

length from Simon, all hovering like birds over the same underwater abyss and fishing ground. And along the rails, faces, possibly hundreds of them, all devoid of expression, turned toward the voice in the mist.

Never had Simon had a more deeply intent, more completely attentive audience and never had he had less to say.

Now I am to be crushed, he thought, feeling as though he were in an arena, held there by a tension that would not even allow him to fall flat on his face. And yet at that moment it was not concern for his own person with which he was filled but the giddy sensation of an unfamiliar impotence, of a defeat that went beyond him personally, and without his either willing it or resisting it he heard himself, in a whisper so soft that only he could hear it, begging the world for mercy.

At that, a tension seemed to leave the boat, the fisherman across from him drew himself upright like someone who has been asleep, the knife slipped out of Simon's hand and over the side, and he saw it glint with a green light as it sank through the water, heading into nothingness.

On the way into Christiansø Simon did not look back once. He knew that there would be nothing to see. That as soon as he had begged for mercy, both the mist and the fishing boats had ceased to exist. That since he had left his sleeping woman he had been moving through a world dreamed up by someone else. And now, only now, did he recall the story of Bjarke's dream.

He did not even glance at the fisherman. But as they laid to and he clambered up onto the quayside, the birdlike profile was there at the corner of his eye, and a shiver ran down his spine. Walking away from the harbor he suddenly turned around, knowing what he would find: boat and man had vanished as if they had never been, and high above him the great sea eagle was soaring heavenward.

Outside the cottage Simon stopped for a moment. Then slowly he opened the door and braced himself against the doorpost to keep himself from falling. From the bed the woman stared at him with a wan and utterly exhausted face. "I have," said Simon, "had enough."

*Translated from the Danish by Barbara Haveland*

# Pawel Huelle

## *Moving House*

(POLAND)

My father had hired Mr. Bieszke to come on Saturday, in the early afternoon, but Mr. Bieszke called it off. It turned out he had to attend a christening somewhere in the neighborhood of Kartuzy, so off he'd gone with his entire family and the move was postponed until Monday.

In the room upstairs, where we'd always lived, terrible things were going on: my mother was packing and repacking cardboard boxes and suitcases, and was cross at having to go on doing it for two more days; my father was cross because my mother was cross; and that meant they were cross with each other and with me in the bargain. I preferred to keep out of their way by spending most of my time in the garden. I can't remember if I was unhappy about that, and maybe I wasn't; until dinnertime I could do whatever I wanted. Only two things were forbidden: going beyond the garden gate into the park, and playing on the terrace, from where you could see through the French windows into the Great Room.

I knew the park well. Its greatest attractions were flowerbeds grown wild, a weed-choked pond, a miniature waterfall that had been out of action for years, never spouting a single drop of water, and a stone plinth on which once upon a time, very long ago, had stood a statue of a king, or perhaps of a prince. In the dense undergrowth of nettles lay various objects: here a rusty bathtub with a large hole in it, there a crank handle for starting up an engine, over there a broken armchair, its upholstery disemboweled and its springs exposed. There were other bits of junk besides, whose purpose was obscure, or else forgotten. But that afternoon the park didn't tempt me, somehow. The terrace and the Great Room were quite another matter. Mysterious and ethereal things went on in there, to which neither my father nor Mr. Skiski, our upstairs neighbor, had access.

In the Great Room lived Madam Greta, the former owner of the house. Mr. Skiski didn't seem to like the word "owner," because he always called her "the Heiress," cackling maliciously. My father simply called her Mrs. Hoffmann, but my mother always referred to her as "that old Kraut," which didn't sound too friendly. I very rarely saw her—she avoided us as much as possible, and we avoided her.

"You're not to go there," my mother would warn. "She doesn't know Polish."  
"Yes," my father would add, "there's no need to disturb her."

Although I didn't see Madam Greta often, I heard her every day. Almost every afternoon she'd sit at the grand piano and for two or three hours the house would resound with music.

"The Heiress is rattling the ivories again," Mr. Skiski would say dismissively.  
"German music again," my mother would sigh.

"She's just playing," my father would shrug. "What's wrong with that?"

I liked her music. I especially liked it before going to sleep, when my father put out the light and shadows filled the room. Then the sounds of the grand piano would melt on the air, and I could almost feel their velvet touch; when she stopped playing, I felt sad, as if something was missing.

No, I had no desire at all to get to know Madam Greta. What would we have to talk about? All I wanted to know was what it was like inside the Great Room, and that meant getting in there one day, to watch her as she played.

