

DOS OYSLEYDIKN (THE EMPTYING)

at honey street in ostrova
 where did the honey people go?
 empty empty
 miodowa empty
 empty bakery & empty road to warsaw
 yellow wooden houses & houses plastered up with stucco
 the shadow of an empty name still on their doors
 shadai & shadow shattering the mother tongue
 the mother's tongue but empty
 the way the streets are empty where we walk
 pushing past crowds of children
 old women airing themselves outside the city hall
 old farmers riding empty carts down empty roads
 who don't dispel but make an emptiness
 a taste of empty honey
 empty rolls you push your fingers through
 empty sorrel soup dribbling from their empty mouths
 defining some other poland
 lost to us the way the moon
 is lost to us
 the empty clock tower measuring her light four ways
 sorrel in gardens mother of god at roadsides
 in the reflection of the empty trains
 only the cattle bellow in
 like jews the dew-eyed wanderers
 still present still the flies
 cover their eyeballs
 the trains drive eastward, falling
 down a hole (a holocaust) of empty houses
 of empty ladders leaning against haystacks no one climbs
 empty ostrova & empty ostrolenka
 old houses empty in the woods near vyzhkov
 dachas the peasants would rent to you
 & sleep in stables

the bialo forest spreading to every side
retreating the closer we come to it to claim it
empty oaks & empty fir trees
a man in an empty ditch who reads a book
the way the jews once read
in the cold polish light the fathers sat there too
the mothers posed at the woods' edge
the road led brightly to treblinka
& other towns beaches at brok
along the bug
marshes with cattails
cows tied to trees
past which their ghosts walk
their ghosts refuse to walk
tomorrow in empty fields of poland
still cold against their feet
an empty pump black water drips from
will form a hill of ice
the porters will dissolve with burning sticks
they will find a babe's face at the bottom
invisible & frozen imprinted in the rock