy to see me, since he had just heard the broadcast of *The Issa Valley* in Lithuanian.

B.S.: I remember seeing Mr. Dapkiewicz just before my departure. He told me about that meeting and about his parents and their connections with Krasnogruda.

M.C.: Can you tell us, did you like *The Issa Valley*, the film by Tadeusz Konwicki? We know it was shot on the Polish side of the border, does it disagree with some of your memories?

C.M.: No, the reason I am not satisfied with that film is different. First of all, Konwicki used the convention of the memories of an emigrant and included some of my poetry without my permission. The book has nothing to do with the nostalgia of an emigrant. My point was that certain distancing in time and space allows a more detached and objective description. And as for nature, of course, I did recognize the Suwałki region. The environs of my county are slightly different. As a matter of fact, they changed a lot, the manor houses and parks along the Nieważa [LIT: Nevėžis] are gone. The flat land that you know -- have you ever been to Szetejnie?

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Not everybody, some of us have.

C.M.: The plain was composed of villages with orchards, beautiful orchards, quite wealthy villages even. And there is nothing there now, all the villagers were deported to Siberia. It seems that half of the population of the Kiejdany county was deported to Siberia. There are now *kolkhoz* [communal farm] fields, huge fields, nothing else. The local population calls this area Kazakhstan.

Magda Andruczyk: You were born in Szetejnie, Lithuania. Do you speak Lithuanian?

C.M.: No, I don't. But I can understand a newspaper if I try to read it. But I don't speak Lithuanian.

M.A.: So, if somebody speaks to you in Lithuanian you understand it?

C.M.: I understand it more or less, but unfortunately I can't speak it. As for the Miłosz family roots, the archives register them near Kiejdany, in Samogitia (Kiejdany and Kaunas counties), from the 16th century, but even then they spoke Polish. This we know because there are documents. We do not know, however, what language they spoke earlier. There is a legend that the family migrated in the sixteenth century from Lusatia, in the West, fleeing the German oppression. Anyway, from the sixteenth century onwards the family has spoken Polish and I have never referred to my nationality as Lithuanian, but always as Lithuanian Polish and that is not the same as Polish (from the Crown).

Rita Kalinowska: Do you remember any song from those times?

C.M.: I am tone-deaf...

R.K.: Would you like to hear us sing a song for you?

C.M.: Of course.

B.S.: It will be a borderland song, the lyrics are in Polish, the music is Lithuanian. *Zakukała ziaziuleńka, zapłakała sieroteńka... (they sing)*

C.M.: It is very similar to those Lithuanian songs I know.

R.K.: We can also sing in Lithuanian...

C.M.: Oh, yes. *(they sing)*

I understand this song. I must admit here that my Lithuanian-ness, if such a thing exists, refers to the songs heard as a small boy in Szetejnie. As a matter of fact, Polish folklore is unintelligible to me, I really understand only Lithuanian folklore. The songs I heard in Szetejnie and that now are

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really important to me, they really build my connection with Lithuania.

Ewa Adukowska: Did you attend Lithuanian weddings?

C.M.: I don't think so. Perhaps I did, I do not remember. Basically, the Lithuanian songs meant to me the songs I heard across the river, in the evening, when people returned from the fields. They sang so wonderfully, there are people with a great talent for group singing. I read somewhere the description of a whole train of deported Lithuanians, families from villages like those around Szetejnie. When the train reached one of the Siberian towns, Irkutsk, I believe, these people on it gave a concert of Lithuanian song. Then they put them on barges and transported them to the place where the river met its tributary flowing across the taiga. They took them farther, up the river, to settle in the taiga. They had to build huts before the coming of winter, to start everything from scratch. The fate of these Lithuanian villages around Szetejnie I found heart-breaking. I felt compassion and solidarity. And that is why I wrote in defence of Lithuania for the international press during its occupation. The Lithuanian part of me survived.

M.C.: Do you remember Sejny Jews?

C.M.: It was, after all, partly a Jewish town. At the same time, Sejny changed a lot in its history. I do not know whether you learnt anything about the nineteenth-century secondary school in Sejny? It was one of the better grammar schools of that time and several noteworthy persons graduated from it. I know, more or less, the story of that school in early nineteenth-century Sejny. The Kunat brothers graduated from that school. One of the brothers lived in Krasnogruda, or even bought Krasnogruda from his relatives, two others were active in the circles of Parisian emigration. Krasnogruda housed the volumes of Stanisław Kunat's library, he worked as a lecturer in Paris, in the school of Batignolles. The other brother also emigrated to Paris. Apart from that, the school in Sejny produced such post-1830 uprising émigré activists as Kajsewicz and Niedźwiecki. So, your town became quite famous for that school, and later important Jewish schools were founded, too.

Ilona Jodzis: There were also the Russian Old Believers in the neighbourhood of Sejny. Do you remember anything about them? The villages near Krasnogruda, e.g. Sztabinki, belonged to the Old Believers. There was a *molenna* [church for Old Believers] there.

C.M.: Speaking about the Old Believers I need to refer to my family chronicles. My paternal grandfather, Artur Miłosz, was totally different from my maternal grandfather, grandfather Kunat. The former was quite a brawler and joined the uprising of 1863. But then, the uprising quickly ended, so he returned to the manor. Then, it was only necessary to protect him from deportation to Siberia. And the nearest village was an Old-Believer village. He was on good terms with them, and the whole village gathered to debate what to do: can a Christian commit perjury to save another person's life? They came to the conclusion that a Christian may commit such a deed and they swore that he had never left his estate. In this way they saved him from deportation to Siberia. That gives you an idea about the *sobornost* of these people, doesn't it? This idea that was so strong among the Old-Believers, the spirit of community, the spirit of collective counsel. And as for the neighbourhood of Sejny, I still remember the little church, and it makes me feel

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so sad. It was a wooden church, very pretty. And it burnt down, I don't remember the circumstances, it was after the war...

M.C.: Yes, I was able to be there in that church and I recorded a mass with these Lithuanian songs, one of which we just sang. That was in the early eighties. The church burnt down in 1983 in unexplained circumstances.

C.M.: Did they build a new one?

M.C.: Yes, a brick one, but it is not the same...

I.J.: What are your memories of your school days, first friendships, first loves?

C.M.: My school was King Sigismund August Gymnasium in Wilno. The terminology of that day was different: gymnasium meant an eight-year school leading to the *matura*, final secondary school exams. My gymnasium was not co-educational. There were separate schools for boys and for girls. In the upper forms of the secondary school I joined a clandestine organization that grouped both gymnasium boys and girls, it was called Pet. What was the organization like? Its history is quite complicated. There was a clandestine youth organization founded as early as during the partitions of Poland called Pet, in secondary schools it was a branch of Zet [Union of the Polish Youth - ed.]. These were self-educational and independence movements. But as we lived in an independent Poland, our organization did not have this pro-independence character but rather had self-educational and slightly political aspirations, I mean, it was not a political organization but, I would say, a more liberal-oriented one. So, for example, I would give speeches against Sienkiewicz or about Darwin, which was connected with my naturalist interests. So, Pet was not exactly a leftist organization but, let's say, a liberal one. Some of the members became well-known personalities. There was, e.g. Małunowiczówna, a Belarusian as the name suggests. She became an outstanding professor of classical Greek and Latin literature at the Catholic University of Lublin. Another one was Abramowiczówna [Zofia - ed.]. She also became a classical scholar -- we have her four-volume Polish-Greek dictionary, the best there was. Another personality belonging to that circle was and is Stanisław Stomma, a Catholic feature writer, later professor of law at Warsaw University. Those were the friendships of my school days.

W.C.: What did you read, with your friends, when you were our age, what books, what poems?

C.M.: That's a very interesting question. Naturally, under your desk, you would read Nat Pinkerton. Those were the cartoons of the time. The hero was an American sleuth called Nat Pinkerton, who worked in the twenties. Apart from that, I grew up on adventure stories. First of all came Karl May. I don't know if you know Karl May at all?

W.C.: Some of us know some fragments by heart and wander around looking for Indians...

C.M.: There was also this writer called Thomas Mayne Reid, today probably forgotten, but incredibly popular at that time. In Sztejnica, I found an old pre-war trunk full of books with



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Mayne Reid's adventure novels in Russian. It was my father's trunk. The action of his novels took place in America; he was very popular in Poland and in Russia. There is even one story by the Russian writer Chekhov about two boys who, having read Mayne Reid, run away from home to reach America, to live there on hunting and robbery, but are caught at the first station. So, there was Thomas Meyne Reid. Obviously, I read Sienkiewicz, but I was not a great enthusiast of his writing. Later came the enchantment with our Polish Romantic literature that remained with me for ever. I think it is unavoidable when you read in Polish. First of all, Mickiewicz, all the more since Mickiewicz stands for my home land. But I had some grudges against Mickiewicz, e.g. his *Pan Tadeusz* does not precisely reflect our natural world. For example, in the scene where Wojski plays [the horn] and the echo responds and the beeches respond to beeches... What beeches? Where do you find beeches here? They don't grow here. The beech boundary runs south of here, even further south than Nowogródek. True, there seem to be beeches in the Białowieża Park, but that's south from us, that's the northern boundary of the beech, further north you don't find any beech forests.

Later came other books. For example: I profited a lot from our religious education. They started with the first years of secondary school. First, there was holy history, but then, it was dogmatics and apologetics, practically on the seminary level. I locked horns with our priest... Oh, I can see our boys livened up at that moment. There was a priest who would throw me out of the class, saying: "Miłosz, you are wearing an indecent expression on your face".

We used the textbook on the history of church by Rev. Archutowski, with annotations printed in small print containing various heresies. So I read all about these heresies and I liked them very much, especially Manichaeism. So I profited from these classes a lot. By the same token I profited from our Latin classes. Our Latin teacher, whose name was Rożek, came from Krakow, he was fanatical about Latin and about translation into Polish. So I learnt his method, I used that later as a professor at the University of California at Berkeley. I had a seminar there in translation from Polish and Russian into English. Rożek used to correct a translation collectively, I mean, he would put a statement on the blackboard and then turn to the whole class asking someone to correct it and give a better translation. Sometimes one sentence took an hour of discussion. It was a very good method which I used with my American students. But now it was a translation from Polish into English.

So much about the profit earned from teachers and textbooks. Then, as I went through a religious crisis, the book that was of great importance to me was the one I read in the final year of my secondary school, the title was *Religious Experience* [*The Varieties of Religious Experience* - transl.]. The author was the American writer William James; this year is the centennial of its publication in English. It was published in Polish, perhaps in 1913 [1918 - ed.]; the author, an American professor, collected various types of religious experience not excluding any religion or denomination. He researched these experiences as a psychologist, though in fact it meant practicing those experiences, i.e. a religious experience.

These are my books, in a nutshell. And Romanticism: for some time I was taken by Słowacki, also because of my homeland. As for Mickiewicz, we took once a grand tour from Wilno by train southwards, to Bieniakonie. Why the Bieniakonie station? We got off and walked - through almost the entire forest, a few kilometres away from the Bolecienki estate. Why this estate again? Because it belonged to the Puttkamers. The wife of Count Puttkamer was Maryla with whom Mickiewicz fell in love in his youth, and there in the woods near Bolecienki, at midnight, the last meeting between

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Mickiewicz and Maryla took place. It is a little bit inappropriate to talk about such things to you young people, isn't it? So, our teachers thought it was a type of a sanctuary to Mickiewicz, and the pupils, fortunately, did not ask indiscreet questions.

As for Słowacki, I used to often visit Jaszuny, the Jaszuny station. Jaszuny was an estate belonging to the Śniadeckis. The daughter of Śniadecki's brother – Ludwika Śniadecka – was the adolescent love of Juliusz Słowacki. While in Wilno, I stayed for some time at the Zaulek Literacki, a few yards away from the house in which Mickiewicz wrote *Grażyna*.

R.K.: What languages did you learn at school?

C.M.: At school I learnt French, but I must say, I didn't gain much from school. And later, while on a scholarship in Paris, I completed a course of advanced French and obtained the licence to teach it at school. So, I was already very much into the language. To pass the test I had to write essays in French. That's as far as French is concerned. There was also Latin. We learnt Latin for several years, a very practical thing, but we didn't have Greek. That's because the schools then were divided into the humanist schools with Latin, classical schools with Latin and Greek, and the so called real schools (or something close to it) without Latin or Greek or any other classical languages. You probably don't have any classical languages?

B.S.: No, though there are more and more schools that return to the humanist profile. We can learn Latin in Sejny but only as an extra-curricular activity.

C.M.: As a result I learnt Greek on my own, later in my life. I took it up when I was sixty. But I didn't learn contemporary Greek, but the so called *koine*, the language of the New Testament. I needed it to translate the Revelation of St. John or Apocalypse and the Gospel of Mark, written in Greek. So that was Greek, I got down to it very late. Whereas Hebrew I did not learn at school at all. In spite of the fact that it should be one of the classical languages, I learnt it only in Berkeley, in order to be able to translate the Bible -- the Book of Psalms, the Five Megillot and the Book of Job. So, in the end, you can learn even at an advanced age.

And as for English... well, I must tell you an interesting thing. In my youth, French was regarded as the language of refinement. The intelligentsia spoke French, and those with some education behind them believed one had to know French so that the servants would not understand the conversations of their masters! The gallomania lasted in Poland quite a long time, not unlike in other countries of Europe. From the eighteenth through the whole of the nineteenth century. The crisis came with the twentieth century and already in 1938, before the war, people in Warsaw started to learn English. It is very interesting, this ebb and flow of different languages. First was Latin -- for centuries the international language of Europe, then came French, and now it is English. I took my first lessons before the war, but I learnt it pretty well only during the Nazi occupation. Incidentally, my teacher was "Tuś" [Jerzy - ed.] Toeplitz, a Jew with an Italian passport, he came from an Italian banking family. He could move freely around Warsaw and later became the founder and rector of the Polish Film School in Łódź. So I learnt English then and started to translate from it. And later, when I lived in America, I had to master the language well enough to be able to lecture in it.

As for Russian, I have never learnt the language. But I knew it from childhood since my father was

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mobilized during the First World War. As an engineer, sapper officer, he followed the front line and we with him. I spoke Russian unaware that I was switching languages. It is just from that time that my Russian has stayed in my memory to such a good degree that recently, during a festival of poetry with Russian poets participating, I was acknowledged to have a good accent.

E.A.: Were you a good student?

C.M.: I used to be a good pupil in the early school days. I read a lot, so I was well-read. It is very important to justly assess someone's abilities. Ability is not something inborn, it is, to a large degree, a matter of culture. A lot depends on a child's work on concepts, on language. After all, it happened to my son. My son was born in America and, coming to France, did not know a word of French. He went to school in a small provincial town and even though he did not know a word of French he was a top pupil in French at the end of the school year. He heard a number of languages at home: English, Polish etc., so he quickly learnt a new language. And he surpassed his peers from the small French town who didn't read much and were not educated. So, it is not only abilities but the cultural environment that counts. So, I was a good pupil at the start. But later, I turned into a horrible student, quite a horrible one, even a troublemaker who took part in the fights in the hallway. And then, again, I became a good student.

W.C.: We have seen a documentary in which you say you did not want to go to study Polish philology because you did not wish to become a teacher. And then, in life, it happened that you became an academic teacher. What kind of experience has teaching been to you?

C.M.: Yes, I must say, that today when you choose Polish studies you do not necessarily have to become a teacher, there are other options. In the past, however, Polish studies meant becoming a teacher. Besides, it was a kind of a "feminine" department. And I preferred to become a macho man. After two days of Polish studies I switched to law. And I completed it, I have a diploma and I never used it. Eventually, I became a teacher at Berkeley, California, and I discovered the talents of the teacher in myself. During the famous revolution in Berkeley, in the sixties, students for some time gave marks to professors and announced them in their bulletins. I always received good marks. I was really punished for wishing to become macho; those lady students went on usually to become mothers or teachers at secondary schools and I wanted something more.

I.J.: And what was your first love like?

M.C.: So, you asked that question, eventually. Such are the times we live in, sir.

C.M.: This happened in my student years, but I don't want to go into details. Anyway, recently, when Poland ceased to be a communist satellite I tracked down my old love and we exchanged letters.

M.M.: Was it a coincidence or were you looking for each other?

C.M.: Well, we were looking for each other a bit. I did not know where she was.

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We corresponded regularly until her death in the late eighties.

Besides, I also recently wrote a kind of a life history of a friend of mine from Wilno; her life was very complicated and strange. She was deported, imprisoned in Lubyanka, then sent to a Soviet labour-camp, then left the Soviet Union with Ander's Army and with it went on to Iraq, Palestine and Italy, decorated with military medals. Then she lived in England, Argentina, then in Australia... In other words, a life history typical for my generation.

I.J.: How did it happen that you became a poet? You once wanted to become a forester?

C.M.: Yes, that's true. I changed this orientation quite late. For many years, during secondary school, my interests concentrated on nature, forestry etc. Well, I would have to talk at length to describe how this came about. It seems the thing that contributed to it was the fact that my father was an ardent hunter and I hunted with him sometimes. It was then that I discovered the horrible cruelty of nature. So, perhaps, it occurred through an understanding that my fascination with birds, because it was mostly birds, was in fact a literary fascination. I mean, I was much more fascinated with the names of birds and phrasing their habits in words than birds as such. As a matter of fact, I knew by heart the Latin names of all Polish birds. They are still with me a bit, though I did not suspect at the time that my fascination with the beauty of birds could be the beginning of a career as a poet. I wrote poetry in the final years of my secondary school, also impersonal ones, my poems were a sort of stylistic exercises that I can even recall today. Some of them were quite good.

I.J.: Do you often read your own work?

C.M.: Not much, quite rarely. My eyes are too weak, so I can't read much. It was...

M.M.: Now we are reading...

M.C.: We have seen the film about the 1993 meeting at the seat of the Polish Writers Association where you read from your poetry. It was a fascinating experience for young people to hear you reading your own poetry.

C.M.: Well yes, I like reading poetry. I read at that time also poetry by other poets. I once recorded Mickiewicz's ballads in a sound studio, in California. It seems, I read them very well. There were ballads and poems by other Polish poets, too, such as Czechowicz.

Darek Miszkziel: Have your sons written any poetry, would they follow in your footsteps?

C.M.: Neither did I want nor did they wish to follow in my footsteps. But they happened to have written some poetry, sometimes quite funny poems.

W.C.: What does the process of composition look like? How does a poem mature in you? Does it happen while writing on paper, or earlier?

C.M.: It can vary, most often it comes to me as a finished line which has to be written down and

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developed later.

W.C.: I have seen crossings-out on the manuscript of the *Second Space*...

C.M.: Yes, yes, it's full of crossings-out...

I.J.: Is there a poem written by you that you find particularly exceptional, or written on a particular occasion, very important to you?

C.M.: It is very difficult to answer such a question, such things are usually well hidden. I don't know. There is a poem, for example, that I wrote on my return to Lithuania, in 1992. I returned after fifty-two years. Yes, fifty-two years is a long time. Generally speaking, when I was your age, my present age would seem to be the age of an elephant... But after fifty-two years I came back to Lithuania and in Szetejnie, I had this really authentic experience of the meadow, I mean, it was the particular pattern of the plants in the meadow that, I believe, occurs only there. This is a childhood memory, remembered just like from childhood. It was an incredibly strong experience for me. I wrote then a short poem titled *The Meadow* included in the cycle *Lithuania after Fifty Two Years*.

Thank you very much for the conversation.



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Czesław Miłosz signs  
books for Sejny Chronicles  
participants in the conversation







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Zbigniew Fałtynowicz in Krasnogruda, winter 2011.

**MIŁOSZ  
AND THE SUWAŁKI REGION**

# ZBIGNIEW FAŁTYNOWICZ THE TIMELINE OF CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ'S PRESENCE IN THE SUWAŁKI REGION

Aleksander Miłosz arrived in Suwałki in late autumn 1926 to start his job as Manager of the local Road Department on the first of December. He settled with his wife, Weronika, younger son, Andrzej, and his mother, Stanisława, in the house at Maria Konopnicka Street 7. The house is still standing there today.

His older son, Czesław, did not come to the city on the Czarna Hańcza at that time. Nevertheless, we can assume the year 1926 to be the time of the first contact of the future poet with Suwałki. It is certain that from that time the student of the King Sigismund August Gymnasium in Wilno spent his Christmases in the city, the way he would in the years to follow. In this way Suwałki became Czesław Miłosz's hometown and he would come here to visit his parents, younger brother and grandmother. This would continue until 1935, when Weronika i Aleksander Miłosz decided to move to Głębokie in the Wilno region.

Nine years of connection with one place is hardly a mere episode, even if one does not live there permanently. Czesław Miłosz came to Suwałki at Christmas and Easter, sometimes for summer holidays or, much less frequently, to deal with some formal matters (e.g. to appear before the conscription board, to receive official mail, etc.). Still, he did not remember the Suwałki period fondly. He simply did not like the town, a sentiment he expressed directly in his letter to Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz of January 2, 1931: "I do not have any friends in Suwałki and I can't stand this little town." His unequivocal response to his parents' plans comes thus as no surprise: in the letter of August 6, 1945, he writes: "My father's plans to settle in Suwałki are nonsense, it is highly inadvisable and unnecessary." The fact is, however, that the town holds a permanent place in the Noble Prize winner's biography. The last poem the poet marked for publishing was titled *W garnizonowym mieście* [In the Garrison Town] (*Kwartalnik Artystyczny* 2004 no. 1); the same label was applied to Suwałki before the war.

The time Czesław Miłosz stayed in Suwałki was also the period of his first visits to Krasnogruda. We cannot, however, exclude the possibility of earlier visits by the Miłosz family to their relatives, the Kunats, when they stayed in Szetejnie and later in Wilno. The young Gabriela and Janina Kunat were frequent visitors of their sister, Weronika Miłosz, and their contacts were most probably maintained this entire time. It seems, however, that the contacts became much closer during the Miłosz's stay in Suwałki, if only for the relatively short distance to Krasnogruda (40km). Aleksander Miłosz had a car, and Gabriela's husband, Władysław Lipski, had his office in the town. Czesław Miłosz used to visit the manor in the summer. The lakes Galadus and Hołny, between which Krasnogruda was

situated, together with the surrounding woods offered more attractions than a provincial town “located in one street.” Not without consequence was the presence of holidaymakers, a source of multiple “pangs of adolescence” to the youth from Wilno. It does not alter the fact that Krasnogruda features in the early biography of Czesław Miłosz for nine years, just like Suwałki.

