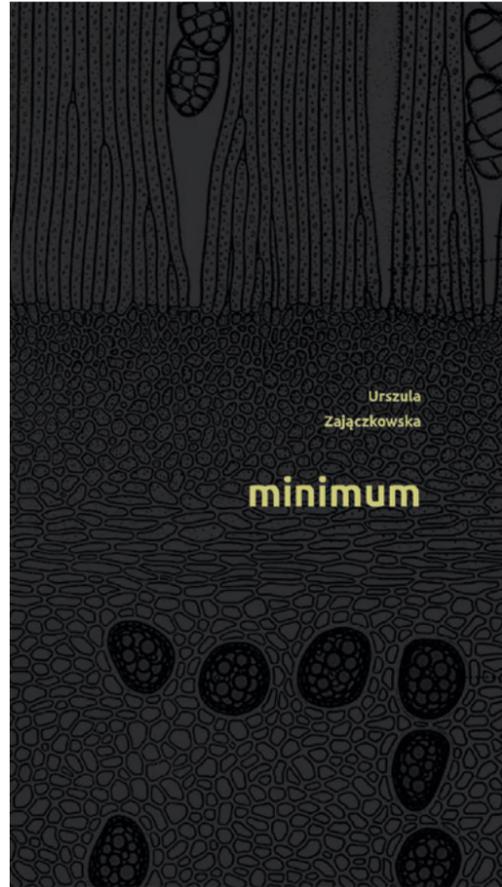


minimum

Poems that disrupt
our sense of comfortable
wellbeing



KOŚCIELSKI FOUNDATION AWARD

The poems found in *minimum*, Urszula Zajączkowska's latest collection of poetry, disrupt our sense of comfortable wellbeing which insists we look at the world around us with a sense of superiority, that we think of ourselves human beings as the epicenters of the universe. Meanwhile, the poet herself rejects this anthropocentric perspective, seeming to say that we, people, are merely one of the components of nature, of life which everywhere falls prey to life, as in her poem *cat dog fly and me (sacred bodies)*. Even the smallest fragment of matter makes room for one that is smaller, the miracle of metamorphosis omnipresent: "the yolk in the shell will produce blood, feathers and eyes, / and any earthworm fragment will always be reborn as another earthworm" (*minimum*). Zajączkowska tends to present Nature in her poems as generous and sparing, linking the end and the next beginning, life and death, us and creatures without individual names. Zajączkowska could be said to echo William Blake, wanting to see the world in a grain of

sand. It's enough to have your eyes wide open... This teaches us sensitivity and humility with regards to that which exists, but above all allows us to change the angle we see things from and turn towards the invisible. That is when we will see that every green leaf is covered in myriads of creatures, and discover inside trees "completely new galaxies, milky ways and distant heavenly bodies." (*tall trees*). But how to talk of that which we try to perceive? Do we have the appropriate lexicon? The originality of Zajączkowska's poetic imagination arises out of the constant tension between the language of science and lyricism, the precision of anatomical etchings and risky metaphors. Well, we do live in dramatic times after all. For "we still don't have / a good language, / a precise language, / so we formulate sentences / mainly with the eyes" (*jungle today – jungle tomorrow*).

Karol Alichowicz, translated by Marek Kazmierski

church. rain

you see, I didn't actually come here to give thanks
for your ever so mildly pleasing creative output,
which only tires, tires me terribly.
and still nothing, however, nothing. because I here, now
only sit around,
waiting
for the cloud to pass,
and I will go out quietly
leaving you completely alone

with that great mystery
of yours.

tall trees for Sherwin Carlquist

I remember when you said
that you really admire those
who study tall trees,
because you only ever studied up close
those which were within easy reach of your hands.

it really is moving,
it's moving
that you do not see
that it is you after all
who opened up the insides of trees,
completely new galaxies, milky ways
and distant heavenly bodies.
and you still take trips there
constantly, any time you feel like it
and as you like it,
(though it seems you're most keen on
walking there).

and this is how my friend
I think right now, swinging from
one of those branches of
yours.

skeleton

it so happens sometimes at night,
that my skeleton
disrupts my sleep
with the crunching of the discs in my spinal column,
as my head turns to the left or the right,
it must be loud when all else is quiet.
I don't want to go see any doctors about it, don't want to
go chasing it off.

Instead, I open my eyes and say to it:
"Yeah, I know, I remember."

Translated by Marek Kazmierski



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URSZULA
ZAJĄCZKOWSKA

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minimum

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Poetry collections published

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Selected awards

Silesius Poetry Award (2015, 2018) – nominations

Kościelski Foundation Award (2017)

Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński Poetry Prize ORPHEUS (2018) – nomination

The EDITION Award for Excellence in Book Design & Editing (2016/2017) – for *minimum's* publisher