I started walking around the house very slowly. First I passed the old maple tree wreathed in mistletoe, then the boarded-up windows of the outhouse, until at last I was on the terrace, facing the broad, glazed doors. Sometimes Madam Greta would open them and, standing or else sitting at a little wooden table, have a look at the garden. She'd gaze down at the stone wall, the shoots of wild vine and the flowering wisteria, and in the gentle sunlight her small gray head made me think of a startled bird. But that only happened in the summer. Now the doors were shut, and on the terrace paving, patterned like a chessboard, yellow leaves rustled beneath my shoes.

I pressed my forehead to the glass. There wasn't much light in the Great Room, and I couldn't see very well. The only thing visible was a table standing next to the French windows, entirely covered in objects. As soon as my eyes had grown accustomed to the dusky light, they began to explore this wilderness, picking out various shapes. There were brass and silver candlesticks, piles of fat books and scores, loose sheets of paper, china boxes and figurines, glass bottles, bits of dress material, needles and thread, earthenware pots, a pair of gloves, a child's toy rake, ladies' hats, cups with saucers and without, paperweights of lacquer and of bronze, a small bust of a man, a silver sugar bowl, some photographs set in frames, and an alarm clock with large bells, a little clapper, and one hand broken off. The contours of these objects were blurred and their shapes merged together as if seen through an out-of-focus lens. But what there was most of were books and musical scores. Heaped up, they recalled a ruined city with ravine-like streets and narrow passageways between one wall and the next.

My initial curiosity satisfied, I stood there waiting for Madam Greta to appear, sit down at the piano, and play. If she wasn't in the Great Room she must be doing something in the kitchen, but I couldn't see in there. The windows were too high, and were covered with packing paper. Not even any of the grown-ups had seen the kitchen. Even on the rare occasions when they visited the Great Room briefly, they never crossed the threshold of the kitchen. The rest of her living quarters—two sitting rooms, a bedroom, and bathroom—

were padlocked shut like the ones upstairs, sealed by officials long ago. For as long as I could remember they'd never been opened. Their ceilings threatened to cave in. So Madam Greta must be sitting in the kitchen.

If the French windows onto the terrace hadn't been locked from the inside, I could have pushed them slightly open, then slipped into the Great Room. I could have had a good look at everything and then left without anybody noticing. But what if she caught me in the act? She'd think I was a thief. While I was weighing up whether Mrs. Hoffmann would complain to my father or not and wondering what the German word for "thief" sounded like, a light went on in the Great Room, and between the massive bed, the wardrobe, and the grand piano which loomed up suddenly out of the darkness, I caught sight of her diminutive, slightly stooping frame. She didn't go straight to the piano, as I'd thought she would. She placed a glass of tea on a small round table and sat down in a deep armchair beside it. Seconds later I felt a shiver up my spine. Something odd was going on in the Great Room, *something I couldn't understand*, and I don't mean just the German language.

As she sipped her tea, Madam Greta was talking to someone. It wasn't a monologue—she kept asking questions, making comments, shaking her head and gesticulating, maybe even arguing—a couple of times I heard her raise her voice. But who was she talking to? There was no one else in the Great Room. What normal person talks to thin air? I thought—perhaps she's mad. That wasn't impossible, I'd seen a mad woman once on Red Army Street; she spat at the passersby and threatened them; she was all ragged and dirty, with spit hanging from her lips. Mrs. Hoffmann, by contrast, was wearing a brightly colored blouse fastened at the neck with an amber brooch, and a black skirt; her shortish gray hair bore the visible imprint of a hairdresser, though she didn't go anywhere in town except to the market at Oliwa and the Cistercian church. After a while, I found that by pressing my ear to the window I could catch a few words, and new doubts came to me: What if she's talking to someone she can see but I cannot? The conversation was clearly growing more animated—Mrs. Hoffmann was waving her hands about, explaining something heatedly, as if there was something the other person couldn't understand. Or was she just play-acting? But for whom? And why? I didn't know what to think. Yet the sight of this old woman, speaking whole sentences in an unfamiliar language, the sight of Madam Greta sitting in her armchair chatting to someone only she could see was so odd that I was rooted to the spot—I couldn't look away.

Suddenly the conversation stopped. Without switching off the light, Madam Greta went to the kitchen with her glass, then quickly came back and sat at the piano. I don't know how she noticed me; outside, dusk was falling, and the light from the chandelier was pretty strong. She rose swiftly from her stool, came over to the French windows and briskly opened them.

"Und vot arr you doink heer?" she asked.

"Me?" I tried to say something. "I was just coming by this way."

"Arr you hunkry?"

"No thanks, Ma'am."

"You vont zum tea? You do!" she answered for me. "You're to vait heer, gut?" And out she went into the kitchen.