One might wonder why for such a long time, even after the Noble Prize, the Suwałki region went practically unnoticed in Czesław Miłosz’s biography. In fact, the poet himself created obstacles and misled his researchers and commentators. He practically never mentioned Suwałki, least of all his father’s employment here. Krasnogruda was for him “the place of many mixed experiences,” unworthy of any attention, a region he referred to as “the land of windy uplands, lakes and spruce woods.” He even claimed that “never did this lake-and-stone land with a cloudy sky seem home.” It is no wonder that Beata Tarnowska in her invaluable book *Geografia poetycka w powojennej twórczości Czesława Miłosza* [Czesław Miłosz’s Post-war Geographical Poetics; Olsztyn 1996] never included the Suwałki region as a space shaping the poetic imagination of the author of *The Issa Valley*. Rather, Tarnowska concentrated on -- and quite justifiably so -- America, Lithuania and France (Paris). Even the poem *Return*, from 1989, Tarnowska referred to as the land of his childhood, i.e. the Nieważa valley.

And this is an important poem, in my opinion, the crucial one for our evaluation of the presence of the Suwałki region in the life and creativity of Czesław Miłosz. It has its genesis in the first visit, after over fifty years of absence, of the poet to the region, on September 22-25, 1989. The meeting with Krasnogruda at that time must have been for Miłosz a profound experience with consequences for the future. These were not immediately obvious, but were still indicated in some way by the poet himself. In an interview given after his visit to the Suwałki region and published in a popular daily under the revealing title, *Nie wiem, czy jest gdzieś miejsce bardziej fascynujące* [I do not know if there is a more fascinating place; *Gazeta Wyborcza* 1989 no. 103], he confessed: “After I landed in Poland, I was very happy to go straight to the Suwałki region, the place I used to spend almost all of my summer holidays (at my relatives’ estate [Krasnogruda]) when I was young. After dozens of years, being on Lake Wigry, I had, eventually, the feeling of... return.” And in the poem published in the Parisian *Kultura* (1990 no. 3) bearing the title *Return*, the writer unveiled one of his greatest life “mysteries.” It was accurately and profoundly interpreted by Wojciech Kass in his poem from 2007 titled *Tak się schowałeś, że nie potrafisz siebie znaleźć* [You have hidden so deeply you cannot find yourself] (published in the collection *Wiry i sny*, Sopot 2008), and by Krzysztof Czyżewski in his essay *The Line of Return (Linia powrotu)*, Sejny 2008).

The Suwałki region of 1989 attracted the poet with its colours, brightness of sunshine, clouds, sparkling waters of Lake Wigry, and most of all, with the future. This meeting with the land of windy uplands, lakes, and spruce woods spelled hope that the Kunats’ home in Krasnogruda might be saved, and moreover, that the protest he had always faithfully voiced, against the destructive powers of historical necessity, would not be in vain. And it was not!

And that is the essence of this *Calendar*, which has been compiled with the conviction that “what has passed is not completely passed, as long as it survives in the memory of generations -- or in the memory of one chronicler at least” (C. Miłosz: *The Issa Valley*. Kraków 2000, p. 14).

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## 1926

December 1 - Aleksander Miłosz, the father of Czesław Miłosz [CM] is employed as the manager of the County Road Department. He settles in Suwałki with his wife Weronika née Kunat, his younger son Andrzej (born 1917) and his mother Stanisława. They live on the first floor of the building at 7 Maria Konopnicka Street (earlier 16 Ogrodowa, now 10 Książdz Kazimierz Hamerszmit Street). CM

(born 1911) remains in his Vilnius lodgings and continues his studies at the eight-year King Sigismund Augustus Gymnasium, where he enrolled after passing his entrance exams in 1921.

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### 1928

April 14 - A poetry reading of the members of the Original Creativity Section (STO) of the Association of Students of Polish Studies at the Stefan Batory Vilnius University is held in the Suwałki Citizens' Club (at 81 Tadeusz Kościuszko Street, now housing the Regional Museum). CM most probably did not participate in the event since he got involved with the Section the following year, when he was already a student of the Law and Social Studies Department.

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### 1930

Summer - CM stays in Krasnogruda preparing to retake his Roman Law exams at Vilnius University. He swims frequently in Lake Holny ("it was a period of my amazing achievements"), also in connection with his "unhappy love."

September 9 - Stanisława Miłosz (born 1864), the mother of Aleksander Miłosz dies in Suwałki. She was born in Imbrody, Kaunas, Lithuania, daughter of Aleksander Łopaciński and Maria née Mohl. CM participates in the funeral of his grandmother.

- From December 15 CM stays in Suwałki, where he also spends Christmas and New Year's Eve. He reads *Âmes religieuses* [Religious souls] by Henri Bremond (1865–1933), a French critic and literary historian, and translates the poetry of Paul Verlaine (1844–1896). Here also, he writes his third letter to Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, with whom he started to correspond while in Vilnius on 30 November.

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### 1931

April - CM spends, with some breaks, the whole month in Suwałki. During Easter, he reads Joseph Conrad (1857–1924). He meets Adam Ulrich, soil improvement instructor at the County Office of Suwałki, "a man of Poznań region," who lends the poet his war diaries recording his service in the German infantry during the First World War and experience in the battle of Verdun.

June 30 - July 4 - CM stays in Suwałki.

- CM spends his summer holidays in Krasnogruda, "picking mushrooms and reading Pushkin."

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### 1932

March 27-30 - CM stays in Suwałki.

May 30 - CM appears before the conscription board; receives Category A and is assigned to a cavalry regiment. Ultimately, CM never served in the army (on his graduation he was transferred to the so-called "surplus category").

June - CM stays in Suwałki for a few weeks. He works on some translations, e.g. the fables by Oskar Miłosz.

July - CM stays for a few weeks on Lake Wigry, at Stary Folwark. He stays here at the Kazimierz Kulwiec Hostel of the Suwałki branch of PTTK [Polish Country-Lovers Society].

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### 1933

December - CM spends Christmas in Suwałki. From here (on December 22), he sends a letter

to Kazimierz Andrzej Jaworski in Lublin, the chief editor of *Kamena*, enclosing some of his poems and asking for their publication.

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## 1934

April - he stays in Krasnogruda where "it was so awfully good." On Lake Hołny, he writes *Wieczorem wiatr* and *Daina* [Evening wind and Daina].

October 10 - At the office of the Suwałki notary Bolesław Monikowski, CM confirms with his own signature receipt of documents issued on August 30 by the Council of Ministers granting him a National Culture Fund scholarship. This allowed him to study for one year in Paris. The scholarship was granted to him on the recommendation of Mieczysław Kotarbiński (1890–1943), painter and graphic artist whom CM met in Krasnogruda. CM left for Paris in autumn 1934.

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## 1935

September - After one year in Paris, CM visits his parents in Suwałki and stays in Krasnogruda. "It's good and quiet here," he writes in his letter to Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz of September 13.

Autumn - CM's parents leave Suwałki and settle in Głębokie, Vilnius region, where they stay until September 17, 1939. After the invasion of the Red Army, they escape to Vilnius where they stay until 1945.

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## 1937

May - Andrzej Miłosz takes his final exams at Karola Brzostowski Gymnasium in Suwałki.

The guide *Pojezierze Augustowsko-Suwałskie: przewodnik krajoznawczy i turystyczno-letniskowy* [Augustów and Suwałki Lakeland tourist Guide] (Warsaw 1937, pp. 307–308) encloses detailed information on Krasnogruda as a summer resort: "The Krasnogruda estate, belonging to the Eysmonts, later the Kunats, now property of the Lipskis, is situated 2.5km east of Lake Galadus, in the beautiful hilly surroundings of Lake Hołny. A wooden manor house, the front porch with columns; an annex (bedroom in the back gives it an L-shape. Built at the end of the 17th century. Inside, a dining room with a beam ceiling; family portraits by L. Janowska from 1910–1912; S. Kunat's collection of books (late 18th c.), his portrait (engraving) etched in Paris, 1832; a collection of the portraits of Polish kings (Lesser's collections), and an engraving of cardinal Jan Lipski (1690–1736), Bishop of Krakow. There are a 300-year-old linden tree and ash trees in the park. The pension in the manor accommodates 20 persons. On a written order (Sejny post office), tourists may be fetched by car from Augustów. Next to the manor, there are 132ha of woods (pine and spruce). A huge boulder stands in the field. The western banks of Lake Hołny are suitable for campers."

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## 1940

July - CM spends one day and night in Nazi-occupied Suwałki during his escape from Vilnius to Warsaw (in the Generalgouvernement).

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## 1944

November 2 — The Land Commissar takes over the estate of Krasnogruda (by virtue of the decree of the Polish Committee of National Liberation of 6 September 1944 on land reform). In this way,

after nearly 200 years, Krasnogruda ceased to be property of the Kunats (on November 23, 1753, the manor of Krasnogruda and Wereńszczyzna together with the villages of Dworzysko, Gawieniańce, Maciejowizna, Sztabinki and Żegary, total area of 2285 hectares, including 769 hectares of woods, were purchased by Teofil Kunat and Joanna née Bohdanowicz from Ryszard Eysmont). The last owners of Krasnogruda: Władysław Lipski was still at that time in the Sachsenhausen Oranienburg concentration camp (until May 3, 1945), Janina Niementowska née Kunat, CM's aunt, together with her sister Gabriela Lipska née Kunat, after leaving Warsaw, where they spent part of the occupation and survived the Warsaw Uprising, left for the village of Drewnica in Żuławy. They stayed there with the Miłosz's who settled there following their repatriation from Vilnius, to move later, together with CM's father and brother, to Sopot.

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### 1945

August 6 - CM categorically opposes his parents' wish to move after the repatriation from Vilnius to Suwałki. He writes from Warsaw: "My father's plans to settle in Suwałki are nonsense, it is highly inadvisable and unnecessary."

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### 1959

December - CM publishes (written in the 1950s in Montegeron, France, completed in 1958 in Paris, and published by Instytut Literacki in 1959) a biographical study on Eastern Europe titled *Native Realm*. The book includes a detailed description of his passage from Vilnius to Warsaw in 1940 (the chapter *Border of Peace*) and the day he spent in occupied Suwałki.

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### 1962

March - CM writes *Elegy for N.N.* (included in the volume *Gdzie wschodzi słońce i kędy zapada* [Where the Sun Rises and Where it Sets]. Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1974), the poem is dedicated to Gabriela Lipska née Kunat, who died on March 16 in Sopot and was buried at the local Catholic cemetery at J. Malczewski Street in the tomb of the Kunat, Lipski and Lipiński families.

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### 1980

October 18 - After receiving the Noble Prize, the Suwałki and Masurian weekly *Krajobrazy* (no. 223) publishes an article titled *Czesław Miłosz i Suwalszczyzna* [Czesław Miłosz and Suwałki Region] signed with the pseudonym "K." It is the first official press release written about the connections of the poet with Suwałki and the Suwałki region, despite the lack of and documentation available.

October 18 - A CM poetry reading is held in the Suwalszczyzna Club at the Suwałki Dom Kultury [Community Centre].

November 24 - A meeting on CM's work with Andrzej W. Pawluczuk is held at the Voivodship Public Library in Suwałki.

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### 1981

May 29 - Andrzej Miłosz stays in Suwałki. After the meeting at the Voivodship Public Library, he writes in the library chronicle: "I enjoyed staying in Suwałki and talking to the numerous readers interested in my brother's work, connected just as am I with Suwałki, the place of residence of our



parents, while my mother's close relatives lived near Sejny, in the Krasnogruda manor. (My mother's father came from Krasnogruda)." He also visited the building of his former school, Karol Brzostowski Gymnasium, now housing Maria Konopnicka Secondary School; he wrote in the school's Golden Book: "Avoid hypocrisy and falsity, in any situation, defend your and other people's dignity, remain faithful to truth and justice. These are the ideals instilled in me here, in this school and in the house of my parents, across the street; these are the ideals I was also taught by the example of my brother, Czesław."

June 14 - The day before the arrival of CM in Łomża, the local weekly *Kontakty* (no. 23) publishes an extensive article by Danuta and Aleksandra Wroniszewska titled *Takim go pamiętają* [They remember him this way], including the opinions and memories of Waclaw Korabiewicz, an energetic manager of the former Vilnius Vagabonds Club at the Stefan Batory University to which the young poet once belonged: "Especially engraved in my memory are our visits to Miłosz in Suwałki, to the place where his parents lived. We used to organize trips to the country with performances [the play *Zabić bazyliżka* (Kill the Basilisk)]. On arriving in Suwałki we decided to visit Czesław who, in those times, would often be in bed with flu. He would get up, put a shirt on his pyjamas and offer us an exquisite fruit liqueur. He was very generous with the drink and, as it tasted exceptionally well, our visit would be somewhat extended. Being completely sloshed we realized we needed to leave to be ready for our next performance in Białystok. It turned out later that Kazik Hałaburda left the briefcase with the materials behind and we had to reconstruct the whole text using our memory. And we were hardly in peak condition on that day."

June 15 - Bożenna Szynkowska, teacher of mathematics at the First Secondary School in Suwałki meets CM in Łomża during the Łomża Poetry Spring, during his first stay in Poland after thirty years. The poet wrote in the Golden Book: "Greetings to the youth of Suwałki."

June 16 - The delegation of the Suwałki culture community (Zdzisław Wyszowski, director of the Department of Culture and Sport at the Voivodship Office, Zygmunt Filipowicz, director of the Regional Museum and Bogusława Miszkiewicz, director of the Voivodship Public Library) meet CM in Łomża for a short conversation.

July 19 - *Krajobrazy* (no. 28) publishes the conversation between Jan Roslan and Andrzej Miłosz *Dlaczego Miłosz nie przyjechał do Suwałk* [Why didn't Miłosz come to Suwałki?] in which Andrzej Miłosz explains that "my brother planned to visit the Suwałki region but could not refuse the invitation of the Gdańsk shipyard workers and the Monument Building Committee and we are leaving [June 16, Łomża] for Gdańsk today. My brother was simply unable to even visit those places he wished to visit."

September - Wydawnictwo Literackie publishes in Krakow *Rozmowy z Czesławem Miłoszem* [Conversations with Czesław Miłosz] recorded by Aleksander Fiut in 1979, in which the poet also remembers Krasnogruda and Suwałki ("In my student years, I used to spend my summer holidays in Krasnogruda, the estate right on the Lithuanian border, behind Sejny"); more information about his pre-war stays in the Suwałki region contains the extended edition of the conversations *Czesława Miłosza autoportret przekorny* [Czesław Miłosz's Wilful Self-Portrait] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1988).

September-October - Tadeusz Konwicki shoots his film *The Issa Valley*, based on CM's novel, in the open-air scenery of the Suwałki region.

- The "Q", NSZZ "Solidarność" of the Lakeside Region Publishing House publishes in Suwałki four volumes of CM's poetry: *Traktat moralny* [A Treatise on Morals], *Traktat poetycki* [A Treatise on Poetry], *Król Popiel i inne wiersze* [King Popiel and Other Poems], *Światło dzienne* [The Light of Day] and the novel *Zdobycie władzy* [The Seizure of Power].

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## 1983

- Leszek Aleksander Moczulski publishes his volume of poetry *Powitania* [Welcomes] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie). Some of the included poems, written from March to May 1981, contain quotes from CM's poetry.

- Ewa Czarnecka (pen name of Renata Górczyńska) publishes in New York *Podróżny świata: rozmowy z Czesławem Miłoszem. Komentarze* [World Traveller: Conversations with Czesław Miłosz. Commentaries] (first Polish edition under the author's real name, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1992). The included *Kalendarz życia i twórczości* [The Calendar of Life and Creativity] does not give any information on CM's connections with Suwałki or Krasnogruda, although both places are mentioned during the conversations.

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## 1986

May - Romuald Karaś publishes his documentary *Na tropach Doliny Issy* [On the trail of The Issa Valley] describing the Krasnogruda traces of CM based on the accounts of Andrzej Miłosz and the pre-war workers of the manor. (Also by the same author: *Dom nad Marychą* [the House on the Marycha]. Warsaw 1986.)

17-19 October - Andrzej Miłosz takes part in a meeting of the graduates of the Suwałki Gymnasium. He reads there the poem *Potomny* [Descendant] written by his brother in 1985 (printed in *Kronika zjazdu absolwentów z okazji 150-lecia szkoły średniej w Suwałkach* [The Chronicle of the Graduates Union on the 150th Anniversary of the Secondary School in Suwałki], Suwałki 1988; also Czesław Miłosz, "Następca" [Descendant] in *Dalsze okolice*, Kraków 1991; also in *Wiersze*, vol. 4, Kraków 2004). The poem was also written in the Golden Book of the school with Andrzej Miłosz's commentary: "The poem *Potomny* was written recently by my brother (connected very much with Suwałki) as if in preparation for our anniversary, though in fact it is dedicated to DESCENDANTS in a much broader meaning."

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## 1988

September - The artist and painter Andrzej Strumillo, resident at Maćkowa Ruda on the Czarna Hańcza, presents his cycle of paintings *Psalms* (eighteen 120 x 180 cm oil paintings) inspired by CM's biblical translations, in the White Synagogue, Sejny. The paintings are exhibited in many Polish art galleries in the following years.

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## 1989

June 18 - The *Suwałsko-mazurskie od A do Z* [Suwałki and Mazurskie Regions from A to Z] edited by Janusz Kopiała (*Krajobrazy* no. 25) includes two entries: "Miłosz Andrzej" and "Miłosz Czesław" emphasizing the connections of both men with Suwałki and Suwałki Region.

September 4 - Andrzej Miłosz participates in the interdisciplinary meetings "Culture and Environment" in Wigry where he also meets Zbigniew Fałtynowicz.

22 September - After a period of fifty years, Czesław Miłosz visits the Suwałki region. The poet is accompanied by his brother Andrzej and his brother's wife, Grażyna Strumillo-Miłosz. Before reaching the Residential Arts Centre in Wigry, the place where they were to stay during their visit, CM visits Suwałki, his "temporary home for the whole period, his parents stayed here [1926-1935]." During his visit with his sister-in-law to the BWA gallery to see Stanisław Słonina's sculpture exhibition, CM has an accidental conversation with the students of Maria Konopnicka Secondary School and

their teacher Maria Wasilewska. He stops at the building at 10 Książd. Kazimierz Hamerszmit Street. The same day CM visits Andrzej Strumiłło in Maćkowa Ruda and goes to Sejny. In the town on the Marycha he visits the exhibition of the scenography for Andrzej Wajda's films (he gives an interview to a journalist of *Krajobrazy*) and visits the exhibition of Andrzej Strumiłło's painting titled *Psalms* at the Community Centre. On the occasion, he also signs his books for the citizens of Sejny. Later in the evening, within the walls of the post-Camaldolese monastery, he conducts talks with Czesław Kudaba, president of the Lithuanian Culture Fund, Vytautas Martinkus, president of the Union of Lithuanian Writers, Alwida Rolska, Polish journalist in Vilnius and other journalists of Lithuanian television.

September 23 - CM stays for a few hours in Punska, has lunch with Romuald Witkowski, Head of the Commune, and visits the community museum run by Jouzas Vaina and a farm in Krejwiany; he also pays a visit to the parish priest, Ignacy Dziemiejko. The strongest emotions are evoked by his visit to the manor and park in Krasnogruda, "the place of many mixed experiences." Still under the impression of the visit to Lake Hołny, he spends the late evening in his apartment at the Residential Arts Centre talking to his brother and his sister-in-law, as well as Andrzej Strumiłło, Małgorzata and Krzysztof Czyżewski and Zbigniew Fałtynowicz.

September 24 - After breakfast, he gives the interviews given the preceding evening to Zbigniew Fałtynowicz. Then, accompanied by Andrzej Strumiłło, he visits the Suwałki Landscape Park, especially the village of Kleszczówek (the Miłosz's were frequent visitors at the local manor before the war) and Kleszczówek lakes. On the same day, he also visits Krasnogruda and Sejny.

September 25 - CM leaves Wigry in the morning and heads for Warsaw.

September 29 - *Gazeta Wyborcza* (no. 103) publishes a conversation with Czesław Miłosz, titled: „*Nie wiem, czy jest gdzieś miejsce bardziej fascynujące*” [I do not know if there is a more fascinating place] conducted in Rome by Roma Przybyłowska shortly after the poet's visit to Suwałki region in which the poet says: "After I landed in Poland I was very happy to go straight to the Suwałki region, the place I used to spend almost all of my summer holidays (at my relatives' estate [Krasnogruda]) when I was young. After dozens of years, being on Lake Wigry, I had, eventually, the feeling of...return. It was the lake I not only kayaked around, but also I managed to walk it around during one day. I was interested in everything now, including the economic details. It was a kind of immersion into Poland, also physically."

October 1 - *Krajobrazy* (no. 41) publishes a conversation with CM, titled *Tu odpoczywam* [Here I relax] conducted by Grażyna Mikłaszewicz during the poet's stay in Sejny.

October 15 - *Krajobrazy* (no. 42) publishes CM's words recorded by Zbigniew Fałtynowicz during the meeting of September 23, in Wigry, as a cover story and in the centrefold.

December - The *Kumpel* supplement to *Powściągliwość i Praca* magazine publishes a story by Grażyna Strumiłło-Miłosz based on the accidental meeting of CM with youth at the art exhibition in Suwałki during his September visit to the Suwałki region.

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## 1990

March - CM publishes the poem titled *Return* in the Parisian *Kultura* (no. 3) (included also in the *Dalsze okolice* [Farther Surroundings], Kraków: Znak, 1991), the poem refers to his stay in Krasnogruda in September 1989 and the experiences of his youth more than sixty years earlier.

Spring - The artist and painter Andrzej Strumiłło presents a cycle of paintings titled *Apocalypse* (twelve 120 x 200 cm oil paintings) inspired by CM's biblical translations. The paintings, together with the *Psalms* cycle, are exhibited in many Polish galleries.

