

Compiling and Editing *Calling Out to Yeti: An Anthology of Polish Women Poets*

Karen Kovacic
School of Liberal Arts

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Why read Polish poetry? The Russian Nobel Prize-winning poet Joseph Brodsky many times expressed the view that Polish postwar poetry is the world's "richest" in both form and content. Two of its poets—Czesław Miłosz in 1980, Wisława Szymborska in 1996—received the Nobel Prize in literature, and a number of others—Zbigniew Herbert, Tadeusz Różewicz and Adam Zagajewski—have achieved international prominence. But the English-speaking world has not yet been able to experience Poland's poetry fully because of what Benjamin Paloff, editor of the *Boston Review*, has called the "men's club" of Polish literature in translation. For example, two recent American anthologies of Polish writers reveal a gender imbalance, with a Trinity University collection (2007) including only three women out of 25 authors, and the Zephyr Press anthology, *Carnivorous Bird Carnivorous Boy* (2004), only one woman out of 24. In Europe, the situation is no better: in six recent anthologies published in Poland and England, only 15% of the authors were women. This imbalance derives in part from outmoded ideas of what women's poetry should be and also from crony-driven literary networks that overlook the contributions of women.

I take the title of my project from a 1957 poem, "Notes from a Nonexistent Himalayan Expedition," by Nobel Laureate Wisława Szymborska. In that poem, the speaker attempts to explain her people to the legendary abominable snowman, often interpreted as a stand-in for the intractable Soviet presence in Poland at that time. But in 2012, that idea of "calling out to Yeti" can also be seen as a radical speech act with gendered implications. The English-language anthology of Polish women poets I'm compiling and editing promises to transform how the Anglophone world sees Polish poetry. Scheduled for publication in 2014 by White Pine Press, *Calling Out to Yeti* will contain eight thematically focused chapters: (1) Lifting the Veils of History; (2) Reimagining the Bard; (3) Ironizing the Art of Poetry; (4) The Domestic Arts; (5) Revisiting Heroes, Monsters, Madwomen and Muses; (6) In the Theater of Dreams; (7) Transitions and Transformations; and (8) Curating Objects. It brings together distinguished poets Wisława Szymborska, Anna Świr, Julia Hartwig, Urszula Koziół and Ewa Lipska with many talented emerging poets. It shows this group of women poets, 25 in all, working intertextually with each other, across generations, within the larger context of Polish literature, and with writers around the world. I am producing 60% of the translations but have also solicited contributions from renowned translators Stanisław Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh, John and Bogdana Carpenter, Bill Johnston, Czesław Miłosz and Leonard Nathan, and Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese.

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