Her steps echoed down the long corridor, and there I was in the Great Room, where I discovered lots of unusual things. The pictures, for example: all of them were very dark and very old; most showed horses, droshkies, and horse-drawn trams around the church of Our Lady, by Neptune's Fountain and beneath the Prison Tower. Or the grand piano: in its walnut paneling were ornate letters forming an inscription which I had trouble deciphering: GERHARD RICHTER UND SOHNEN, DANZIG 1932. In the bookshelf stood row upon row of weighty tomes, the light gleaming across their gilded spines, but the stuffed birds—one white, the other fabulously colored—interested me more, along with a viper in a phial full of liquid. There was also a small collection of pipes and china pipestems with little pictures on them. Then my gaze fell on an open book which lay beside an empty vase. Two color illustrations depicted a woman and a man, but they were nothing like my mother and father. Instead of skin, or rather under the skin which wasn't there, there were swirling veins, entrails, arteries and joints, muscles and bones. They weren't exactly naked, and I didn't feel ashamed, but looking at them gave me a mixed feeling of curiosity and revulsion: if they were human beings, then I must look like that inside as well.

When Madam Greta came back, I shut the book; she set down a tray of tea, apple charlotte, and jam on the little table, and said, "Vee arr heving a Geburtstag. Zat iz a kind of zelebrashun. You undershtent?"

I answered that I did, and as I was eating a piece of charlotte she asked, "You like it ven I play, don't you?"

"Yes," I replied. "But how did you know that?"

"I can see it in your eyz?"

I was amazed. I'd never actually looked her straight in the eyes; I'd never even met her on the stairs or in the garden. As soon as she'd played the first chord, which rang out pure and strong across the Great Room, she turned around on her swiveling stool and asked, "Und vich tune do you like ze best?"

I didn't know what to answer. I didn't know any of the titles, and I wouldn't have been able to hum anything. All I could have said was, "Please play the good-night tune—the one I fall asleep so well to. Or the one you played when it was snowing, and my mother was standing by the window and called me over to come and watch the snowflakes slowly blanketing the park, the avenue, and garden. Or else the one I heard when my father was fixing the radio, which blended in with all the radio stations in the world." But most of all I was longing to hear the tune from an evening in June.

My father and mother were sure I was asleep. They were sitting in bed, covered by the sheets and drinking wine from slender glasses, laughing every now and then. When the bottle was empty, my father whistled gently down its hollow neck and they laughed again; the sound was like the horn of the transatlantic liner they'd planned to sail away on for their honeymoon, but they never had a honeymoon. That was the moment when the sounds of the piano began to drift in from the Great Room. Mrs. Hoffmann was playing a

slow, sad tune. My father took my mother in his arms and they danced around the room on tiptoe, careful not to wake me. Through my half-closed eyelids I could see their whirling figures; I watched the white wings of the sheets as they slowly settled, until the light went out and I could no longer see anything, but the music went on wafting in through the open window of our room along with a strong scent of peonies from the garden.

"I don't know what it's called," I said at last. "You played it once, in the summer."

"Vell, all right. I'll play a bit, und you tell me ven you recognise it."

I nodded, and Mrs. Hoffmann began to play. Although it wasn't the tune from that night in June, I listened to it enraptured, and was sorry when it broke off as Madam Greta suddenly lifted her fingers from the keyboard.

"I kan see zat's not ze vun you vonted. Do you know vot I voz playing just now?"

"No."

"*Tannhäuser*, ze overture."

"Tann-hoyzer?"

"Yes."

"Is that a composer?"

Madam Greta looked me in the eyes, then got up from the piano, took a book from the shelf and motioned me to bring up another stool. She opened the book at a picture of a castle: there were knights, fine ladies, minstrels, horses, banners, and turrets.

"Zat is ze castle of ze Landgraf of Thuringia," she said.

I turned the pages of the book as Mrs. Hoffmann explained each picture in turn, playing each successive movement of *Tannhäuser*.

When we were past the Grotto of Venus, the duel of songs and Elisabeth's lament, and had reached the pilgrims and the wooden staff that burst into green shoots, Madam Greta said, as her fingers raced across the keys, "Now vatch out, here come ze trumpets, und now ze horns und oboes!" and I really could hear the trumpets, horns, and oboes, though the only sounds were from Gerhard Richter's grand piano.

"Is it all true?" I asked, once silence fell. "Did it really happen?"

Madam Greta took out a photograph album, and I saw pictures that were similar but a little different. On a large stage among beech trees stood men dressed in historical costumes, holding flaming torches in their hands.