July 12 - Leszek Aleksander Moczulski and his wife Krystyna visit Krasnogruda for the first time. They

are brought to Lake Holny by Zbigniew Fałtynowicz. Standing on the bank of the lake, the poet, born in Suwałki, declares: "Now I know where the world of Miłosz's *naive poems* comes from."

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## 1991

January 4 - The foundation of the *Ośrodek Pogranicze – sztuk, kultur, narodów* [Centre "Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations"] in Sejny by Krzysztof Czyżewski, Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska, Bożena Szroeder and Wojciech Szroeder with the honorary patronage of Czesław and Andrzej Miłosz.

- Suwałki Culture Society (STK) publishes a book titled *Czesław Miłosz* (edited by Zbigniew Fałtynowicz, graphic design by Wiesław Osewski; 28 pages, illustrated) prepared as "a gift on the eightieth birthday." The content is composed of sketches by: Waldemar Smaszcz, "*Ciągle trwa ten eon...*" [This eon continues.]; Stanisław Koziara: *Miłosz and Others* (On new Translations of the Psalter in Polish), Tadeusz Budrewicz: Commentary on the "Elegy on the Trouble with the Polish language" Krzysztof Tekielski: Lithuanian Polish in the "The Issa Valley", Zbigniew Fałtynowicz: *Krasnogruda*, an account of Czesław Miłosz's stay in the Suwałki region in September 1989 titled: "I did not expect such a gift ..."; and poetry: *1911* by Czesław Miłosz and *Wigry* by Krzysztof Czyżewski dedicated to the meeting in the complex of the former monastery in Wigry. The publication includes many photos of the first visit, after fifty years of absence, of the author of *Ocalenie* in Suwałki region (reviewed by M. Stala, "Dar," *Jaćwież* 2001, no. 14).

- STK publishes a collection of Czesław Miłosz's poems titled *Czas wyniesiony* [Elevated Time] (edited by Zbigniew Fałtynowicz, graphic design by Wiesław Osewski; 60 pages, illustrated, edition of 5000). The contents: *Year 1911, Lessons, Evening Wind, Years, In my Homeland, World (A Naive Poem), How can I forget, Separate notebook: the Wormwood Star, Lecture I, "Photos just received ..."* *River*.- Historian Jerzy Szumski publishes a study titled *Eysmontowie i Mejerowie, właściciele Hołnów Mejera i Krasnogrudy* [The Eysmonts and the Mejers, owners of Holny Mejera and Krasnogruda] (in: *Drobna szlachta podlaska w XV-XIX wieku* [Polish Gentry in 15th-19th century], Białystok 1991).

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## 1992

June 6 - Czesław Miłosz (accompanied by his son Anthony, brother Andrzej, and Małgorzata and Krzysztof Czyżewski) returns in the morning from Lithuania. Crossing the state border at Ogrodniki, at Ogrodniki, they visit Krasnogruda and the farm of Piotr Drapkiewicz, in the neighbouring Żegary. "A car pulled up in front of my house - remembers Piotr Dapkiewicz, the son - and Czesław Miłosz, the Noble Prize winner, got out with his brother and son. He wanted to meet my father. He did not know my father had died in the fifties. We sat down and started reminiscing. My wife served us Lithuanian blini on cabbage leaves. Everyone praised it." The Miłoszs and the Dapkiewiczzs were on close relations before the war, the latter family was also closely connected with the manor. The poet signed the family's visitors' book.

June 7 - CM spends the morning at the Centre "Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations" in Sejny. Krzysztof Czyżewski is presented (by CM and his brother Andrzej) with the letter of intent granting the property rights of the Krasnogruda manor house to the Borderland Foundation.

June 7 - A meeting with CM is held at the Centre "Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations" in Sejny. The small audience of the meeting with the writer includes a number of students, Centre workers, guests from England, Zbigniew Fałtynowicz, Hanna Karaś, Jarosław Sieradzki and Zbigniew Tanajewski. (CM: "In Warsaw or Kraków I meet university students, never secondary school students, the way it is here, in Sejny.") The account of the meeting appears in *Krajobrazy* no.9 (Z. Tanajewski,

*Moje zatrzymanie czasu: Miłosz w Sejnach* [My Stopping the Time: Młosz in Sejny]) and in *Tygodnik Północny* no. 16 (H. Karaś, *Miłosz w Sejnach* [Miłosz in Sejny]). After one night spent at the Residential Art Centre in Wigry, CM leaves for Warsaw.

August - Waldemar Smaszcz, in an article that appeared in *Gazeta Współczesna*, describes the “mystery of Krasnogruda” which, according to the critic, is revealed in the poem *Return*, published in the volume *Farther Surroundings*. The poem appeared also earlier in the weekly *Krajobrazy* (no. 14) with the commentary titled *Revealing the Mystery*.

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## 1993

June 15-17 - CM is a guest of the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations.” He stays at the Residential Art Centre in Wigry. The visit goes unnoticed by the media.

Autumn - The first issue of the *Krasnogruda* magazine appears (published by Borderland Foundation and Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations” in Sejny). The opening article is a conversation with Czesław Miłosz titled *Poszukiwanie ojczyzny* [In Search of a Homeland] carried out by the chief editor of the magazine, Krzysztof Czyżewski, on June 7, 1992, in Sejny (reprinted in: CM: *Rozmowy polskie 1979–1998*. [Polish Talks - 1979–1998.] Kraków 2006).

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## 1994

June 26–28 - CM is a guest of the Central European Forum of Culture “1994,” organized in Wigry by the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations” and the Borderland Foundation. On June 27, the poet takes part in the plenary discussion (printed in *Krasnogruda* 1995 no. 4), and then a meeting with readers during which he presents his poems from the anthology *Wypisy z ksiąg użytecznych* [Extracts from useful books]. He also gives an interview to Wojciech Marek Darski and Rober Traba (*Borussia* 1994 no. 9).

- Grzegorz Rąkowski, in his guide *Polska egzotyczna* [The Exotic Poland] (Pruszków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rewasz) devotes one chapter, *Śladami Miłosa* [In the traces of Miłosz], to the poet’s connections with Krasnogruda.

- Beata Tarnowska, in her study: *Geografia poetycka w powojennej twórczości Czesława Miłosa* (Olsztyn: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna), passes over Krasnogruda (and the Suwałki region) as a place of interest in the intellectual and emotional biography of the poet. She also mistakenly attributes the origin of the poem *Return* to CM’s visit to Lithuania.

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## 1996

- There appears “*Aj, moi dawno umarli*” [Ah, my people died long ago] (Sopot: Sopotckie Towarzystwo Kultury) by Wojciech Kass dedicated to CM’s connections with Sopot. The author presents there, for the first time, a comprehensive picture of the post-war fate of the last owners of Krasnogruda: Gabriela Lipska née Kunat and her husband Włodzimierz Lipski, Janina Niementowska née Kunat and the Miłosz’s. The book contains a rich collection of photographs from the interwar period, reprinted for the first time. The publication is supplemented with an insert containing a few poems, one of them is *Pieśń* [A Song] (dedicated to Gabriela Kunat).

- Andrzej Zawada, in his book *Miłosz* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie) mentions Suwałki and Krasnogruda as the places connected with the Miłosz family and the poet himself; it also contains four photographs (one from the interwar period and three contemporary ones) showing CM in Krasnogruda and in the boat on the Czarna Hańcza from 1989.

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## 1997

May - CM publishes *Abecadło Miłosza* [Miłosz's ABC's] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie), a book of memories of the people and events set in an alphabetical order (including the *Krasnogruda* entry). The following year its continuation appears titled *Inne abecadło* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie), including the entry, *Kunat Stanisław, Ulrich*. (combined edition, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2001).

June 25-28 - CM participates in a meeting on *Polish and Lithuanian Cultures - Similarities and Differences*, a gathering of Polish and Lithuanian writers and artists. On June 27, he delivers a speech together with poet Tomas Venclova. He visits (together with Andrzej Miłosz, Grażyna Strumiłło-Miłosz, Tomas Venclova and Krzysztof Czyżewski) Krasnogruda and the Catholic cemetery in Sejny with the tombs of the former owners of Krasnogruda: Bronisław Kunat (1855–1922) and Florentyna Kunat née Grzegorzewska (1864–1940), the parents of Gabriela and Janina; Bronisław Kunat was the brother of Zygmunt Kunat, the father of Weronika Miłosz. It is CM's last visit to the Suwałki region.

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## 1998

- The publishing of the anthology *Gdzie jeziora syte przestrzenią obłoków: Suwalszczyzna w poezji* [Where Lakes are Full of Cloud Space. Suwałki Region in Poetry] (Suwałki HAŃCZA, ed. Marianna Rant-Tanajewska, photo. Stanisław Woś, graph. Wiesław Osewski, 190 p., illustrated., issue 800, in the series of Biblioteka Suwalska ed. Janusz Kopiał) the author, Zbigniew Fałtynowicz, includes three poems by CM: *Wieczorem wiatr*, *Wykład I*, *Powrót* [Evening Wind, Lecture I, Return]. The anthology is concluded with the poem *Krasnogruda* by Józef Drozdowska. There are also other poems referring to Miłosz: *Wigry* by Krzysztof Czyżewski, *Spotkanie na Wigrach* by Wojciech Marek Darski and \*\*\* (*Stanąłem nad jeziorem w bramie poranku...* [I stood on the lake in the gate of the lake...]) by Leszek Aleksander Moczulski.

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## 2001

May 19 - Zbigniew Lipiński dies (born 1923), the nephew of Władysław Lipski, "the guardian of the memory of Krasnogruda families": the memory of Gabriela Lipska née Kunat and Janina Niementowska née Kunat and Władysław Lipski. He accompanied CM on his first visit to Sopot on June 17, 1981, and received the poet in his and his wife's flat in Sopot on the poet's later visits to the city (September 26, 1989, November 2, 1993, 10-12 June 1995, June 1996 and October 8, 1998). He also accompanied CM during his Sopot meetings and walks (each visit to the cemetery to visit the tombs of CM's mother and his aunts). On June 11, 1995, CM writes a dedication on a copy of his *Metafizyczna pauza* [The Metaphysical Pause]: "To Zbyszek and Teresa Lipińska in gratitude for their warm hospitality during my visits in Sopot." Zbigniew Lipiński was buried at the Catholic cemetery in Sopot in the tomb of Weronika Kunat (died in December 8, 1945; in 1975 buried in Sopot after exhumation from Drewnica), Gabriela and Władysław Lipski (died on October 5, 1978) and Janina Niementowska (died on November 21, 1977).

June - The editors of the *Jaćwież* quarterly (no. 14), published by the Regional Division of PTTK, commemorate CM's ninetieth birthday by publishing a collection of articles, including: Andrzej Miłosz's memories of Suwałki, titled *Srebro rodzinne* [Family Silver], a historical sketch by Jan Szumski *Krasnogruda*, historical and literary essays by Waldemar Smaszcz *Powroty Czesława Miłosza* [Czesław Miłosz's Returns] and Wojciech Kass' *Byli raz sobie Psiapsiulewicz, Nina, Ela, Władek, Zaza...*, as well

as poetry by Józefa Drozdowska *Krasnogruda* and *Nad Niewiażą* [On the Nevezhis], and a picture story *Czesław Miłosz i Suwalszczyzna*.

June 30 - Waldemar Smaszcz publishes his essay *Jestem tu tylko na chwilę...: suwalskie i krasnogrudzkie wątki w biografii twórczej Czesława Miłosza* [I am here only for a moment...: the Suwałki and Krasnogruda threads in the artistic biography of CM] in the *Gazeta w Białymstoku* (no. 151), the regional supplement to *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

December - *Jaćwież* no. 16 opens with a dedication by CM: *For the readers of Jaćwież*, obtained by Wojciech Kass on November 19, 2001, during a meeting in the Krakow flat of the poet. The same magazine contains also Marcin Kydryński's documentary tale of his journey to Szetejnie and other places in Lithuania connected with CM.

- On the Noble Prize winner's ninetieth birthday, *Krasnogruda* (no. 13) is dedicated in its entirety to Miłosz, as "A Gift to Miłosz."

- Irena Batura, in her guide to the Sejny region *Po ziemi sejneńskiej* [Through Sejny Land] (Suwałki: Wydawnictwo HAŃCZA), tells the story of the Krasnogruda manor, adding that "Czesław Miłosz liked to stay here for summer holidays."

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## 2002

January 25 - The Centre "Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations" and the Borderland Foundation organize an event called "*10 + 1. Facing Tomorrow*" in the White Synagogue, Sejny, whose guest is to be CM. In spite of earlier arrangements he is not able to be present at the meeting and a pre-recorded message is played instead. The message addressed the contemporary issues of maintaining cultural identity, respect for the past, and the value of establishing roots in the past.

- CM assumes honorary patronage over the initiative of the foundation of the International Centre for Dialogue in Krasnogruda. CM's statement: "I wish to declare that the project of the International Centre for Dialogue to be established in the near future in Krasnogruda, close to the Polish and Lithuanian border, is well known to me. Just as known to me and highly appreciated are the activities of the Centre "Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations" and the Borderland Foundation in Sejny. I am very glad that "Borderland" is to be the host of the International Centre for Dialogue. I am also very glad for the fact that Krasnogruda was chosen to become the seat of the Centre, the former property of my family is to be restored and enlivened with cultural activities on the Polish-Lithuanian borderlands. I believe that the establishment of such a centre is extremely necessary today, as we have the great opportunity to join in actively in the process of European integration and develop co-operation and understanding between our closest neighbours. Therefore I give my full support to the creation of the International Centre for Dialogue in Krasnogruda and express my agreement to hold the honorary patronage over the initiative."

April 26 - CM meets in his flat the young people gathered around the Centre "Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations" under the guidance of Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska and Bożena Szroeder. He answers their questions concerning his connections with Sejny (the account of the meeting and conversation is published in the *Almanach Sejneński 2003* no. 2 under the title: *Moje związki z Sejnam*, and also reprinted here: C. Miłosz: *Rozmowy polskie 1998-2004*. [Polish Talks - 1998-2004] Kraków 2010.

September 21 - Andrzej Miłosz dies in Warsaw. In CM's letter, read during the funeral at the Powązkowski Cemetery, Warsaw, the poet refers to the years spent by both brothers in Suwałki, saying: "So many times did I admire you for being this condensed ball of energy so firmly set in the world and approving of it. I myself had little talent for sports and I just watched your consecutive sporting



passions: cycling, gliding, parachuting, sailing.” (*Gazeta Wyborcza Białystok*, October 19/20). The funeral was attended by: Krzysztof Czyżewski, Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska and Zbigniew Fałtynowicz.

- *Almanach Sejneński* (2002 no. 2) publishes an extensive collection of articles on CM in the chapter called *Notatnik krasnogrudzki* [Krasnogruda Diary]: poetry with Krasnogruda motifs (*Łąka, Wieczorem wiatr, Ptaki, Bryczką o zmierzchu, Pan Anusewicz, Wykład I, Powrót, Mój dziadek Zygmunt Kunat, “Otrzymane właśnie zdjęcia...”* [Meadow, Evening Wind, Birds, Britzka at Dusk, Mr Anusewicz, Lecture I, Return, My Grandfather Zygmunt Kunat, “Photos just received ...”]), conversations with Sejny youth titled *Moje związki z Sejnam* [My connections with Sejny]; and a sketch by Zbigniew Fałtynowicz: “*Niepojęta identyczność, niepojęte oddzielenie*”: Czesław Miłosz na Suwalszczyźnie w dwudziestolecu międzywojennym” [Inscrutable identity, inscrutable separation: CM in Suwałki region in the interwar years]; also several archival documents: *Lustracja dóbr krasnogrudzkich w powiecie sejneńskim położonych* of 1858 [An Inspection of Krasnohruuda Estate in Sejny Poviats 1858], and the study elaborated by Rafał Winiewicz: *Rewaloryzacja zespołu podworskiego w Krasnogrudzie* [The Revalorization of the manor complex in Krasnogruda].

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## 2003

February 18 - CM writes: “Immersed in ‘now’ we ought to try to transpose into, so to speak, a new dimension that used to exist, while being conscious of the fact that we are working for that which is to come and that we are preparing a gift for those who are take our place. I feel joy being able to say to those with whom I used to walk here, in Krasnogruda and Sejny: ‘You are in good hands; you are not forgotten but present.’ It might have been possible for the ‘abomination of desolation’ to persist and the fact that it has not is a sign of good will and wisdom.” These words will become the motto of the founding act of the International Centre for Dialogue in Krasnogruda.

April 30 - May 4 - The youth of the Cultural Heritage Class, working at the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations” in Sejny, take part in a trip titled *Wielokulturowe Wilno: śladami poetów* [Multicultural Vilnius: in the Poets’ Footsteps], whose aim is the discovery of the city’s identity (Lithuanian, Jewish, Russian and Polish) by following the traces of four poets: Tomas Venclova, Abraham Sutzkever, Iosif Brodsky and Czesław Miłosz. The members of the group also have a longer stay in Szetejnie.

July 30 - The Borderland Foundation takes out a thirty-year lease on the Krasnogruda Manor and park pursuant to an agreement with Pomorze Forest District Office.

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## 2004

August 14 - Czesław Miłosz dies in Krakow. The funeral ceremony (August 27) is held in St Mary’s Church and Pauline Church where the poet is buried in the Crypt of Honour; among those participating in the ceremony are: Krzysztof Czyżewski, Zbigniew Fałtynowicz and Leszek Aleksander Moczulski.

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## IN MEMORIAM

### 2004

September 22 - The Maria Konopnicka Museum in Suwałki organizes the *In memoriam* meeting gathering writers and poets from the Suwałki and Masuria regions, CM’s poems are read by: Irena Batura,

Sigitas Birgelis, Tadeusz Dawidejt, Zbigniew Fałtynowicz, Jan Jastrzębski, Ewa Jurkiewicz, Wojciech Kass, Maria Leończuk, Janina Osewska and Mirosław Ślapik.

October – The publication of the Almanach *Wiersze z oddali: II Polonijne Spotkania Literacko-Artystyczne* [Poems from Afar: 2nd Literary and Artistic Meeting of Polish Community Abroad] (Rzeszów: Rzeszowski Oddział Stowarzyszenia „Wspólnota Polska”); Birutė Jonuškaitė, Vilnius journalist and writer, publishes the story titled *Krasnogruda – miejsce sprzecznych przeżyć* [Krasnogruda - a place of mixed experiences].

November 28 - The White Synagogue in Sejny is the venue of the Remembrance Evening on All Soul's Day dedicated to Czesław and Andrzej Miłosz and their connections with the Suwałki Region. Another event is the opening of a photographic exhibition titled *Miłosz's Presence*. Among the special guests of the event are: Grażyna Strumiłło-Miłosz, Andrzej Miłosz's widow, and Agnieszka Kosińska, Czesław Miłosz's secretary from 1996–2004. Sharing their memories of the Miłosz's are: Krzysztof Czyżewski, Piotr Dapkiewicz, Zbigniew Fałtynowicz and Andrzej Strumiłło.

November - *Jaćwież* quarterly in its *Literature* section publishes a few texts under the label *Czesław Miłosz In Memoriam*: Zbigniew Chojnowski's poem *Po*, Wojciech Kass' reflections *Jasny punkt*, memories of Piotr Dapkiewicz *Spotkanie z Poetą* [A Meeting with the Poet], and Zbigniew Fałtynowicz's sketch titled *Czas wyniesiony* [Elevated Time].

December - the third volume of the *Sejny Almanach* includes *Księga Drogi* [Bright Point] by Czesław Miłosz, edited by Krzysztof Czyżewski. The second part of it is published in the fourth volume of the periodical.

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## 2005

July 4 - The meeting of Janusza Krzyżewski, Marshal of the Voivodship, with the regional authorities on the project of the International Centre for Dialogue is held in the Borderland House, Sejny. The concept of the establishment of the new institution is presented by Krzysztof Czyżewski, President of Borderland Foundation and Director of the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations.”

July 6 - August 15 - Polish and Lithuanian youth connected with the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations,” under the guidance of Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska and Bożena Szroeder carry out a project titled *Krasnogruda Route*. The result of the few weeks of activities is cleaning the manor and the park, carrying out interviews with the inhabitants of Krasnogruda and the surrounding villages about the history of the manor and its owners, collecting all the accounts, as well as acquainting visiting tourists with its history and connections with CM.

July 17 - The feast organized in Krasnogruda includes the opening of three exhibitions of photography: *Powroty Czesława Miłosza do Polski* [The Return of CM to Poland], *Mój brat – w obiektywie Andrzeja Miłosza* [My brother—through the lens of Andrzej Miłosz] and *Album krasnogrudzki* [Krasnogruda Album]. Also presented is Andrzej Miłosz's film about the Nobel Prize winner. The feast is popular among the inhabitants of Krasnogruda and the neighbouring villages who arrive in great numbers.

August 14 - On the first anniversary of the death of Czesław Miłosz, the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations” organizes an evening of remembrance and reading of Czesław Miłosz's poetry. Among the participants are Tomas Venclova and Anatol Roitman, a Russian translator of Miłosz's poetry. The event is preceded by a mass (in Polish and Lithuanian) held in the Żegary church dedicated to the memory of the author of *The Issa Valley*. Such meetings are held every year on August 14.

November 20 - The opening of the *Krasnogruda Route* exhibition dedicated to the history of the Krasnogruda manor, the young people's restoration of the place and plans for its future development.

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2006

July - Wiesław Szymborski publishes his poem *Krasnogruda* in his collection *Miejsca* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Prymat, 2006):

*the octopuses of chestnut trees swallow  
azure's remains*

*lake's breath got stuck in the weedy nets  
time froze in the marble of the tree trunks*

*I do not remember the foot prints  
sand overgrown with nettles*

*trees do not remember the voice  
words got stuck in the boughs' throat*

*on the glass of the sunken windows  
I won't find a reflection  
between a soviet and sovieticus  
the panes they replaced after each thaw*

*the forgotten is stronger than remembrance -  
perhaps the still sheet of the lake  
or the walls of the stable*

*perhaps the tree corpses of the orchard  
abandoned by Old-Believers  
remember*

*I search  
between the grains of sand  
in the cracks of the rotten planks  
in the crumbs of bricks  
for a trace of a trace  
and the meaning of meanings*

*I search  
for the sealed books  
for the erased traces  
for the murdered photographs*

*a hopeless searcher  
without hope*

August 14 - The premiere staging of *The Issa Valley* by Czesław Miłosz in the Krasnogruda park (the performance includes CM's poetry, Old-Believers' religious songs, Hassidic *nigunim* and traditional Polish and Lithuanian folk songs). "The action takes place within the park, there is little light here.

We'll begin at the lake and then we'll move on to the consecutive tableau scenes...Our actors will sing the songs heard on the borderlands from time immemorial: Polish, Lithuanian, Jewish and Old-Believers'...The rhythm of the performance will be marked by, actually, insignificant details, such as the sound of the scattered gravel -- in the scene of the digging out of the coffin, or the clatter of the carts in the departure scene. Here, we wish to show the picture of exile, the fate of the twentieth-century people who lost their history, their houses." Screenplay and direction by Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska and Wojciech Szroeder, scenography by Rafał Winiewicz with the co-operation of Michał Moniuszko and Janusz Zawieja; performers: Justyna Kulikowska (Mother), Urszula Namiotko (Grandma), Irena Grablunas (Nina), Weronika Czyżewska (Magdalena), Stanisław Czyżewski (Tomasz), Bartosz Nazaruk (Baltazar), Piotr Wołukanis (Niemczyk/Władysław), Kacper Szroeder (Szames), Jacek Janiec (Rabbi), Tomasz Stawiecki (Priest) and the choir: Dawid Krynicki, Damian Oskroba, Karol Dziemotko, Łukasz Błaszczak, Michał Błaszczak, Przemek Pachucki, Karina Wiktorowicz and Monika Korzecka). *The Issa Valley* is staged many times in the Krasnogruda park in August that year and in the following years.

October 30 - A commemorative plaque (design by Bohdan Chmielewski) is unveiled on the wall of the house at 10 Książdz Kazimierz Hamerszmit Street (formerly 7 Maria Konopnicka), the place of residence, from 1926–1935, of Weronika, Aleksander and Andrzej Miłosz, the parents and brother of the poet, the house CM used to visit.

30 October - The Maria Konopnicka Museum, the branch of the Regional Museum in Suwałki, opens the exhibition *Czesław Miłosz i Suwalszczyzna* [Czesław Miłosz and Suwałki Region] (text by Zbigniew Fałtynowicz, design and arrangement by Witold Błażejowski). To commemorate the event, the participants of the ceremony plant Miłosz's oak in the Museum garden. The exhibition is presented the following year in Lithuania: in Alytus [Olita] and Kėdainiai (Kiejdany, October 30 - November 27, 2007).

October 30 - The publication of the album *Czesław Miłosz: Suwałki - Krasnogruda* (concept, elaboration and introduction by Zbigniew Fałtynowicz, design by Stanisław Woś, edited by Marianna Rant-Tanajewska; published by Suwałki: Muzeum Okręgowe, 116 pages, illustrated; in Polish, English and Lithuanian languages). The album is a photographic reconstruction of the Suwałki region as an important place in the Nobel Prize winner's biography and how "the experience of the place translates into the poet's later work turning into one of its fundamental messages. It suggests the Suwałki period became 'the lifted time and the Heraclitian river of life - the moment eternal'" (W. Kass). Reviewed by: Zbigniew Chonowski: *Miłosz i Suwalszczyzna* [Czesław Miłosz and Suwałki Region]. *Nowe Książki* 2007 no 3; Wojciech Kass: [untitled]. *Zeszyty Literackie* 2006 no. 96; K[rzysztof] M[yshzkowski]: [untitled]. *Kwartalnik Artystyczny* 2006 no. 3/4; Monika Żmijewska: *Miłosz na Suwalszczyźnie*. *Gazeta Wyborcza Białystok* 2007 no. 144.

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## 2007

March - Biblioteka Mnemosyne, editor Piotr Kłoczowski, publishes Zbigniew Fałtynowicz's *Wieczorem wiatr: Czesław Miłosz i Suwalszczyzna* [Czesław Miłosz and Suwałki Region] (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2006. - 200 p., [12] il.; 23 cm.; ed. Marianna Rant-Tanajewska, graphic design and typography by Janusz Górski).

Reviews: Marek Bernacki: *Suwalskie tropy w biografii Czesława Miłosza* [Suwałki Tracks in the Biography of Czesław Miłosz]. *Akademia* [publication of the Akademia Techniczno-Humanistyczna in Bielsko-Biala] 2007 no. 16; Tadeusz Budrewicz: *Wieczorem wiatr...*, *Jaćwież* 2006 no. 36; Zbigniew Chojnowski: *Suwalskie miłosziana*. *Forum Akademickie* 2007 no. 4; Bernadetta Darska: *Kameralny poeta w krainie „wietrznych wyżyn”*. *Nowe Książki* 2007 no. 8; eLKa: [title unkn.], www.magazyn.świat.

pl; Andrzej Franaszek: *Nie zaprę się ciębie, młodziku*. [I won't deny you, youngster.] *Tygodnik Powszechny* 2007 no. 15, supplement *Książki w Tygodniku* 2007 no. 15; Wojciech Kass: *Czas zastępy, czas wyniesiony*. [Frozen Time, Elevated Time] *Jaćwież* 2006 no. 36; [Erwin Kruk] (e): *Wieczorem wiatr* [Such is "Evening Wind..."]. Czesław Miłosz i Suwalszczyzna. *Zeszyty Literackie* 2007 no. 2; K[rzysztof] M[yshkowski]: [title unkn.]. *Kwartalnik Artystyczny* 2007 no. 1; Eliza Ptaszyńska: *Taki jest „Wieczorem wiatr...”*. *Topos* 2007 no. 3; Paweł Rogala: *Pamięć Ziemi: szukanie Suwalszczyzny*. In: *Zapisane w krajobrazie: literacko-kulturowe obrazy regionów dawniej i dziś*. Joint publication, Zofia Budrewicz and Marcin Kania eds., Kraków – Bukowo 2008, pp. 195–198; Dorota Skłodowska: *Wieczorem wiatr*. *Tygodnik Suwalski* 2007 no. 14; Jakub Winiarski: *Poeta i kraj lat dziecińczych*. <http://poe-wiki.org/index.php?title; Magdalena Żerek: Wieczorem wiatr. Czesław Miłosz i Suwalszczyzna> <http://klub-litera.nazwa.pl>

May 10-12 – The Jagiellonian University organizes an all-Poland research conference under the research project titled: *Żagary. Monograficzny opis grupy literackiej oraz zgromadzenie i opracowanie źródeł* at the „Dwór Mejera” Recreational Centre on Lake Hołny, on the opposite bank from Krasnogruda. The twenty papers presented are published in the book *Żagary: środowisko kulturowe grupy literackiej* (Kraków: Universitas, 2009). The participants of the conference have a meeting with Krzysztof Czyżewski, director of the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations,” during which he reads his paper titled *Linia powrotu: o praktykowaniu pogranicza w dialogu z Czesławem Miłoszem* (reprinted in our book, published earlier in English as *Line of Return: Practicing “The Borderland” in Dialogue with Czesław Miłosz* in *Michigan Quarterly Review* 2007, vol. 46, no. 4; and K. Czyżewski: *Linia powrotu*, Sejny 2008).

August 14 - A mass at the Żegary church opens the meeting commemorating the third anniversary of CM's death, organized by the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations.” The memories of CM and his poetry are shared on the porch of the Krasnogruda manor by: Zbigniew Faltynowicz, Irena Grudzińska-Gross, Jerzy Illg, Irena Jun and Tomas Venclova. At nightfall the ensemble of the Sejny Theatre presents a performance of *The Issa Valley*.

August - *Tygodnik Powszechny* (no. 33) publishes the poem *List do Czesława Miłosza* [A Letter to Czesław Miłosz] by Jerzy Illg (written in *Żegary – Krasnogruda, 2–8 August 2007*), part of which we quote below:

*Here, in Krasnogruda, and across Lake Hołny  
you rowed once straight to the Mejer's manor  
and went mad with passion and awe  
towards a ginger-haired goddess, from whose window sill  
jumped out in the morning, oh, a happy rival  
here, where the Russian roulette  
picked up in despair, in a dusty attic,  
could have crossed out all you achieved  
later in your long, industrious life,  
and taken away all your future women,  
books, journeys, sufferings, honours...  
- here, in Krasnogruda, in the overgrown park  
on Lake Galadus, in Żegary nearby,  
where a student shot the grebes with his rifle  
(and always felt remorse, as if he killed  
the holy Lithuanian water snake),  
you soar above us*

*I feel your watchful eye  
- and I know you are happy and proud,  
that we enjoy your land so much.*

September 22 - At the Krasnogruda manor house is held a presentation of the results (photographic, architectural, sculptural and journalistic) of the *Krasnogruda Route* project conducted since September 9 under the guidance of Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska with a group of youth from Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. The young people took part in the workshops whose aim was the recovery of "the memory and life" of Krasnogruda, conducted by: Egidijus Aleksandravicius, Krzysztof Czyżewski, Siarhiej Dubaviec, Marek Skorupski, Andrzej Strumiłło, Katarzyna Surmiak-Domańska, Wojciech Szroeder, Wiesław Szumiński and Rafał Winiewicz. Also conducted were: research of the old cellars, construction of sculptural installations in the park and gathering of the materials (photographic, documentary etc.) concerning the multicultural traditions of the region.

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## 2008

August 14 - The annual "Remembering Miłosz" event is held in Żegary and Krasnogruda. Participants included: Piotr Dapkiewicz, Irena Jun, Andrzej Franaszek, Anatol Roitman, Andrzej Strumiłło, Barbara Toruńczyk and Henryk Woźniakowski. Audience and guests see the performance of *The Issa Valley*.

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## 2009

August 14-15 - Memories and reflections on CM are shared with a large audience who arrive for the event by (among others): Piotr Dapkiewicz, Irena Jun, Andrzej Franaszek, Anatol Roitman, Andrzej Strumiłło, Barbara Toruńczyk and Henryk Woźniakowski. For the first time, the *Remembering Miłosz* event is accompanied by the *In Miłosz's Circle* symposium which is held the following day at the White Synagogue, Sejny. The leading theme of the meeting is "Poetry and Silence." The debate (including the participants of the "Remembering Miłosz" and Algirdas Avišenis, Ewa Zadrzyńska, Cezary Woźniak, Krzysztof Czyżewski and Janusz Palikot) is chaired by Cezary Wodziński.

September - The proposal of Anatex Company from Białystok wins the opportunity to revitalize of the manor and park in Krasnogruda. In the same month the first stage (the project is to be concluded on June 30, 2011) of the project takes place. This includes repair of the wooden building of the manor house (which will house a library and a permanent exhibition about Miłosz), reconstruction of the outer buildings (the future seat of the Borderland Foundation) and the aviary (future art studios), as well as maintenance and restoration of the park surrounding the manor.

October 24 - The opening of the *Krasnogruda 2+0 = 1+1* exhibition organized by the Borderland Foundation inside the White Synagogue presenting the design plans of the International Centre for Dialogue. The exhibition was prepared by: Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska, Wiesław Szumiński, Rafał Winiewicz, Stanisław Woś, Wojciech Szroeder and the collaborators: Urszula Wasilewska and Michał Moniuszko.

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## 2010

June - The publication of the study by Agnieszka Kosińska (with the co-operation of Jasek Błach and Kamil Kasperek): *Czesław Miłosz: bibliografia druków zwartych* [Czesław Miłosz: Bibliography of Compact Prints], Kraków - Warszawa: Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University and the Insti-

tute for the Documentation and Study of Polish Literature, 2009. The author mentions in her work the pre-war connections of the Miłosz's with Suwałki and the region.

June 6 - The ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the International Centre for Dialogue with the restoration and revitalization of the manor complex and park in Krasnogruda. The ceremony attracts a large audience. The founding act is signed by Krzysztof Czyżewski, president of Borderland Foundation and the members of the Board: Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska, Wojciech Szroeder and Bożena Szroeder. It states that: "This happened in the Polish Republic, in the manor house of Krasnogruda, Sejny county, on Tuesday, the sixth of July Anno Domini 2010 at 1 p.m., on the ninety-ninth anniversary of the birth of Czesław Miłosz (30 June), on the day that Bronisław Komorowski became President of Poland and one year before, for the first time in history, Poland will assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (1 July 2011)."

August 14-15 - The sixth anniversary of CM's death gathers in Krasnogruda and Sejny many writers (e.g., Paweł Huelle, Tomasz Różycki, Adam Zagajewski), historians of literature (e.g., Irena Grudzińska-Gross, Joanna Zach, Marek Zaleski), editors (e.g., Barbara Toruńczyk, Jerzy Illg, Piotr Kłoczowski), as well as readers of poetry and local residents who came here to share their reflections on the life and work of Czesław Miłosz. Following the yearly tradition, after the service for the author of *Ocalenie*, said in Polish and Latin at the Żegary church, the participants of the *Remembering Miłosz* event meet in the evening on the front porch of the Krasnogruda manor house, this year under restoration. In the morning, a symposium titled *Czyj jest Miłosz?* [Whose Miłosz?] is held at the White Synagogue, Sejny. The following day (August 15) is dedicated to the debate chaired by Grzegorz Gauden (director of Instytut Książki) on the celebrations of the centennial of the poet's birth and the 2011 Miłosz Year project.

September 8 - The opening of the exhibition of Jan Tadeusz Skłodowski's photography titled *Litewskim szlakiem Giedroyciów i Czesława Miłosza* [The Lithuanian Trail of the Giedroyc's and Czesław Miłosz].

September - *Zeszyty Literackie* (no. 111) publishes the poem *Krasnogruda* by Paweł Huelle:

*When I was going down, to the lake, I heard  
The sound of brass trumpets and bumblebee's buzzing  
Sun. Sun. And underneath it clouds.  
August. And it was Sunday.*

*A manor in the green of nettles.  
Burdock. Pigweed. Belladonna.  
A small Lithuanian church. A gravel dirt road.  
An Old-Believers' village. Our Lady of Wilno.*

*And a unison of various voices.  
Women. Children. Men. And priests.  
Also a poet reading a poem on the porch.  
About love that conquers all.*

*Let the words: "ash" and "oblivion" be damned  
Just like "nothingness" and "emptiness" - sang the Hassids  
Whirling on the mud floor. The star of Venus was bright.  
It smelled of grain Everybody was alive.  
When I was going back home down the road, I saw*

*Storks over the meadow and a flock of cranes  
Crickets. Crickets. And over them clouds.  
August. And the Messiah who will not save anyone.*

October 6 - The Sejm of the Republic of Poland adopted a resolution declaring 2011 the Year of Czesław Miłosz. The anniversary will enter the UNESCO schedule and will be celebrated in such countries as Lithuania, USA, France, China, India and many others. The most important event in the Suwałki region will be the opening of the International Centre of Dialogue.

October 18 - The opening at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris of the exhibition titled *LIMES – PONTES – AGORA: A Tale of New Borderlands of Europe in Eight Scenes* devoted to the Polish traditions of intercultural dialogue, their continuation after the breakthrough of 1989 and the future vision of practising dialogue in the new borderlands of Europe. The exhibition was prepared by the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations.” The title of the exhibition refers to three central motives on which both the textual-descriptive (text by Krzysztof Czyżewski) and constructional-visual layers (design by Wiesław Szumiński) will be based. “Limes” stands for borders: on the one hand, a source of division and exclusion, conflicts and isolation, on the other, accounting for identity and durability of diversity, including cultural diversity. “Pontes” refers to bridges: the first to fall victim to conflicts, fears of the Other and the crisis of multiculturalism. Simultaneously, they symbolize an open, integrative identity of the borderlands, and identity whose immanent part is “the other,” the other side, the crossing over. And finally, the symbol refers to the formation of cross-cultural competence: the modern craft of bridge building. “Agora” symbolizes the space of coexistence, the civil ethos, an integrative matrix that allows people speaking different tongues, with different worldviews, and belonging to different cultures and generations to live together, within one community. The exhibition is organized around eight scenes/stations: *Borderland - Ethos and Tradition; Borderland - Map; Borderland - Atlantis; Czesław Miłosz - Exile and Return; The Meeting of 1989 - Poet and Practitioners of Active Culture; BORDERLAND Centre - Memory, Education, Coexistence; Bridge builders - laboratories of intercultural practices; and the International Centre for Dialogue and Pedagogical Province*. The exhibition is shown only until October 22 and then transferred to the White Synagogue, Sejny.

November - Wiesław Szumiński, graphic artist and painter living in Suwałki, creates 9 illustrations (mixed technique, 59.5 x 45.5cm) to the poem *Orpheus and Eurydice* by Czesław Miłosz, he also publishes, at his own expense, twenty copies of their reproductions with the accompanying text. The opening of the exhibition is held on March 23, 2011 at the Maria Konopnicka Museum in Suwałki.

December - The Regional Museum of Suwałki publishes, financed by the City Office, *Rok Miłosza* calendar (edited by Zbigniew Fałtynowicz, design by Stanisław J. Woś), using the photographs taken during the five visits of the poet to the Suwałki region in 1989–1997 and including fragments of his interviews.

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## 2011

January 15-17 - A two-day symposium titled *The Environs of Native Realm* is organized in Sejny by the Borderland Foundation and the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations” referring to *Native Realm* by Czesław Miłosz (original edition Paris 1959) translated into most of the European languages and commented on by eminent humanists, e.g. Karl Jaspers and Jeanne Hersch. The impulse for its writing came from -- according to the author -- “a desperate desire to communicate certain information to the Western reader, to explain what it meant to come from that other part of Europe, the worst part of Europe, the sort of historical complications a person from there has to ex-



perience” (Renata Gorczyńska (Ewa Czarnecka): *Podróżny świata: rozmowy z Czesławem Miłoszem* [World Traveller: Conversations with Czesław Miłosz] : *komentarze*. Kraków 1992). During the symposium on the ways of reading and commenting on *Native Realm*, Tomas Venclova discussed Soviet Lithuania, Andrzej Mencwel talked about various readings of the text, and Piotr Kłoczowski carried out an original analysis of Czesław Miłosz’s situation in 1951–1953, on the eve of writing the book. The program was supplemented by Birutė Jonuškaitė’s presentation of *Laiko pameistrys, Czaljadnik czasu* [The Apprentice of Time], a collection of essays on Oskar and Czesław Miłosz to be published in Vilnius in three languages: Lithuanian, Belarussian and Polish. The symposium was accompanied by the exhibition (from the collections of the Centre for Documentation of Borderland Cultures) of various editions of Czesław Miłosz’s books published in samizdat in the 1970s and 1980s and other editions of *Native Realm* in various languages. The participants were also presented with Czesław Miłosz’s and Tomas Venclova’s collections, including Venclova’s Lithuanian book collection donated to the Borderland Foundation. Another event was *Café Europa*, i.e. the reading of Miłosz’s poetry by the meeting’s participants. The following day was devoted to visiting of the Krasnogruda manor house.

January 18 - A meeting with Krzysztof Czyżewski, the creator of the International Centre for Dialogue in Krasnogruda near Sejny, is held at the Suwałki Museum to inaugurate the centennial anniversary of the birth of the poet. Krzysztof Czyżewski, President of the Borderland Foundation and Director of the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations” presented the audience that gathered at the Museum the concept that led to the creation of the new space on Lake Holny designed to carry out intercultural activities and projects promoting the common co-existence in the world of open borders. First of all, Krzysztof Czyżewski presented the most essential threads running through the creativity of the author of the *Native Realm*, still alive and inspiring us today, important for the contemporary challenges and supporting the dialogue between the East and West. He devoted much attention to the problems of rootedness in the contemporary world and “coordination of one’s voice of protest” - the way Czesław Miłosz practised it all his industrious and creative life - against historical necessity. The meeting was concluded with a display of photographs of the restored manor house and other buildings in Krasnogruda, a place of significant experiences during his student years in the interwar period, a place to which he would return both physically and spiritually at the end of his life.

March 16 - Władysław Broniewski Library “Książnica Płocka” opens the exhibition *Czesław Miłosz. Kim byłem?* [Czesław Miłosz: Who was I?] from the collections of the Czesław Miłosz Archives at the Regional Museum in Suwałki and the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations” in Sejny. The curators of the exhibition, Ewa Luma and Ewa Lilianna Matusiak, concentrate on the origin of the multicultural voice of the Noble Prize winner’s work through a photographic presentation of the poet’s biography. The exhibition’s opening included a meeting with Zbigniew Fałtynowicz, who gave a lecture titled *Czesław Miłosz – powrót*.

March 20 - Kai Bauman conducts *Conversation about Krasnogruda* with Krzysztof Czyżewski during the cycle of meetings called *Wiek Miłosza* (March 18-25) at the The Polish Baltic Frédéric Chopin Philharmonic in Gdańsk. Some of Czesław Miłosz’s poems (e.g. *Powrót*, *Wieczorem wiatr*, *Ptaki*, *Bryczką o zmierzchu*, *Pan Anusewicz*, *Wykład I*, *Elegia dla N. N.*) recited during the meetings by Irena Jun are later included in the book *Wiek Miłosza* (Gdańsk: słowo/ obraz terytoria, 2011).

March 23 - The poem *Orpheus and Eurydice* by Czesław Miłosz provides the theme of the literary evening organized at the Maria Konopnicka Museum in Suwałki. Zbigniew Fałtynowicz presents the genesis of the poem emphasising the weight of the lines: *Of his having composed his words always against death / And of having made no rhyme in praise of nothingness*. Waldemar Smaszcz shares his thoughts on the importance of the poem in the creativity and biography of the author of *Ocalenie*.

There is also the display of the nine pictures by Wiesław Szumiński inspired by the poem.

May 5 – The promotion of Andrzej Franaszek's *Miłosz: biografia* [Miłosz: Biography] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak). This extensive (960 pages), superbly written and documented work explains the "mystery" of Krasnogruda (see the chapter *Rosyjska ruletka* [Russian Roulette]), and devotes considerable space to the role of Suwałki and the Suwałki region in CM's life and creativity.

May 20 – The Institute for the Documentation and Study of Polish Literature, in Warsaw, publishes a reprint of the 1936 Wilno edition of *Trzy zimy* [Three Winters], considered one of the most significant poetic debuts in Polish poetry since Adam Mickiewicz. The scenery of the poems, according to the new edition's editor, Piotr Kłoczowski, are Krasnogruda, Wilno and Paris.

- Publication of the conversations between Iwona Lompart and several Polish writers titled *Poczuliśmy prawo do spełniania marzeń* [We felt the right to fulfill our dreams] (Nueremberg: AB Polnischer Medien Verlag UG, 2011). This publication includes Krzysztof Czyżewski's extensive interview titled *Marzenie jest powrotem do rzeczywistości, a nie ucieczką od niej* [A dream is a return to reality, not an escape from it], and is devoted to his fascination with the work and person of Czesław Miłosz and the future activities of the International Centre of Dialogue in Krasnogruda.

June 29 – The unveiling of a plaque at chemist's shop at 78 Tadeusz Kościuszko Street, Suwałki, in commemoration of the centennial of Czesław Miłosz's birth and his connections with Suwałki. It is the same chemist's shop that the poet stopped by during his passage from Wilno to Warsaw in 1940, described in *Native Realm*. This is an initiative of the Regional Museum in Suwałki and the Augustów and Suwałki Scientific Association, and the founder of the plaque is *Start*, a company owned by Jacek Pietrukiewicz, et al.

June 30 - The opening of the International Centre of Dialogue in the restored manor of Krasnogruda. The institution's mission consists in building bridges of tolerance and coexistence between peoples.

June 30, 1911, in Sztejnje on the Nieważa, 180km from Suwałki and 140km from Krasnogruda, Czesław Miłosz was born.

Written by: **Zbigniew Fałtynowicz**

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Literature: *Almanach Sejneński* [2003] no. 1, [2004] no. 2, [2005] no. 3, [2006] no. 4; *Czesław Miłosz*. Written and edited by: Zbigniew Fałtynowicz. Suwałki 1991; *Czesław Miłosz: bibliografia druków zwartych* [Czesław Miłosz: Bibliography of Compact Prints]. Written by: Agnieszka Kosińska; collaboration: Jacek Blacha, Kamil Kasperek. Kraków 2009; *Czesław Miłosz: Listy do rodziny. Kwartalnik Artystyczny* 2008 no. 3; *Czesława Miłosza autoportret przekorny*. Interviews conducted by Aleksander Fiut. Kraków 1994; Zbigniew Fałtynowicz: *Dla Miłosza: Suwałki – Krasnogruda*. Suwałki 2006; by the same author: *Wieczorem wiatr...* [Evening Wind... ] *Czesław Miłosz i Suwalszczyzna* [Czesław Miłosz and Suwałki Region]. Gdańsk 2006; Andrzej Franaszek: *Miłosz: biografia* [Miłosz: Biography]. Kraków 2011; Renata Górczyńska (Ewa Czarnańska): *Podróżny świata: rozmowy z Czesławem Miłoszem. Komentarze* [World Traveller: Conversations with Czesław Miłosz]. Kraków 1992; Wojciech Kass: *Aj, moi dawno umarli!* Sopot 1996; *Kroniki* (after the Maria Konopnicka Museum in Suwałki) – special edition. Suwałki, June 2011; *Centre "Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations": vademecum*. Written by Zbigniew Fałtynowicz and Agnieszka Szyszko. *Jaćwież* 2003 no. 21.



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Czesław Miłosz during the meeting on relations between Polish and Lithuanian cultures, Wigry Monastery 1997.

**CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ  
AND THE "BORDERLAND"**



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Czesław Miłosz with his brother Andrzej, Wigry Monastery 1989.

W-wa, dnia 31 V 90r.

9/8/34

My, niżej podpisani, Czesław  
i Andrzej Miłoszowie, jako jedyni  
spadkobiercy majątku Krasnogruda  
w pobliżu Ogródnik (Sejny) zrezygnujemy  
nie praw do rentówki z odbudowanymi  
dworem na rzecz fundacji "Borderland"  
z siedzibą w Sejnach. Rentówka Sejny  
je park i tereny nad jeziorem Hołny  
w pobliżu dawnej siedziby.

Krasnogruda należała do  
brata naszego dziadka, Zygmunta  
Kunata i córek właściciela, Janiny  
i Gabrieli, które zmarły w latach trzy-  
dzielnych. Jedynym synem Gabrieli  
zginął w niemieckim obozie koncentracyjnym.

Andrzej Miłosz  
978 GRIZZLY PEAK Blvd.  
Berkeley, California 94708.  
Andrzej Miłosz  
00664 W-wa  
Nobelskiego 24/16  
tel. 21-90-34

Warsaw, 31 May 1990

We, the undersigned, Czesław and Andrzej Miłosz,  
the only heirs of the Krasnogruda estate situated near Ogródniki (Sejny), waive our rights with  
respect to the land remaining after parcelling out of the Krasnogruda estate and the restored manor  
buildings in favour of the Borderland Foundation, with its head office in Sejny.

The aforementioned property includes the park and the land along Lake Hołny, near the former  
manor house.

Krasnogruda belonged to our grandfather's brother, Zygmunt Kunat, and his daughters, Janina  
and Gabriela, who died in the seventies of the twentieth century. The only son of Gabriela perished  
in a Nazi concentration camp.

Professor Stanisław Barańczak  
8 Brookdale Road  
Newtonville, Massachusetts 02160

Dear Staszek,  
I'm writing in English because Carol is typing this on her computer.

Of course, I have heard about the Polcul program and I would be able to approach them directly. Yet, as we discussed the matter, I'd rather add it to your concerns, too.

Briefly, I believe a non-commercial initiative in Poland called Pogranicze [Borderland –transl.] deserves financial help.

Two years ago I was practically a witness of its foundation in the town of Sejny, on the Polish-Lithuanian border. These are enthusiastic young people wishing to work for the improvement of relations between various nationalities, particularly between the Poles and the Lithuanians and to foster cultural activity in the region, in its towns and villages. The extremely ambitious program of theirs has already entered the phase of realization. They are registered as Fundacja Pogranicze - Borderland Foundation; Centre Borderland of Arts, Cultures, Nations; ul. J. Piłsudskiego 37, Post box 15; 16-500 Sejny; Poland. The local administration and the Sejny municipality are sympathetic and helpful. Thanks to them the foundation received a permanent seat in the building of the former Jewish yeshiva. Sejny was once a famous centre of Jewish learning and one of the goals of the foundation is to keep the memory of Jewish culture alive. The foundation maintains excellent relations with the Lithuanian speaking community of Puńsk, a township near the border. It already organizes exhibitions, lectures, and poetry readings. For November it prepares "a month of education towards tolerance: Meeting the Other, or about the Virtue of Tolerance."

The foundation also owns the manor house of Krasnogruda, located on the Polish-Lithuanian border. This used to be the hereditary estate of the Kunats, my relatives on my mother's side. Under the communist rule the estate land was parcelled and the manor house, standing in the park overlooking the lake, was half destroyed and rebuilt into apartments for forestry workers. Legally, myself and my brother, Andrzej who lives in Warsaw, are the only inheritors. While we do not have any intentions to claim the land, we have transferred our rights to Progranicze for the house. The foundation intends to restore it to its previous shape and use it as a place for meetings between Polish intellectuals and those from across the border. This is, of course, a long

range project, first, it will be necessary to find quarters for workers' families who live there, and secondly, the restoration will involve gathering considerable funds.

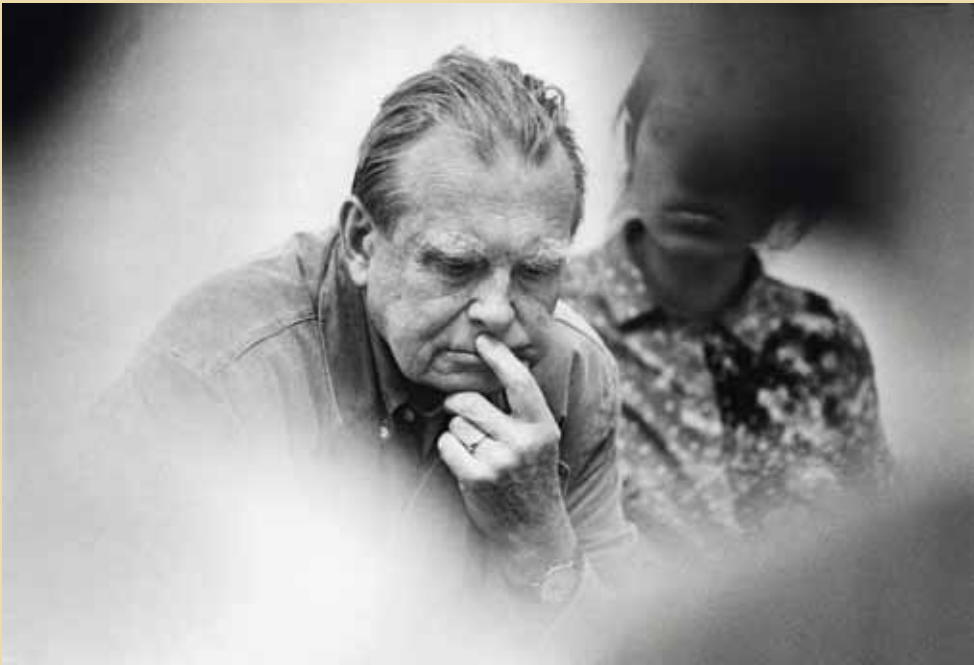
An initiative such as this of Pogranicze is a rarity in our part of Europe menaced by national conflicts. It is my strong belief that good will and energy of those young people deserve help. The name of the director of the foundation is Krzysztof Czyżewski. Donations should be sent to: Bank PKO S.A.; I Oddział Warszawa; 501044-20001694-132-1110.

My warm regards,  
*Czesław Miłosz*  
12 October 1991

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The letter comes from the Czesław Miłosz archive at the Beineke Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection, Yale University Library. Originally written in English.





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Czesław Miłosz during the Central European Forum of Culture organized by the Borderland Foundation, Wigry Monastery, June 26–28, 1994.

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Czesław Miłosz  
Poet  
Prof. University of Berkeley  
Sejny, 6 June 1992

To whom it might concern,

I wholeheartedly support the initiative of the Borderland Foundation to establish a centre for small homelands of Central and Eastern Europe in Krasnogruda, the former property of my family to which I feel spiritually attached.

The programme includes artistic, educational and publishing activities dedicated to various communities, and especially to young people, and aims to restore the identity of the inhabitants of this part of Europe, overcoming barriers by learning the differences between neighbouring cultures and authentic co-operation between them -- all that, I believe, means undertaking the challenges facing contemporary Central and Eastern Europe.

Therefore, I see the realization of this type of project as urgently needed.

Responding to the request of the Borderland Foundation I agree to assume honorary patronage over the project: "Krasnogruda - Centre for the Cultures of the Small Homelands of the Central and Eastern Europe."

Czesław Miłosz

CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ

poeta

prof. University of Berkeley

Sejny, 6 czerwca 1992 rok

Do instytucji

i osób zainteresowanych

Serdecznie popieram inicjatywę Fundacji "Pogranicze" stworzenia w Krasnogrudzie, w miejscu należącym ongiś do mojej rodziny, z którym związany jestem duchowo, ośrodka kultur m a ł y c h o j c z y z n Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej.

Program obejmujący działania artystyczne, edukacyjne i wydawnicze, zwrócony do różnych środowisk ale w szczególności do młodzieży, zmierzający do odrodzenia tożsamości mieszkańców tej części Europy, do przełamania granic poprzez poznawanie odmienności sąsiednich kultur i autentyczną współpracę pomiędzy nimi - wszystko to jest w moim przekonaniu podjęciem wyzwania jakie stawia nowa sytuacja w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej.

Dlatego za nagłą uważam potrzebę realizacji tego rodzaju projektu.

Odpowiadając na prośbę Fundacji "Pogranicze" przyjmuję honorowy patronat nad projektem "Krasnogruda - ośrodek kultur m a ł y c h o j c z y z n Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej".

*Czesław Miłosz*

## IN SEARCH OF A HOMETLAND - CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ IN CONVERSATION WITH KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI

C.M.: I would dare say, here I must boast about myself, I wrote about it even more often than Kundera. I wrote then for *Cross Currents*, a magazine published at that time in English, and I think still is, by a Czech, Ladislav Matejka and the University of Michigan, dedicated to the cultures and literatures of Central Europe. Central Europe, in this sense, was professor Matejka's invention. He conceived the magazine from scratch as a publication dedicated to the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia. So, he conceived a certain model. He published there his essays much earlier than Kundera spoke in public. Of course, Kundera is very well known in Western Europe, also in today's America, and the publicity that this idea gained is mostly due to him. My fame is of a completely different type, i.e. it is limited mostly to the American academic circles. In Western Europe, I was "discredited" for a long time as an abominable anti-Stalinist.

K.C.: All the same, you took part, together with Konrád, Havel and Venclova, in the debates in the 1980s on Central Europe and the complex of ties binding it together. You were talking then about an idea that, in fact, was a utopia existing only in the minds of intellectuals.

C.M.: Yes. Barbara Toruńczyk wrote about this concept as a utopia.

K.C.: Masaryk's idea, a pre-war concept, the idea of the union of the free nations of Central Europe, was also utopian. Today, the situation is changing, at least one element of the idea comes true: the nations of this part of Europe begin to self-determine their existence.

C.M.: It was in this utopian phase that I wrote about the borders of Central Europe delimited by architecture. I meant, wherever there were Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque there was Central Europe, too. In this sense, Wilno is, of course, a Central European city, all these elements are there. Similarly, Dubrovnik. Of course, the affiliation of Tallinn or Riga is based on a slightly different basis, that of the Germanic Gothic. The Hanseatic tradition. You cannot determine where Central Europe ends. In the north east, at any rate, it would be the boundary of the Jesuit Baroque. In our debates, we also dealt with the differences between the Habsburg empire in the south and the Tsarist one in the north, as well as the former Commonwealth whose area was partly overtaken by the Russian empire and partly by the Habsburgs. These old traditions survived in some way and still exist. It is undoubtedly one of the causes of friction between the countries of Central Europe today, there are countries where the Habsburg heritage is strong and they feel a greater affinity towards each other.

K.C.: How do you perceive the problems of the Central and Eastern Europe, taking mainly the perspective of what happened in 1989?

C.M.: I would like to contribute to the neighbourly relations between the countries of this part of Europe: between Poland and the Czech Republic and Slovakia, between Poland and Ukraine,

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Poland and Belarus, Poland and Lithuania. As I mentioned in *In Search of a Homeland*, it became for me, in my old age, my civil service .

K.C.: One of the arguments often raised concerning the question of Central European identity was the claim that this part of Europe would never be able to manage its own problems, and that these countries needed a foreign empire, Russian or German, to calm the ethnic, national and religious conflicts.

C.M.: This really used to be the province of Vienna, Berlin, Moscow or Petersburg. To what extent can these people live together without killing each other? It is a great unknown. It makes me anxious because there are certain voices, for example, those that are inimical to Lithuania in Poland, that revive old wounds.

I am a member of the Serbian Academy, and when I took a stance, obvious as it might be, against the Serbian invasion of Croatia, I received a long list enumerating all the wrongs the Serbs have ever suffered at the hands of the Croats during the last fifty years. That's what I am afraid of – the revival of mutual grievances, of what happened fifty years ago. With the historical memory so characteristic of our nations, fifty years is nothing but a breeze, and five hundred is just a piece of cake, isn't it?

K.C.: And this historical memory shows a tendency to be passed on to younger generations with all the baggage of complexes and traumas inherited from our ancestors.

C.M.: Yes, history that is completely unverified, passing into legend. Hence the great difficulties in Polish-Jewish relations, especially in America, because it is the young generation, say, the third one, that inherits these numerous images, clichés, shorthand negative ideas.

K.C.: Is there a chance to establish here a Europe of homelands, in the sense used by Vincenz in his writings?

C.M.: A very difficult task, because, as you know, this part of Europe has this tradition of nation-states. Historically, there was no concept in the past that would equal the existence of one's nation with the necessity of owning a state. A nation-state will tend to encompass the territory that would overlap ethnic boundaries. That's the origin of what is going on in [the former] Yugoslavia. Eventually, assembling all the Serbian lands under one state is nothing else but the realization, cruel and absurd, of the idea of the nation-state. So, such tendencies do exist. Hence the problem of the so called minorities dividing Poland and Lithuania. The problem is poisoned in advance.

K.C.: Both your last book and your visit to Lithuania were a step towards Polish-Lithuanian reconciliation, an attempt to improve the relations between Poland and Lithuania. Where do you see the basic errors we commit today that create tension in this relationship?

C.M.: You see, the reconciliation at a higher, intellectual level is very easy. The lower we get the more difficult it becomes. It is because at the lower level we meet stereotypes, inherited stereotypes. I was told only fifteen percent of the Polish-speaking population of Lithuania knows

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Lithuanian. And that there is resistance to learn the language, which is, after all, the official language. Poles would send their children to a Russian school although they could send them to a Polish one. The power of the Soviet Union was tempting and there always has been this tendency to jump over the heads of the Lithuanians: "Do the Lithuanians matter? Really?" I don't know whether you know that during the war, in Wilno, there was this saying popular about those who learn languages: "Optimists learn English, pessimists learn German, realists learn Russian and morons learn Lithuanian."

The Polish culture is essentially not a folk culture but a gentry one, penetrating downwards and reaching the lower classes, and Polish stereotypes are essentially of the gentry origin.

The Lithuanian culture has folk roots, peasant roots, and it is a conflict of two cultures, i.e. the stereotype of the gentry culture at the level of the kolkhoz labourer who considers himself Polish because he is Catholic even though he doesn't even speak Polish, only Russian. This gentry stereotype spells contempt for Lithuanian and Lithuanians themselves, which, of course, is not something Lithuanians like.

K.C.: Can you recall people who encouraged rapprochement between Poles and Lithuanians before the war? You have mentioned Juozas Keliuotis...

C.M.: Yes, he tried to organize meetings between Poles and Lithuanians in Wilno. I did not take part in these meetings then, I think. It is because at the time I lived in Wilno I said to myself: "Oh, damn it, I am tired of all that." I was not interested, but he did organize them. A different type of meetings were organized by Michał Römer, you can read about them in *Lituanica*. I talked about Michał Römer in Kaunas on the occasion of the doctorate of honoris causa and I also talked to Landsbergis about the need to publish Römer's diaries. I suggested to the Minister of Culture, Kuolis, that they contact the Polish Academy of Sciences and jointly publish the diaries. There are, it seems, forty volumes, written in Polish. Reading Michał Römer's diaries could be the best remedy for Polish-Lithuanian conflicts. Poles would understand a lot by reading his diaries, so would the Lithuanians. Thus, he would have a remedial posthumous influence. Just like his family, as a matter of fact. The Römers live now in Brussels and young Römer visited Lithuania recently, so it is a kind of a family tradition of conflict appeasing conflict.

K.C.: I know they are organizing an exhibition dedicated to Römer's mother at the Čiurlionis Museum, in Kaunas. Writing so much about Römer, Tyszkiewicz, Oskar Miłosz and Józef Mackiewicz, you always refer to the ideas of "the natives," the ideas of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a federation of many nations.

C.M.: I am very keen on being regarded a citizen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, nevertheless, I realize it is impossible to resuscitate it on account of the fact that, as Józef Mackiewicz put it: it was torn to pieces by the Lithuanians, Belarusians and Poles alike. On my part, it means only emphasizing the heritage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, an attempt to recall the consciousness that is so much different from the consciousness of the so-called pure Poles or pure Lithuanians. My professor, Wiktor Sukiennicki, regarded himself a Lithuanian of Polish culture, but such "animals" are no longer there. I have repeated many times that I am no Lithuanian since I write in Polish. But, if I were to explore my roots it would appear obvious that Lithuanian music,

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for example, is, for me, a dozen times closer than Polish music, and when I say music I mean the folk songs I heard in my childhood.

K.C.: Where did you hear those songs?

C.M.: I heard them in Szetejnie. Every evening there was singing in the neighbouring villages so you got the impression that there was an echo that repeated one song. True, it was villages that no longer exist. Today, there are, you saw it for yourself, just big kolkhoz fields.

K.C.: Let us return to the Polish-Lithuanian meetings organized by Römer and Keliuotis...

C.M.: Römer used to organize meetings of notables from both sides, i.e. those that held sway over the public opinion in Wilno. As you probably know the milieu of the “natives” was closely related to Wilno freemasons, and the freemasons of Wilno had a very tough life there. Only from my professor, Stanisław Swianiewicz, did I learn that there were evening meetings at the Stefan Batory University, so that there was a certain continuity since the Filomath times.

Römer tried, then, to organize these meetings. Similarly to Keliuotis. But, perhaps, not at this special level, i.e. not of the “notables.” Actually, I don’t remember that exactly, I should not say what it was like. The aim was to alleviate the tension. I will repeat myself here: reconciliation at a higher, intellectual level is very easy, but the lower you go the worse it gets, and with a common policeman or clerk it is a completely different story. Or with fanatics on this or the other side, including the Lithuanian fanatics who had majority. Let us not idealize the Polish youth, either. The Polish youth before 1939 would beat the Jews, and then in turn, were beaten by the Lithuanian fanatics who would disperse the Polish people entering a church with clubs.

K.C.: Were there any initiatives of rapprochement between different cultures and nations in multinational Wilno? Could the Literary Wednesdays be ascribed a similar character?

C.M.: The Literary Wednesdays had to some degree this international character, but only to a small degree. Basically, Literary Wednesdays was an organ of the Polish intelligentsia in Wilno, clustered mainly around Stefan Batory University. Without the University, Wilno would have been deprived of this aura, it would not have the Polish intellectual environment. It would have possessed the Jewish one, not connected with the University. There were plenty of Jewish institutions acting completely independently of the University. There was, however, this awareness that it was a multinational city and representatives of other nations were invited to some Literary Wednesdays: one Wednesday was dedicated to Lithuanian literature with a Lithuanian guest from Kaunas, another was dedicated to Jewish literature, but in percentage terms there were very few of these non-Polish representatives.

Many of the Literary Wednesdays were dedicated to theatre in Wilno. A few days ago, during a reactivated Literary Wednesday, while listening to Mrs. Byrska, I recalled a wonderful performance of a medieval morality play directed by her in these walls. It was a German medieval play, translated into Polish. Then, her students prepared the mystery play by Oskar Miłosz, titled *Miguel Mañara*, but it was staged not for the Literary Wednesdays but for the Polish Radio. In a sense, the Literary Wednesdays, radio and theatre were cooperating institutions. The Literary

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Wednesdays gave birth to the “Kukułka Wileńska” [Wilno Cuckoo], a literary cabaret produced mainly by Bujnicki, often with the participation of [Konstanty] Gałczyński. “Kukułka Wileńska” was broadcast to the whole of Poland.

K.C.: I remember your story about how the Byrski’s engaged you in work for Wilno Radio and how you were fired for standing up for ethnic minorities.

C.M.: Yes, it was the main reason. In 1936, there was the political trial of the Dembiński’s group that emerged from the Żagary. I was not arrested or accused of anything since they believed I did not belong to the group. My relations with the group were, as a matter of fact, rather casual, I quarrelled with them. The group split into political, poetic and literary groups. Neither myself nor Zagórski, or Bujnicki, were engaged in it politically. Bujnicki was the Secretary of the Institute for Research of Eastern Europe. All the same, I shared with Byrski strong political views that found release in our reactions towards other ethnic groups inhabiting Wilno. Thus, we invited and aired Belorussian choirs. The Belorussian choir is very good. We sometimes invited Jews to give radio talks, even about religious issues. And that was the main argument against us. I know the mechanism. A colleague of mine, working for the same Radio, would denounce me to the newspaper, to rev. Maksymilian Kolbe’s *Mały Dziennik* [The Little Daily], telling stories of a communist cell inviting Belarusians, and Jews to the Radio. They attacked me and Byrski by name. The governor at that time was voivod Bociański who persecuted the Lithuanians so much that he threw them out of the country (one of them cut his wrists in protest). He was very sensitive to the opinions of the rightist press. With the publication in Maksymilian Kolbe’s newspaper of the articles about the Communists nestled in the Radio, he fired us. But, in that Poland of years ago, it wasn’t so easy. So, the state administration demanded the Radio to dismiss us but the director of the radio in Warsaw replied: “What? The government is to tell us whom we should employ?!” The director of the Radio was an old Pilsudski-ite legionary, Piotr, or as they called him “Piesio,” Górecki, an old “fogey,” more of a figurehead, really. The actual director was Halina Sosnowska who immediately transferred Byrski and me to Warsaw, within a space of a few months, it seems to me. That marked a period of great happiness for me as I could enjoy many months off between the dismissal from Wilno and taking up the job in Warsaw. Halina Sosnowska was a wonderful person; she took part in the resistance during the Nazi occupation for which she was sentenced to life imprisonment after the war. She was released after twelve years and soon afterwards died.

K.C.: Your most recent book is titled *In Search of a Homeland*. So, in spite of so many years of wandering, you are still on the road?

C.M.: It seems so: the fact that I live in America introduces here a decisive element. I have noticed that the place I stayed longest in my life was Berkeley, California.

K.C.: What emotional associations do you have today when you hear the word “Krasnogruda”?

C.M.: Hmm. I have many associations, even quite a lot, but I would rather not reveal them in public.

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This conversation took place in Sejny on 7 June 1992. It was published in *Krasnogruda* 1993, no. 1; reprinted in *Rozmowy polskie 1979–1998, Dzieła Zebrane*, Kraków 2006

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EUROPY ŚRODKOWO-WSCHODNIEJ

# KRASNOGRUDA

jesień '93 nr 1



MITTELEUROPA NAUMANA  
ŚRODY LITERACKIE  
RUCH DOMÓW TAŃCA



AWIERINCEW • BÉLOHRADSKY  
JANOWICZ • KANOWICZ  
KISS • KONRAD • KRUTVOR  
MIŁO SZ • SKVORECKY

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The first issue of the magazine "Krasnogruda"  
published by the "Borderland", with the conversation  
In Search of a Homeland.





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Czesław Miłosz and Krzysztof Czyżewski during the Central European Forum of Culture organized by the Borderland Foundation, Wigry Monastery, June 1994.

## ON "BORDERLAND"

In the course of many years living in exile I have wondered about the strange way that the so-called West imagines our Central and Eastern Europe. It's an example of how the human mind copes with the geography and politics of distant and little-known countries. It in fact replaces everything that is concrete, every detail, with so-called general ideas, those *idées générales* in which French intellectuals are such specialists. But we know how many vital matters, conflicts, and complications are obscured by easily accepted generalizations. In the ten years of its work, "Borderland" has dealt with things that in our part of Europe are particular, concrete, and at the same time nurturing. The very name, Borderland, indicates a realm, hazy for outsiders, where one must actually be in order to understand people who have different languages and different traditions. To have chosen this region instead of the capital for its home base was in itself symbolic - and, it seems to me, prophetic, because with the progressing European integration the importance of particular provinces and regions must inevitably grow, even at the expense of nation-states. We face the problem of maintaining cultural identity, but this identity means having respect for the past and being rooted in it. And this is what Borderland Foundation has cultivated in Sejny and its surroundings, and in other similar areas such as Transylvania. I could refer here to Simone Weil, who has spoken of the necessity of a rootedness that can be achieved through a love of local traditions and customs.

"Whence can a rebirth come to us, who have contaminated and devastated the entire globe?  
Only from the past, if we love it."

Over the past ten years we have observed in Poland the formation of cultural centres in various specific regions having the kind of multinational past that provides the impetus for a variety of initiatives. Among these, the preeminent position belongs to Pogranicze. I have followed its activities with great interest, finding in them an affinity with my own deepest convictions.

I wish you all another successful decade.

*Czesław Miłosz*

## ABOUT THE TIME OF THE RETURN

[...] I would like to build on our preliminary discussion during our last meeting in Krakow that only now takes on substance[1].

First of all, I would like this international meeting organized around "the myth of return" to initiate our project of restoring Krasnogruda and founding an International Centre for Dialogue there.

I wish to gather around this project a milieu of interesting people from around the world-- poets, artists and pedagogues--who will become connected with the Centre through co-operation.

I believe that we are now definitely on the best path to a legal acquisition of the whole estate.

So, in the summer, we will be able to publicly present a realistic plan for the development and revival of the estate[2].

Why do I insist on linking the theme of return with Krasnogruda and why does it seem so important to me right now? On the one hand, I mean you, Czesław Miłosz, whose life and poetry are enclosed and completed in the circle of return. On the other hand, it is us, the people of the Borderland, reaching Krasnogruda through our own lives and activity, in the process of finding ourselves on the line of return. You can say that following Mickiewicz, your destiny led you along the line of exile, but you have lived long enough to allow us, following you, to find ourselves on the line of return.

I read in the paths of your fate something of much broader significance, a harbinger of civilizational change with long-lasting consequences for the future. Perhaps I am mythologizing things incorrectly here, but then, we all need a myth, a new one, inspiring our imagination and action.

Of course, there are plenty of contemporary connotations of the theme of return in today's world, especially, it seems, in Europe, e.g. the claims of the various associations of those who were expelled.. This must not be forgotten, and perhaps it should also become a subject for debate.

But it seems to me that in this case, return stands for symbolic (historical) compensation, rather than material or legal. However, it will not comprise a real-life return, in the sense of revival and development of lost places. To put it briefly, it is not the Miłosz's who are going to return to Krasnogruda. There will be very few such visits and not in the near future. Returning here will be the adherents of the organic work, like us, the children of a new era, those searching for the rootlessness they were unable to find in the civilization of the Enlightenment whose resources seem to be already in a state of exhaustion. This sought-after rootlessness, known e.g. from the reading

and analysis of Simone Weil's writings, does not necessarily have to be bound up with nostalgia and old-fashioned ways, just the opposite, it can be modern and promising. There are, probably, various threats connected with it of which we might not be aware, but which might be visible to you.

Perhaps we need some type of warning, too.

I recently reread your *Notes on Exile*, the text in which many people found priceless advice about how to live and create while in emigration. You revealed there the weak points and dangers awaiting the exiles, while at the same time pointing to potential sources of energy. I myself belong to those people who use your texts and meetings with you as the indications of how to follow you along the path of return, how to exit the Land of Ulro. Certainly, I am not the only person today with such an attitude. I wish the newly restored Krasnogruda Manor to become a place of both reflection and practical initiatives connected with the myth of return.

*Krzysztof Czyżewski*

Krakow, 4th February 2003

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[1] At the end of 2002, Krzysztof Czyżewski discussed with Czesław Miłosz the idea of organizing a seminar devoted to the myth of return at the Borderland Foundation, Sejny.

[2] Eventually, the Borderland Foundation took out a long-term lease on the Krasnogruda manor and park pursuant to an agreement with Pomorze Forest District Office.

## ON THE RESTORATION

Time is one of the greatest mysteries of human life, or even one could say, its primary mystery. We live in time, we are in constant flux, we journey the road leading from childhood to death, but also there are changes taking place independently of us; they are known as history. When I think of Krasnogruda, I see myself as a youngster with a rifle. I also see a manor house belonging to two of my cousins, Ela and Nina Kunat, the manor house having all of the characteristics of the era of the decline of gentry manors. Since the economic situation was difficult, the house had to be turned into a pension for intelligentsia from Warsaw every summer. At the same time there was a large bookcase with economic works of Stanisław Kunat, who after 1831 left Poland for Paris, where he lectured until the end of his days. For me the past was of little meaning. I had enough problems of my own; I was, shy, reclusive and mildly in love with a girl, whom I was destined to meet later on a different continent, a doctor in a small town in New England. That meeting took place when the times of manor houses, the Jewish community in Sejny and the famous (for its fish dishes) restaurant of Mama Fligeltaub on the main square had all passed.

Now the past has for me colour and weight, it is the centre of my attention and constant thoughts. This does not mean that I would like to return to what once was, and to see the world once more with my young naïve eyes. I would rather say that the visit to places that I know from my youth gives me an almost tangible sense of flowing time and the passing away of people as well as customs. A contradiction appears: then and now. Between these two points there is the great expanse of mass executions, deportations, destruction and decay. I use the word "expanse" because one miraculous quality of time is the fact that we can regard it in spatial terms. And even music is an architectural undertaking involving time. Attempting to cope with the spatiality of time, humanity has invented the comparison to a river, which as Heraclites said, cannot be entered twice, each moment brings new water. At time this stream of time appears to be stalled, but we, living in the twentieth century, could not be deceived by such an impression. And when we come to a halt within "now," we cannot escape the feeling that something has to be done with the gap separating us from "then." The obligation of the restoration of the departed makes itself apparent, despite the knowledge that they do journey back with us into the past, and that in reality there is no such thing as return. It is very fitting that instead of a manor house in Krasnogruda there will be a centre

of international dialogue, and that Sejny preserve the memory of what it was then, before the World War, and even earlier when the superb gymnasium was still here, among its graduates was Stanisław Kunat and other prominent activists of the post-1831 wave of emigration; the time when the shtetl of Sejny was a centre of religious thought worthy of mention in the Encyclopaedia Judaica, and Bishop Baranaukas resided here.

Once we were taught Hegel's formula: "To overcome while retaining". And I suppose that this is the best way of relating our attempts at drawing closer to the past. Immersed in "now" we ought to try to transpose that which was into a, so to speak, into a new dimension, so to speak, fully conscious of the fact that we are working for that which is to come and that we are preparing a gift for those who are to take our place. I draw an enormous joy from being able to say in my thoughts to those with whom I walk around Krasnogruda and Sejny: "You are in good hands; you are not forgotten but present.

" It might have been possible for the "abomination of desolation" to persist, and the fact that it has not is a sign of human good will and wisdom.

*Czesław Miłosz*

Krakow, 18 February 2003

nia się Bukowiny od Galicji i powstanie państwa koronnego: do otwarcia



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From left: Krzysztof Czyżewski, Tomas Venclova, Czesław Miłosz  
and Grażyna Strumiłło-Miłosz. Krasnogruda, June 1997.

i w światowej, tym gwałtowniejsze stawały się manifestacje interesów działaczy rozmaitych frakcji

## THE LINE OF RETURN

“Woe to the person who leaves and does not come back.” This maxim by Oscar Miłosz must have sunk deep into the heart of his younger cousin, because Czesław Miłosz made a titanic effort to return. How did he do it?

He accepted his exile as “destiny, just like we accept an incurable illness.” [1] And since this was the case, it seemed natural to fight fate (even if it was to turn out to be a hopeless struggle) because this could, eventually, help us “perceive our own illusions.” In *Notes on Exile* he reveals little by little his own strategy of exile, which “consisted of maintaining a postulated and imagined presence in the country of his origin. Imagined, because he had to confront the history and literature of his own country as one organism developing through time, and designate for his oeuvre a function within the movement that leads from the past into the future.” [2] Working out for himself a place in the process of the development of Polish culture, the author of *A Treatise on Poetry* never abandoned it. As Jan Błoński put it, “Miłosz remained in the truth, while we were exiled from ourselves, from the Poland in which ideas, literature, and art were possible. It is certain that the emigrants sustained the continuity of our literary development [...]. So it is we who have returned to them, not the other way around.” [3] Miłosz’s approach to language was conditioned by this strategy. Irena Grudzińska-Gross accurately notes that Miłosz, in opting to remain loyal to his mother tongue, remained a traditional exile, in contrast to Joseph Brodsky, who left his country at a time of mass migrations and global interconnectedness, when the concept of “exile” had become anachronistic. “Miłosz is still an exile,” writes Grudzińska-Gross, “whereas Brodsky is merely an immigrant,” whose “complete devotion to Russian could only weaken him.” [4]

Just as essential as his awareness of the fate of the exile was his acknowledgement that he was an inhabitant of the Land of Ulro, the land of disinheritance. He did not come to terms with his place of residence, and his attitude can best be described with the words of Marina Tsvetaeva: “to overcome by refusing.” A practicing Catholic, fed from his childhood with images of Adam and Eve leaving the gates of Paradise with their heads bowed, Miłosz delved into the writings of Origen and the Cappadocian Church Fathers, Johannes Scotus Erigena, John of Ruysbroeck, and William Blake, finding in them faith in *apokatastasis* [restoration]. But disinheritance was also an aftereffect of the poisons of the Enlightenment worldview, which was dominated by the disciples of scientific rationality



and which led to the erosion of religious imagination. This was accompanied by humanity being uprooted from the natural environment, from the sense of community and the dignity of work, all of which was fatefully described by Simone Weil as the principal disease of the twentieth century. Miłosz's inextinguishable rebellion against the position of modern man in the world was recast as the labour of return, because return does not necessarily mean turning back and reaching the place from which we started our journey into the world. Brodsky's claim – that man always *de-parts*, and thus no return is possible – accurately expresses the human condition in the era of “fluid liquid modernity” in which the persistence of Ithaca is unknown and thus the return of Odysseus cannot be fulfilled. Miłosz was also conscious of the fact that it was impossible to return to the past, that the Heraclitean passage of time is also a spatial category. If, however, he described his residence as the Land of Ulro, then any attempt to leave it would take place along the line of return. Returning, for Miłosz, meant *de-parting* from the land of disinheritance.

For Miłosz, roots could not be made sacred. Likewise for Vincenz, about whom Miłosz wrote, “the most important thing was what Simone Weil called *enracinement*, which is impossible without a homeland.”[5] However, rootedness, Weil's *enracinement*, is not the same thing as family roots. Finding a homeland is not the same as dwelling in the place where our ancestors once used to live. Of course, they may be related. The way Miłosz drew strength from continuity with the past and a long family tradition impressed Irena Grudzińska-Gross, as she compared his situation with that of Brodsky, who was not so comfortably “embedded both in the world and in his own language” and who, growing up in Soviet Leningrad, “was condemned to forgetting.”[6] But humans acquire roots above all thanks to work on the imagination, on memory, and on language, thanks to the establishment of friendships and loving correspondence. One attains or recovers a fatherland, building one's home in time and space. For the exile, “the only measure against the loss of orientation is to reconstitute one's north, east, west, and south, and in this new space to locate one's own Vitebsk or Dublin, elevating it, so to speak, to a new power. That which was lost will be regained in a higher level, as something that is present and vital.”[7]

Miłosz considered himself to be a builder. He looked critically upon books proclaiming collapse and decadence. Though he felt a dark thorn in his side and saw with his own eyes the fulfilment of his catastrophic visions, he did not allow despair – much less nihilism – to engulf him. He tried to be useful and constructive in his actions. In a letter to Brodsky, who had only just left Russia and was full of anxiety, “just like all of us from our part of Europe who were raised on the myth that the life of a writer ends when he leaves his homeland,” Miłosz strove to calm him by saying that “everything depends on the person and on his inner health.”[8] He perceived one of the main threats to his health in *acadiá*, the affliction of those who cease to care for their own existence and surrender to depression and indifference. The monk John Cassian would add here another feature that he called the *horror loci* – that is, an aversion to one's place of residence and an inability to live here and now. Thus zeal and a devotion to discipline made Miłosz (as Tomas Venclova accurately put it) “the man of the word ‘yes,’” [9] for whom discord with the world did not take away the world, did not take away love for it and for the place where one could feel at home. Seen from this perspective, the fact that he returned at the end of his life to Kraków, where he spent such a short period at the end of the war, and not to Szetęjnė, where he was born, is of secondary importance.

Once upon a time we travelled with Tomas Venclova by car from Sejny, through the Kaliningrad District, to Nida in Lithuania, where, at Thomas Mann's house, we were to take part in a conference

on the twentieth century as the age of exile. Crossing the territory of the former East Prussia, we were struck everywhere by the traces of exile: deserted settlements once inhabited by Germans, Lithuanians, Jews and Poles, by Mennonites, Lutherans and Catholics, by counts, noblemen and burghers. In the region where the great Lithuanian poet Donelaitis once received his education, we met exiles from Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and Chechnya. I, however, could not help but feel that "exile" was no longer the name of this land on the threshold of the twenty-first century – not any longer. I thought about the changing phases of the eternal cycle. This land awaited return. Not the short visit of a descendant to a cemetery, or to the walls of a rundown kolkhoz that had once been a palace. It awaited the arrival of those who would begin to live here permanently, who would rebuild the ruins, reclaim the land that had grown wild, read the remaining traces and pay respect to the memory. This land awaited the pioneers of a new world. I myself was one of them and I had to learn not how to live in exile, but on the line of return.

I accompanied Czesław Miłosz in his returns to the Polish-Lithuanian borderland, to Krasnogruda, Sejny, Szetėjnė and Vilnius. I needed advice. He was returning for a few days; I was beginning a new life in the places from which he had been expelled. His *Notes on Exile* offered advice to emigrants from different geographical latitudes about how to retain their orientation, their creative abilities, and themselves. For years I was working on *Notes on Return*, based on conversations with him, on our common journeys, on his books. On this, precisely, I base my story about practicing the borderland in dialogue with Czesław Miłosz, together with reflections on the way out of the Land of Ulro.

As I mentioned at the beginning, when Miłosz talked with me he was frugal with his words, preferring to concentrate on matters of life practice. He did, however, leave two texts that are especially important for me, touching the deepest secrets of the Returnee. I would like to refer to the second of them, written in the form of a letter to me and my friends from Borderland, at the end my story. The first one is a poem beginning with the words: "In my old age I decided to visit the places where I once wandered in my early youth." [10]

Miłosz wrote the poem *Return* following his first visit to Krasnogruda in 1989. Many times and persistently – practically throughout his life – he came back to Krasnogruda. What was the reason for this? The memory of youth? Nostalgia? Amorous initiations? Yes, but this does not give a complete answer. There was something else that made him disinclined to speak about this *returning* aloud, emphasizing that it was too intimate.

*There is nothing to esteem in the fattened wisdom of adults,  
and acquiescence trained in slyness is disgraceful.*

*Let us honour a protest against the immutable law and honour revolvers  
in the hands of adolescents when they refuse to participate for ever.*

When I read these words for the first time, I knew already that Miłosz's youthful oath dwelt in Krasnogruda. He returned to this place, came back to it in his memory and in poetry written even in old age, to confess a faith in promises once given and in oaths he once took in his youth. He recalled these in his poem *My Mother's Grave*. It is his mother Weronika, connected with Krasnogruda, to whom these promises were entrusted. It is to her "who knows my childish oaths" that he said: "Help me create love that lives forever / From my stubborn discord with the world."

In Krasnogruda I met an old man confessing to the child within himself, to whom he remained faithful

all his life. Isn't this the essence of return and the truth about our attempts to get out of Land of Ulro, where we remain imprisoned by our consciousness, with a sense of troubling alienation because the child within us does not feel at home in this land?

Rebuilding Krasnogruda, we intend to create a place commemorating those whose destiny was connected with the manor. On that site there will arise an International Centre for Dialogue, spiritually linked with the thought and work of Miłosz, where we will teach the craft of bridge-building in a multicultural world, a craft based on the ethos of the borderland. Personally, however, nothing links me to this place more than the youthful oaths I share with Miłosz. After all, I also swore that I would not betray the choices I made with the heart of a child, exposing myself to ironic comments from adults like "when you grow up, you will be wiser." After all, I also promised myself to disagree with the laws governing the world of adults, with the practicalities of life and other cowardly prevarications, with the tongue that would take from me my secrets and the consciousness that would render unreal all that had been my real kingdom. That is why I dreamt that in Krasnogruda – the one built along the line of return – there would be a bench along a park lane, or a footbridge on a lake adorned with gentle waves, where we could commemorate the Returnee by asking ourselves about our fidelity to our youthful oaths.

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A fragment of the essay "The Line of Return On Practicing Borderland in Dialogue with Czesław Miłosz," in Krzysztof Czyżewski, *Linia powrotu: Zapiski z pogranicza*, Sejny 2008. Originally the 2007 Copernicus Lecture, delivered on March 30, 2007, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

[1] Czesław Miłosz, "Noty o wygnaniu," in *Zaczynając od moich ulic*, Kraków 2006, p. 56.

[2] *ibid.*, pp. 57–58.

[3] Jan Błoński, *Miłosz wśród nas*, in *Miłosz jak świat*, Kraków 1998, p. 222.

[4] Irena Grudzińska-Gross, *Miłosz i Brodski. Pole magnetyczne*, Kraków 2007, p. 248.

[5] Czesław Miłosz, "Do Tomasa Venclovy," in *Zaczynając od moich ulic*, *op. cit.* p. 38.

[6] Irena Grudzińska-Gross, *op. cit.* p. 47.

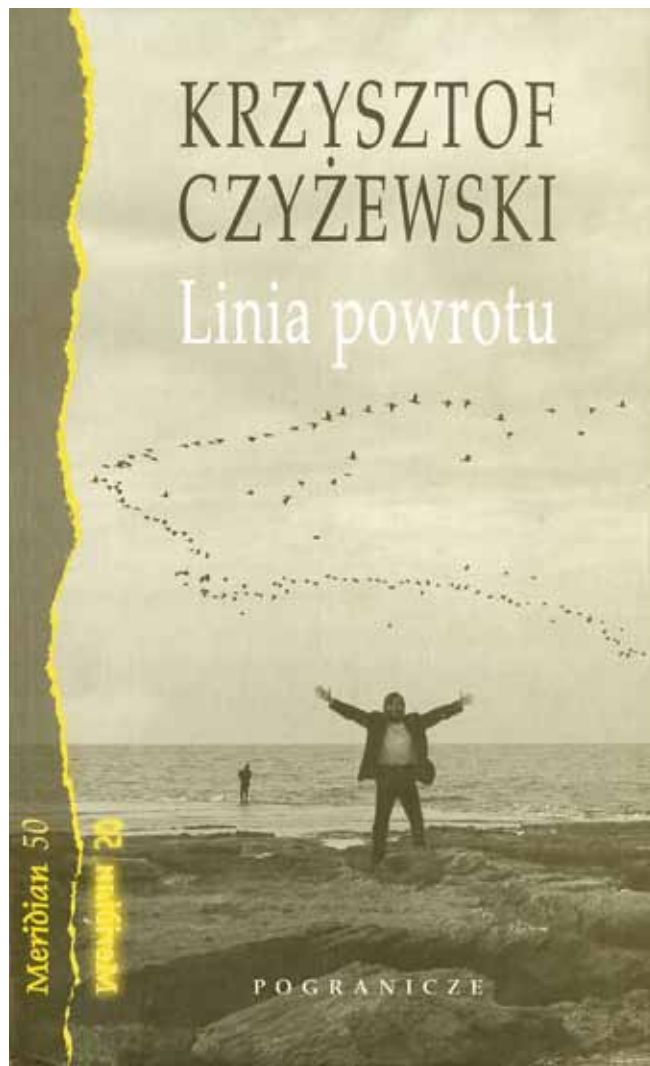
[7] Czesław Miłosz, *Szukanie ojczyzny*, Kraków 2001, pp. 215 and 47.

[8] Miłosz's first letter to Brodski of 12 July 1972, quoted after: Irena Grudzińska-Gross, *op. cit.* p.19.

[9] Tomas Venclova, "Przedmowa," in Irena Grudzińska-Gross, *op. cit.* p.19.

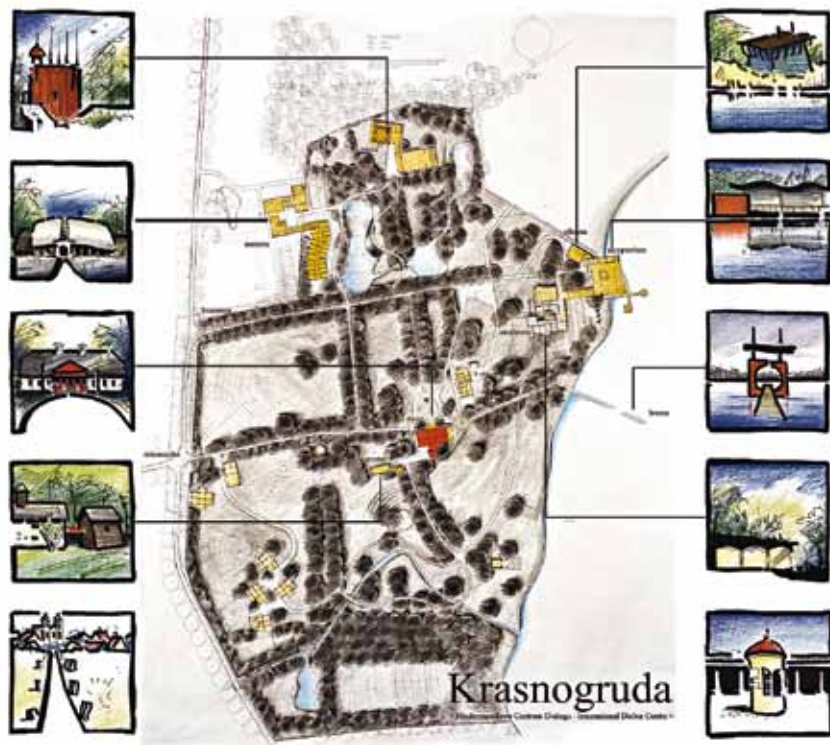
[10] Czesław Miłosz, "Powrót," in *Dalsze Okolice*, Kraków: Znak, 1999, p.58.

i tym głosnic) ...  
nizmu. Także ten zakątek starej Europy musiał przetrwać, a  
dramatycznym skrócie określona przez E... a  
n



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The cover of the book *Linia powrotu*  
(*The Line of Return*) by Krzysztof Czyżewski.

e-  
... i, o mniejszym doraźnym znacze-  
niu, za to nieporównanie trwalsze, o k...



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 Different elements of the Pedagogical Province in Krasnogruda designed by Rafał Winiewicz. So far three of them are realized: The Manor, The Outbuilding and The Aviaries.

**PEDAGOGICAL PROVINCE  
OF BRIDGE BUILDERS**





The Gate. A fragment of Rafal Winiewicz's design.

Our daily mission is building the “connective tissue” (Czesław Miłosz) between cultures and generations, man and nature, memory and past, art and social change. We refer here to the Polish traditions of organic work and the heritage of the European “Bildung” whose literary equivalent is the “Pedagogical Provinces” (Goethe, Hesse, Janion). Our vision involves putting into practice the Pedagogical Province whose material existence and spiritual development are based on the programs linking art with education and engaging all resources of the borderland region. The vision is by no means a mere literary myth, but a project/challenge whose reality has been fashioned for over 20 years dedicated to acquisition of knowledge, mastering of the tools, team building, gaining public confidence and establishing a suitable place for the project location.

The Pedagogical Province will be built on the basis of the revitalized manorial complex, the former property of Czesław Miłosz’s family in Krasnogruda. The restoration of the three buildings: the manor house, the outbuilding and “the aviaries,” as well as the manor park is possible thanks to the assistance of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage that will make possible the establishment of a new space for culture with a programme linking innovation of cultural practice and development of the local community. The place reborn from ruin and civilizational degradation will acquire the lost potential of the manor and the connected with it character of a “small homeland” connected with it. The worked out by the “Borderland” practices of culture animation and intercultural dialogue together with the reinforcement of the borderland identity, social integration, revival of the communication between generations and people’s civilizational aspirations will create a chance for development and thorough utilization of the historical and cultural, ecological, tourist and cross-border potential of the commune.





The Krasnogruda manor house in 2009.



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The Krasnogruda manor house in 2011.









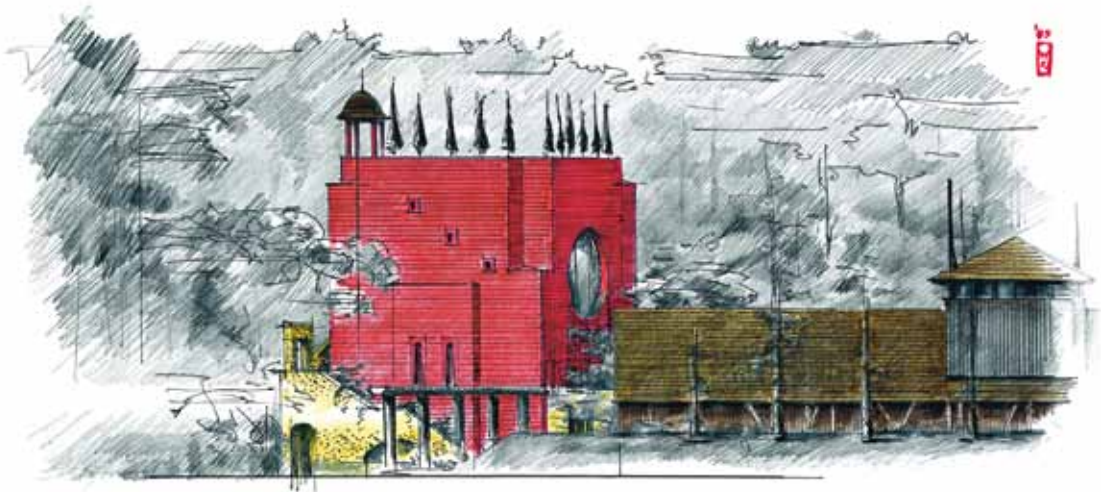


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Rafał Winiewicz with the participants of the Krasnogruda Route on the manor porch, summer 2006.



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A view on the Krasnogruda manor, outbuilding, park and Lake Holny.





The Tower. A fragment of Rafal Winiewicz's design.

# HESSE'S CASTALIA.

Hermann Hesse wrote *the Glass Bead Game*, his last novel for which he received the Nobel Prize, in the Europe subjugated by barbarian totalitarian regimes, whose followers threw the book onto the burning pyre in Opera Square, Berlin. During the twilight of European civilization, Hesse spun the tale of Castalia, a certain special pedagogical province where life was subordinated to education and spiritual development. His work referred to the German tradition of Bildungsroman, best expressed by Goethe in the educational novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. Hesse created a contemporary novel which -- following the example of masterpieces of the previous centuries -- strives to protect man from "the oblivion of being" (Heidegger), to throw an undying light on "the world of everyday life" (Husserl), "to build the knowledge about the soul" (Freud) and to serve as "the base of education" (Hofmannsthal).

Castalia also hides in itself threats, and these also feature in Hesse's novel. One especially: the breaking of links with the outside world to embrace exclusively the pleasures of spiritual exercise. Josef Knecht, the hero of the novel, is quite aware of this threat. His spiritual development leads him first to the top of the Castalian hierarchy, and then, still further, to serve people in everyday life; as a great master he leaves Castalia and undertakes the work of a teacher. Josef Knecht's choice of pedagogical service to shape, first of all, the education of the young, complements our knowledge of the *Glass Bead Game*. This is an educational and artistic programme practiced in the schools of the province, the most important element of which is the spiritual upbringing of a new generation, intended to grow up not in an ideal land of the spirit, but in the real world, with all its earthly, historical and human conditioning. Because only then can each "symbol and each combination of symbols lead not to one or other place, not to particular examples, experiments or proofs, but towards the centre, the secret and the innermost profundity of the world, to *urknowledge*."



# NEIMAR AND THE CULTURE OF DIALOGUE

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Committed to the process of European integration and creation of civil society, we begin to achieve awareness that our future will be, essentially, decided by the problem of meeting with the Other, a prospect with an alarming possibility of failure leading to never-ending culture wars. Such a trail of events would mean failure in our ability to establish an authentic community in the postmodern reality. Therefore we need an innovative school of thought, supported by a philosophy of dialogue, which demands continuation and development. There is also a need, perhaps an even bigger one, for a culture of dialogue, forming the ethos of the persons engaged in its creation, and finding its expression in practical activities in interpersonal space. This, therefore, calls for new cultural practices and modern tools of bridge building, suitably adjusted to dialogic reflection. In other words, we inquire here about a new way of thinking, and about craftsmanship that can facilitate this thinking, worked out in modern workshops of cultural dialogue.

Man's dialogue with the Other means building. It is not bestowed upon us, it does not establish itself on its own. Dialogue is a craft. Practicing it has been, for centuries, compared to bridge building. In the Balkans they called bridge builders *neimars* and surrounded them with respect because of the architects who knew the secrets of nature and were able to conquer the forces of chaos. Later the name vanished into oblivion and together with it the secret of the craft. Bridge building became a technology. Old tools were misused, and while searching for new ones, people forgot the functions, those mastered once by the *neimars*, that these tools should serve.

The question of how to internalize the Other is also a question about the viability of a modern borderland culture. Borderland is understood here not as a territory situated at the outer boundary, e.g. of a state, but as a space of coexistence of different people, where borders run across communities. Today, the borderland is no longer an area located far away from the centre of the region, known for tribal conflicts continuing since time immemorial and for the richness of the various, sometimes exotic, cultural traditions, preserved in spite of modernity. The centre of modern civilization has itself become a borderland. The creation of bridge building workshops, situated in more and more current and more and more difficult "border passages" becomes, in such circumstances, indispensable. As long as it is still not too late, as long as the ethos of dialogue will not be considered something unnecessary, as long as new apprentices will not fill the workshops of the new rulers of souls of King

Ubu's sign. An alternative for such a course of events is neither a festival-type multi-culturalism nor any other form of a superficial short-term meeting of cultures. Before us lies the challenge of creating an active culture of dialogue in the organic process of personal and community development, a process of long duration. For that purpose we shall require the forgotten craft of the *neimar*, read anew and made beneficial again wherever we struggle to transcend ourselves.

# THE ETHOS OF UNIVERSITAS

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The university, both as an institution and in its philosophy, is experiencing a deep crisis today. The ethos of *universitas*, worked out over almost nine hundred years (and in reality considerably longer, because, after all, the first European universities--established in Bologna in 1088 and Paris in 1150--were a continuation of the Greek idea of academy), which constitutes the essential foundation of European civilization, is under threat today. There is even talk of its demise. Anxious humanists, analysing the reasons behind the phenomenon, write about the "academic enterprise in the era of student consumerism" (David Riesman), about the transformation of universities into training centres for professional experts with the accompanying degradation of professors from their position as masters to the role of instructors (Tadeusz Ślawek), about the phenomenon of lowering standards propelled by the "dogmatic embrace of instrumentalism," discrediting the authority of intellectuals, struggling against high standards of study and culture in the name of critiquing elitism and privilege (Frank Furedi), and finally, about the system of education which "rather induces to repetition and pleasing the teacher than understanding and testing yourself" (Michel Crozier).

The ethos of *universitas* and its vitality for the democratic and pluralistic society are of fundamental significance for the creation of the dialogue of culture. *Universitas* used to institute the world being in itself a microcosm of the communion between people and environment, beyond any religious, national, geographic or administrative borders, in which expressing common values did not stand at odds with tolerance, and pursuit of truth was free from instrumentalization and individualistic self-interest. The threat to (or an outright disappearance of) this ethos in multicultural European society is a vexing phenomenon. It is not difficult to observe that it is accompanied by an increasing fragmentation of reality: with its break-up into smaller and smaller parts, each defending its own separateness and identity. And it is not about, first of all, nation-states only. Nowadays, it is chiefly the question of the growth of cultural differentiation and ensuing tensions, including even the threat of cultural wars. Culture has ceased to play the role of a uniting agent, increasingly depriving itself of a universal dimension and more and more often offering itself to serve as a form of protection for the particular identity of one community or region or another. The tension between what is universal and what is particular has always existed in culture. At present, however, the dominance of particularistic tendencies and confrontation with otherness is clearly felt. It is, doubtlessly, one of the consequences

of the exhaustion of the ethos of *universitas*.

In such a situation, we need something more than just a critical reflection on the condition of the university in the modern world. What we need is a new vision of the pedagogical province. We also need courage and the power of imagination to look forward into the future and to create unusual and stimulating educational utopias that foster individual creativeness.

The inspirations and contexts connected with Hesse's Castalia-- *neimar*, culture of dialogue and the ethos of *universitas*--are decisive in the establishment of the forms and ways in which the project of *The Pedagogical Province of Bridge Builders* will be implemented. Under it, we wish to broaden humanistic reflection and work out innovative intercultural practices through activities, such as: laboratories of intercultural practice, international symposia, art studios, residential programmes for translators and editors, publications, culture trails etc.

The realization of the project of *The Pedagogical Province of Bridge Builders* constitutes a new stage in the work of the "Borderland," offering a chance to deepen and broaden new aspects of its educational and artistic activities in the multicultural communities of different regions of the world. Nevertheless, the forms of the activities to which we refer in our undertaking were worked out by our team over many years, so they have their own continuity and dynamics of continuation, and they also have their international partners and will be embedded in the context of our past accomplishments. We may mention here some of the long-term programmes carried out by the "Borderland": *The Class of Cultural Heritage* (programme dedicated to youth and students), *Sejny Chronicles* (long-term work with children of different ethnicity, work on the multicultural heritage of their small homeland), *Glass Bead Game* (multicultural ethnicities for schools), *Academy of Borderland Teachers*, *Borderland School* (programme for animators of intercultural dialogue from different countries), *Sejny Theatre*, *Klezmer Orchestra*, *Centre for Documentation of Borderland Cultures* (with rich collections, film and audio library, scholarship programmes and research), *Borderland Publishing House*, *Krasnogruda* magazine, *Sejny Almanach* (bilingual Polish-Lithuanian publication), *Borderlander* (a prestigious award for persons of particular merit in maintaining the ethos of borderlands), *Laboratories of Intercultural Practice* (supporting establishment of similar centres on the world's borderlands), and the *European Wandering Academy* "New Agora."

# THE KRASNOGRUDA ROUTE

*The Krasnogruda Route* is a project of the Borderland Foundation initiated in 2006 and involving the youth of Sejny and the villages of the Sejny municipality. The input of local residents has also been important, especially that of the elderly residents. The project concerns the “archaeology of memory” of the Krasnogruda manor; its fruit are exhibitions on the history of the place and its connections with Czesław Miłosz and the staging of *The Issa Valley* in the Krasnogruda park. Under the *Krasnogruda Route*, we organize an annual event on the anniversary of the Noble Prize Winner’s death. The meeting called *Remembering Miłosz* begins with a mass held in the adjacent village of Żegary and then continues with artistic activities composed of poetry readings, song, remembrance meetings, performances and exhibitions. The event has a bilingual, Polish-Lithuanian character (bilingual mass, songs and readings). Apart from the visitors from Poland and abroad (e.g. Tomas Venclova and Rita Gombrowicz), we invite young and old residents of the municipality who participate not only as the audience, but also as the creators of the event (the mass, singing, enjoying regional food).

*Krasnogruda Route* has so far been organized only in summer and has not assumed any permanent structure. It did manage, however, to earn its own capital of trust and partner cooperation with the local residents, lifting their hopes and aspirations, which later turned out to be an important milestone in the process of the revival of Krasnogruda and the construction of the International Centre for Dialogue.

*Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska, Wojciech Szroeder*

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A scene from the performance  
of *The Issa Valley* in the  
Krasnogruda park.











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Scenes from the performance of *The Issa Valley*, directed by Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska and Wojciech Szroeder, part of the Krasnogruda Route project. The play was performed in the Krasnogruda park, late in the evening, in July and August 2006-2008. The film based on the performance was later directed by Alex Pavlović, its premiere took place at the White Synagogue, Sejny, 2010.





1. Building the stage set for *The Issa Valley*.

2. Presentation of the results of the *Krasnogruda Route* workshops run in 2005 by: Jurate Racinskaite (*Księga* [The Book]), Cyna i Erwin Schenkelbach (*Przechodźsiwiaty*), Witold Boćwiński (*pieśni litewskie* [Lithuanian songs]), Wojciech Tochman (*Sztuka reportażu* [Art of Reportage]), Przemysław Trzeciak (*Człowiek w przestrzeni* [Man in Space]), Rafał Winiewicz (*Architektura przestrzeni* [Architecture of Space]), Stanisław Woś (*Drzewa - obiekt fotografii* [Trees - Topic of Photography]).

3. A scene from *The Issa Valley* performance.



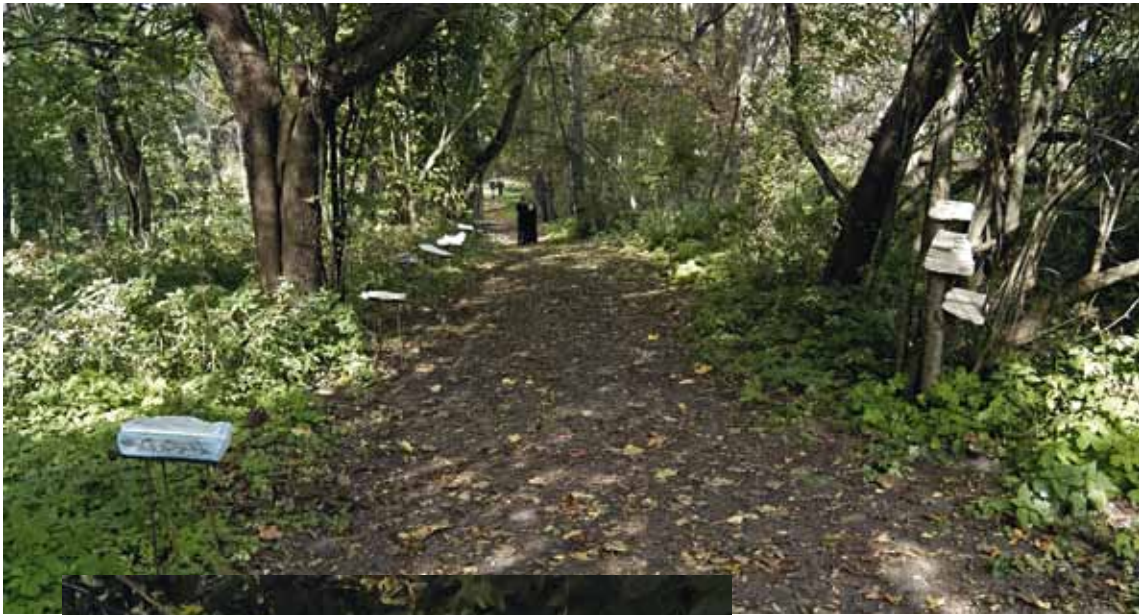


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1. An essential element of the *Krasnogruda Route* was the archaeology of the manor memory, i.e. conversations with the elderly inhabitants of Krasnogruda, Żegary, Dusznica, Sztabinki, Radziucie, Jenorajście, Berżniki, Rachelany, Ogrodniki and other villages. The photo shows Urszula Namiotko in conversation with Stanisława and Władysław Rakucewicz from Krasnogruda, 2005.



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2. The *Krasnogruda Route* Exhibition at the White Synagogue, Sejny. The exhibition opened on 20 November 2005.





The theme of the Krasnogruda Route 2008 was *“Towards the Community Traditions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.”* The project gathered participants from Lithuania, Belarus, Germany and Poland; the workshops were run by: Katarzyna Surma-Domańska (reportage), Eijgius Aleksandravicius (history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania), Marek Skorupski (photography), Wiesław Szumiński (*Gliniane księgi [Clay Books]*). The photographs show the Clay Books workshop – the product of the workshop is *The Poets’ Avenue* with the installations featuring the poems by Josif Brodsky, Jerzy Ficowski and Tomas Venclova.





1. The late Stanisława Wyżłańska from Krasnogruda used to work at the manor as a maid servant; here she shares her memories with Weronika Czyżewska. Summer 2005.

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2. Every year on August 14, the anniversary of the poet's death, the Borderland holds a meeting titled *Remembering Miłosz*. It begins, traditionally, with a mass for the poet and then the invited guests share poetry and memories of Czesław Miłosz. Among our guests in the past years were Rita Gombrowicz, Irena Grudzińska-Gross, Barbara Toruńczyk, Irena Veisaite, Eįgidius Aleksandravicius, Piotr Dapkiewicz, Andrzej Franaszek, Jerzy Illg, Anatol Rojtman, Tomas Venclova, Henryk Woźniakowski, Adam Zagajewski. The second day of remembrance is composed of the symposia, e.g.: *Poetry and Silence* (2009) or *Whose Miłosz* (2010).

3. Local residents helped in the realization of the Krasnogruda Route and the restoration of the manor. The photo shows a meeting inviting neighbourly co-operation, initiating the Krasnogruda Route on July 17, 2006.

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3. Local residents helped in the realization of the Krasnogruda Route and the restoration of the manor. The photo shows a meeting inviting neighbourly co-operation, initiating the Krasnogruda Route on July 17, 2006.



# THE EUROPEAN AGORA

The event to be held under the auspices of UNESCO has been organized by the Borderland Foundation and the Centre Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations. The special character of the event will be emphasized by the choice of its time, venue and context: crowning our twenty-year-long efforts endeavours designed to restore the Agora - the place of meetings and dialogue in the borderland communities.

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## TIME

30 June 2011 is the centennial of the birth of Czesław Miłosz, Noble Prize laureate, son of the Polish-Lithuanian borderland, a Polish émigré in France and citizen of the United States of America. Both, Poland and Lithuania declared 2011 to be celebrated as Miłosz Year and many places, starting from New York, through Brussels, Krakow, and as far away as Peking and Tokyo will become venues for various events commemorating Miłosz. Simultaneously, 30 June 2011 will be the eve of the inauguration of the Polish presidency of the European Union, 1 July 2011. "The Eve of the Polish Presidency in the EU" is one of the official events of the two-day celebrations.

## VENUE

Krasnogruda is situated in one of the most charming corners of this part of Europe, right on the Polish-Lithuanian border, on Lake Hołny. The Krasnogruda hill commands a view on the ecologically unpolluted, post-glacial landscape of hills, lakes and forests that stretch further, over the border, into the neighbouring Russia (Kaliningrad county), Lithuania, Belarus and Poland. It is the location of a manor with a spacious park, the former property of Czesław Miłosz's family. "Borderland" aims is to found here the Pedagogical Province of Bridge Builders.

## CONTEXT

The special concurrence of the events presents a splendid occasion for Czesław Miłosz to become one of the patrons of the Polish Presidency and of the process of the European unification.

The life and thought of the author of the *Native Realm* correspond to the challenges facing us today, such as establishing a common European home for all Europeans and development of their intercultural competencies, opening the possibility of living together in the world of open borders, migration and appearance of new borderlands.

The twentieth anniversary of the activities of the “Borderland” is a fitting context for its new venture: innovative and at the same time deeply rooted in the traditions of constructing the “connective tissue” between people and cultures, symbolized by the person of Czesław Miłosz. The restored manor buildings will become the seat of the International Centre of Dialogue in Krasnogruda, a unique, on a European scale, institution dedicated to the research and popularization of the craft of international dialogue on the world’s borderlands, the first step on the road to create, in the years to come, the Pedagogical Province of Bridge Builders.

The European Agora in Krasnogruda will be preceded by the events to be held on 27 June in Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas, Kėdainiai, Šeteniai), a series of meetings, concerts and conferences arranged by the Czesław Miłosz Birthplace Foundation. This event, too, on its completion, will be followed by another two days of symposia, workshops and artistic presentations. The most important day in our agenda of events will still be June 30th, the day of specially arranged “agoras” for statesmen, philosophers, poets and artists.

**The Agora of Statesmen** Participating in the Agora will be the President of the Republic of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski and his wife. Bronisław Komorowski will give a speech and open the International Dialogue Centre in the presence of, inter alia: Chief Advisor to the President of the Republic of Lithuania Virginija Būdienė (who will read the letter from the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė), the Minister of Science and Higher Education, Barbara Kudrycka, the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, Arūnas Gelūnas, Undersecretary of State in the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland, Maciej Klimczak, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, Egidijus Meilūnas, and representatives of the regional authorities: the Voivod of Podlaskie Voivodship, Maciej Żywno, Vice Marshall of Podlaskie Voivodship, Cezary Cieślukowski, Chairman of the Podlaskie Voivodship Assembly, Bogdan Dyjuk, Councillor of the Podlaskie Voivodship Assembly, Waldemar Kwaterski, Starost of Sejny, Ryszard Grzybowski and Mayor of Sejny, Jan Stanisław Kap.

The ceremony will also be attended by the poet’s son, Anthony Miłosz, with his family.

**The Agora of Philosophers** Hospitable Europe - a debate with Zygmunt Bauman (Leeds), Cezary Wodziński (Ublík), Michał P. Markowski (Krakow).

**The Agora of Poets** Europe’s Child - a debate and poetry reading with the participation of Irena Grudzińska-Gross (New York, moderator), Adam Zagajewski (Krakow), Marcelijus Martinaitis (Vilnius) and Alicja Rybalko (Vilnius).

**The Agora of Artists** The premiere of the “Return” oratorio by Wład Marhulets (New York) inspired by Czesław Miłosz’s poem under the same title, composed especially for the European

Agora. Sinfonietta Cracovia Orchestra under the baton of the composer and the Jauna Muzika choir (Vilnius). Soloists: Iwona Sobotka – soprano (Barcelona), Mariusz Godlewski – baritone (Warsaw), David Krakauer – clarinet (New York).

The following two days of meetings in Krasnogruda and Sejny on the Visions of Native Realm are the New Agora Symposion with the participation of: Egidijus Aleksandravicius (Kaunas), Ihar Babkou (Minsk), Clare Cavanagh (California), Krzysztof Czyżewski (Krasnogruda), Leonidas Donskis (Kaunas), Małgorzata Dziewulska (Warsaw), Smarand Enache (Târgu Mureș), Irena Grudzińska-Gross (New York), Andrzej Franaszek (Krakow), Andrzej Mencwel (Warsaw), Adam Pomorski (Warsaw), Krzysztof Rutkowski (Paris), Aleksander Schenker (New Haven), Marek Tomaszewski (Paris), Barbara Toruńczyk (Warsaw), Marek Zaleski (Warsaw).

“Café Europa” in the White Synagogue: An evening of poetry reading and music with the participation of the poets: Johan de Boose (Brussels), Andrei Khadanovich (Minsk), Birute Jonuškaite (Vilnius), Jane Hirshfield (San Francisco), Vasyl Makhno (New York), Joanna Miłosz-Piekarska (Melbourne) Ryszard Krynicki (Krakow, ), Donatas Petrošius (Vilnius), and translators: Anatol Roitman (Novosibirsk) and Adam Pomorski (Warsaw), and singers from Puńsk and Krasnopol.

“Describing Miłosz” A meeting on Czesław Miłosz’s work with Professor Aleksander Fiut (Krakow), the author of *Z Miłoszem* (With Miłosz), and Andrzej Franaszek, the author of *Miłosz. Biografia* (Miłosz. A Biography) and Algis Kaleda (The Apprentice of Time).

**Opening of exhibitions:** “In Search of a Homeland. Czesław Miłosz’s Testimony and Prophecies” at the Krasnogruda Manor, and the “Limes – Pontes – Agora” exhibition that presented the “Borderland’s” activities at the UNESCO general assembly in Paris (White Synagogue), “Orpheus and Eurydice” exhibition based on Wiesław Szumiński’s paintings and the exhibitions: “Miłosz in Samizdat” and “Native Realm in the World” (Borderland House).



The European Agora in Krasnogruda, June 30, 2011.



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1. The Agora of the Poets. Sitting from left: Anthony Miłosz, Irena Grudzińska-Gross, Adam Zagajewski, Martinaitis, Alicja Rybalko.  
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2. The Agora of Philosophers: Professor Zygmunt Bauman.  
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3. The Agora of Statesmen. Standing: Bronisław Komorowski and Krzysztof Czyżewski. Sitting from left: Egidijus Meiūnas, Barbara Kudrycka, Arūnas Gelūnas, Anna Komorowska, Anthony Miłosz, Maciej Klimczak, Virginia Būdienė and Maciej Żywno.







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The Agora of Artists.  
The premiere of the  
“Return” oratorio in  
Sejny Basilica, June  
30, 2011. From left:  
David Krakauer, Iwona  
Sobotka and Wlad  
Marhulets.



Ryszard Krynicki reads poetry during Café Europa in the White Synagogue, Sejny, on July 1, 2011.

# IN SEARCH OF A HOMELAND. CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ'S TESTIMONY AND PROPHECIES

*The exhibition held inside the Krasnogruda manor house depicts what for Czesław Miłosz became fate, obsession, dream, life utopia and objective that took the form of self-imposed everyday discipline: the search of a homeland.*

*exhibition's motto, written by Oskar Miłosz and placed over the manor house porch, proclaims: "Woe to the person who leaves and does not come back." The loss of homeland, and the loss of one's roots have become one of the basic attributes of the drama of modern man. The author of the Land of Ulro was able not only to venture deeply into the deposits of his own existence, but also dared to rebel against the matrix of the exile's fate and desperately seek ways of escaping from the land of disinheritance. Exiled from his native land, the land of his childhood, and from the religious imagination, he finds his homeland on the line of return, in apokatastasis (restoration).*

*Returning to Krasnogruda in 1989, he wrote: Let us honour a protest against the immutable law...*

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Exhibition Concept and Script:  
Małgorzata and Krzysztof Czyżewski  
Design: Aleksandra Wasilkowska  
Graphics: Grzegorz Laszuk

*In Search of a Homeland Exhibition.*



# NATIVE REALM ACTION

Exploring the European heritage of tolerance and co-existence, we wish to generate new ideas, attitudes, and tools, in order to oppose contemporary forms of xenophobia in Europe. The long-term aim of the Action is the establishment and development of a new movement of border-crossers: its tasks similar to those of the human rights movement from the beginning of the twentieth century. At the foundation of the project is the belief that the society too concentrated on diversity and on the defence of its own identity will face the problem of the ethos of communality; and that this problem deeply concerns the inhabitants of the more and more multicultural post-Cold War, post-industrial, and post-modern epoch. We do not mean to eliminate borders but to gain competence in crossing them, to allow the bonds of community to develop in a culturally diversified world. It is precisely art and knowledge that can assist in the creation of durable bonds in local communities and in the dynamics of interpersonal relations. The border-crossers' movement endeavours to build connective tissue and aims to prepare modern bridge-builders for action.

The title of the project refers to the famous book by Czesław Miłosz: *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition*, published in 1959 in Paris by the circle of anti-Communist Polish emigration. It was translated into nearly all European languages and commented on by eminent European humanists. For Miłosz, *nativeness* stood for rooting Central Europeans in their common European heritage; the problem involved the limited Western knowledge about the Eastern part of the continent, and the consequences of the Cold War divisions. Today, dialogue and rapprochement of East and West seem to be more advanced; still, much is left to be done in the matter. The communality of Europe as a whole, however, is becoming a more serious issue.

Our Action is to take place in the Europe of many languages and cultures and it will recall, on the one hand, the dissident tradition of opposing the Cold War divisions of Europe, but will, on the other hand, utilize up-to-date media technology and other modern tools of interpersonal communication. A part of the above-mentioned dissident tradition is the story of *Native Realm* as it was read in the circles of democratic opposition in the former Soviet Union: emigrants used to insert a page or more from the banned Parisian edition of the book inside their private letters sent from the West to Vilnius. The pages were passed from one to another in Vilnius and other cities of the empire, while being supplied with scribbled commentaries, debated on and slowly re-joined into a whole book. In those



trying times, *Native Realm* helped people discover common European values and, in spite of being separated by the Berlin Wall, to feel “at home” in Europe.

In its initial phase, the Action will mainly consist in building different forms of commentaries to *Native Realm*. Miłosz’s book -- using the existing translations (14 European languages) or those in the making (Bulgrian and Ukrainian) -- will be sent once again to different people and communities in Europe. The process of sending will itself take different forms: traditional mail, e-mail, and the Internet media, such as e-books, blogs, or Twitter. Of course, Miłosz’s book will only be a pretext, a point of reference, or an inspiration to generate reflection, debate or dispute, an exchange of opinions on the subject of the contemporary understanding, designing and creation of our own “native realm.” We expect the commentaries to take different forms: direct annotations “on the margins” of the book, essays or other literary forms, works of art, public debates, school lessons or university seminars, blogs or websites etc.

The Action is meant to become a process of complex and formally diverse “commenting,” that will actually breed and animate new reflection on the “native realm,” expressed in innovative forms of artistic expression and public debate. The Action will also rest upon other stimulants of activity and development, such as: engagement of organizations and institutions , designing Europe’s first intercultural trail and connected with it common trips, book publishing, exhibitions, symposia, etc.

# THE CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE

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The Borderland continues the traditions of the Jagiellonian Commonwealth, the ethos of civil tolerance and good neighbourhood, and makes every effort to carry them into the twenty-first century. They are needed by the European Union, of which we are a part, and by the contemporary world facing increasing tension and cultural difference. Facing challenges of modernity defined in this way, Poland, a country boasting a rich heritage of nations and cultures in coexistence, has a very important mission to fulfill. We believe that initiatives such as the International Centre for Dialogue will help us to meet our aims.

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The International Centre for Dialogue will be created in Krasnogruda, on the foundation of the restored manor house and the complex of buildings around it covering an area of 16 hectares. The estate is on a long-term lease to the Borderland Foundation.

The result will be the establishment of a school, unique on a European scale, which will train leaders of integrative activities in multicultural communities. They will obtain here both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the domain of conducting a dialogue between social groups, religions and nations.

The IDC will become an important link in the network created by the Borderland of laboratories of intercultural practices under the Glass Bead Game programme. Future initiators and animators of laboratories across the world will learn the details of the craft of bridge building and transfer their knowledge onto the actual needs of their local communities.



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1. The cellars of the manor are an exquisite place for chamber events, concerts, performances and debates. In the photo: Piotr Cieplak and the SzaZa (Paweł Szamburski and Patryk Zakrocki) musical duo telling their tale of „*Ignorance in Practice, or Cycling in Portugal.*” July 28, 2011.

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2. The concert of the Staff and the Sejny Chronicles ensembles during the final event in a series of musical workshops exploring the dialogue of jazz and traditional borderland songs. Lake Hołny pier, Krasnogruda, July 14, 2011.

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3. The restored buildings of the manor complex – the Manor, Aviaries and Outbuilding – now the venue of exhibitions, artistic workshops, seminars and movie showings organized under the IDC programme.





# FOUNDING ACT

This happened in the Polish Republic, in the manor house of Krasnogruda, Sejny county, on Tuesday, the sixth of July Anno Domini 2010 at 1 p.m., on the ninety-ninth anniversary of the birth of Czesław Miłosz (30 June), on the day that Bronisław Komorowski became President of Poland, and one year before the day that, for the first time in history, Poland will assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (1 July 2011).

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This happened

588 years since the year this land, situated in the royal Przelomska Forest, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was incorporated into the estate of Sztabinki, granted to the Kopećs by King Sigismund the Old

434 years since the first preserved record concerning the manor of Krasnyhrud

324 years after the Krasnogruda estate was purchased by Maciej Tadeusz Eysymont and his wife Wiktoria née Wołkowicka from the Massalski family

316 years since the time Krasnogruda with its environs counted 50 homes on its land and was taken over by the Prussian partition and acquired a mortgage estimating its value at four hundred and five thousand thalers

312 years since the Eysymonts started the construction of a new manor house using narrow-ringed pine that survives today, 70% of which will be used in the restored building of the manor house

264 years since the wedding at Krasnogruda of Teofil Kunat, arms-bearing Topórs, of Evangelical denomination, with Joanna née Bohdanowicz

257 years, since, on 23 November, Teofil and Joanna Kunat purchased the estate from Ryszard Eysymont, including the manors of Krasnogruda and Wereszczyzna, as well as the villages of: Dworczyisko, Gawieniańce, Maciejowizna, Sztabinki and Żegary for a total area of 2285 hectares, including 769 hectares of forests.

225 years since the birth of Bronisław Kunat, the first son of Teofil and Joanna, baptized in the parish church of Berźniki, later the mortgage holder of the estate of Krasnogruda,

married to Florentyna Grzegorzewska.

252 years since the birth of Zygmunt Kunat, the second son of Teofil and Joanna, married to Józefa Syruć, who settled in Szetejnie and was the grandfather of Czesław Miłosz, born there

99 years since the day of 30 June, 1911, the date of birth of the future Nobel Prize winner and poet, Czesław Miłosz

88 years since 23 October, 1922, when, after the death of Bronisław Kunat, the Krasnogruda estate was inherited by his daughters, Gabriela Lipska and Janina Niementowska

66 years since the liquidation of the estate following the PKWN decree on agricultural reform of 6 September by virtue of which the inhabitants of Krasnogruda were forced to leave the manor, as it became the property of the State Land Fund

21 years since, for the first time after the war and his emigration, Krasnogruda was visited by Czesław Miłosz, who also later visited it a number of times

17 years since the brothers Czesław and Andrzej Miłosz, and Janina and Andrzej Jurewicz, the children of Maria née Kunat, symbolically bequeathed Krasnogruda to the “Borderland” and entrusted it with the foundation here of the International Centre for Dialogue

7 years since the signing of a long-term agreement on the lease of the manor and park in Krasnogruda between the Borderland Foundation and the Pomorze Forest District Office; and from the launching of the first cultural projects: “Krasnogruda Route” and the staging of The Issa Valley

6 years since the death of Czesław Miłosz

3 years since the lifting of border checks on the Polish-Lithuanian border, following the accession of both countries to the European Union and the Schengen zone.

1 year since the Borderland Foundation started investment in construction designed to establish the International Centre for Dialogue

This happened in the year of the Smolensk tragedy, the great flood and:

the election of Bronisław Komorowski as President of Poland,

when the Prime Minister of Poland was Donald Tusk

and the Minister of Culture and National Heritage was Bogdan Zdrojewski

the Metropolitan of Warmia was Rev. Archbishop Wojciech Ziemia

the Voivod of the Podlaskie Voivodship was Maciej Żywno

the Marshal of the Podlaskie Voivodship was Jarosław Dworzański

the Starost of Sejny was Ryszard Grzybowski

the parish priest of Sejny parish was Rev. Dean Zbigniew Bzdak

the Mayor of Sejny was Jan Stanisław Kap

the Head of Sejny Commune was Jan Kındzier

Krasnogruda Village Administrator was Irena Bobrowska

the District Forester of the Pomorze Forest District was Ryszard Karczewski

the President of Borderland Foundation was Krzysztof Czyżewski

On the initiative of the Borderland Foundation, the executor of the will of the pre-war

owners of the estate of Krasnogruda, and among them one of the greatest poets of the Polish language and the Polish-Lithuanian borderland, Czesław Miłosz, the newly restored manor and park complex will become the seat of the International Centre for Dialogue. It is the first stage of the project establishing here the Pedagogical Province of Bridge Builders, dedicated to the artistic and educational mission of creating “connective tissue” between people of different cultures, ethnicities and creeds, between man and nature, memory and future, between art and social change. The construction project was financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage Assistance and was rendered by the Marshal and Voivod of Podlaskie Voivodship and the local Sejny authorities: Starost, Mayor and Commune Administrator; also engaged were, from the beginning, the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, especially of: Krasnogruda, Żegary and Dusznica. Individually, we wish to mention the assistance we received from the late Andrzej Miłosz, Czesław Miłosz’s brother, who cared for the future of Krasnogruda with his whole heart.

We wish this place, reborn from ruin and civilizational degradation, to acquire the lost potential of the heritage of the manor and the inseparably intertwined notion of the “small homeland.” Let the practices of cultural animation and intercultural dialogue worked out by the “Borderland”, together with reinforcement of the borderland identity, social integration and the revival of communication between generations and people’s civilizational aspirations, create the opportunity for the development of the historical, cultural, ecological, touristic and cross-border potential of this beautiful corner of the world.

Let visitors coming to this place find the Poet’s words, written here in his 1989 poem Return, still alive:

There is nothing to esteem in the fattened wisdom of adults, and acquiescence trained in slyness is disgraceful.

Let us honour a protest against the immutable law and honour revolvers in the hands of adolescents when they refuse to participate for ever.



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Laying the foundation stone of the International Centre for Dialogue in Krasnogruda,  
30 June 2010. Front: Małgorzata i Krzysztof Czyżewski. Standing from left: Wojciech and  
Bożena Szroeder, Piotr Dapkiewicz and a bricklayer from ANATEX Co.

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Krzysztof Czyżewski, Kuba Kossak, Monika Kmita, Zbigniew Fałtynowicz and collections  
of the Centre for Documentation of Borderland Cultures.

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PUBLISHER  
Fundacja Pogranicze  
i Ośrodek "Pogranicze - sztuk, kultur, narodów"  
16-500 Sejny  
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ISBN: 978-83-61388-45-6