"*Die Kunst*," she said, "zat's just art. *Zey* used to sing vot I've just been playing: *Beglick darf du nicht, O Heimat! Zey* vere performances in ze Wald—opera, you undershtent? At Zopott. Und here iz my huzband."

The photograph was of a tall man in a light striped suit, standing beside another man in a black suit against the background of a little waterfall and a pond. Both were smiling into the camera, and they looked like old friends.

"That's our park!" I said. "There's the waterfall, and there are the steps. You can even see the roof behind the trees!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hoffmann, "zat voz ze park. Und my husband voz a musician und composer. Ze ozer man is Max. He came here zat time from Vienna

to sing *Tannhäuser*: Both of zem are no longer living now. Und zis," she said, showing me another picture, "is Erikson. He voz a Norwegian from Oslo, und ze season after he sang Hagen in *Götterdämmerung*. Vot a wonderful voice he had!"

"Where's Gerta Daymerung?" I asked. "Is it somewhere in Sopot?"

At that, Madam Greta brought out another book and showed me more pictures, then sat at the piano again and played Siegfried's funeral march, which sent shivers down my spine. Then she played more—*Steuermann, lass die Wacht*, and *Gesegnet soll Sie schreiten*, and *Wach auf, es naht gen der Tag*, until everything started to get mixed up in my head. Parsifal was walking in the park by the dried-up pond, Mrs. Hoffmann's husband was chasing Hagen around the stage of the forest opera at Sopot to the terrible wailing of the Valkyries and the Nibelungs, Erikson was standing on Madam Greta's terrace, holding a flaming torch and singing "*Beglück darf du nicht, O Heimat!*" while the sailors from the *Flying Dutchman* were on their way back from Oliwa on the road to Sopot, singing "*Heil der Gnade Wunder Heil!*"

It was all strange and entrancing and beautiful, like the park in the old photograph. My cheeks were flushed as I listened to Madam Greta play on and on, a new piece every time, now without telling the story, or showing pictures from the books. We were both in an odd state, in a sort of trance, perhaps, because we didn't hear my father's footsteps or notice him standing behind us. He, too, seemed enchanted by the music, or else by the scene in Mrs. Hoffmann's room: she stooping over the grand piano and I staring at her or at her fingers as if hypnotized. Or maybe he was bewitched by something else entirely. In any case, he stood behind us for several minutes before putting a hand on my shoulder and gently saying, "We've got to go now."

Mrs. Hoffmann struck a mighty, crowning chord, turned toward my father, and said, "Oh, Mr. Schiffbaumeister! Ve're just making a little music together. You're not angry, I hope?"

"No, I'm not angry," my father said, "but we really have to go now. Good night, Mrs. Hoffmann."

"*Guten Nacht*, gut night, gentlemen, gut night."

Once we were back in our room upstairs, my mother couldn't seem to calm down. Why had I gone there? She'd told me so many times! And what had she been doing to me, that old Kraut?

My father tried to stand up for me.

"She was playing him Wagner. That's all."

But an evil spirit had entered her.

"Germans! Germans! Germans!" Louder and louder she shrieked. "It's always those Germans! Always building their highways and machinery. They've got the best planes in the world, and the best gas ovens for burning people up. Those Germans, they play Wagner, they always feel marvelous, they've always got hearty appetites!"

I'd never seen my mother in such a state before. She shrieked at my father,

saying how pointless it was that he'd brought her to this city, how he'd only done it so she could spend five years living under the same roof as a German.

"Why didn't she leave? Why didn't she get out of here like the others?"

"Calm down," said my father. "The child shouldn't hear such things."

But the evil spirit wouldn't leave her alone.

"Why not? He's got to find out one day, hasn't he?"

She began to shout names, beloved names she knew well, spreading out one finger for each name, first on her left, then on her right hand; once the fingers were all outspread, she repeated the same thing many times in tears, for there were far more murdered people than fingers.

Unable to stand it any longer, my father asked her to stop, shouting at her that it wasn't he who'd caused the war, it wasn't he who'd moved the borders, it wasn't he who'd taken a city from one people and given it to another. I stood between them, torn in two. I could see their bodies; I could see the man and woman in the color illustration, like two pulsating, living wounds.

My father fell silent at last, then took some medicine from the cupboard and gave it to my mother with a glass of water. Finally she came to her senses and made up with him, but in spite of that, once we were all in bed, the word "Germans" hovered in the room like a bird aroused in the darkness.

On Monday morning Mr. Bieszke came. We loaded all our worldly goods onto the cart and the horses pricked up their ears, the way they always do before the open road. At last we moved off downhill, along the avenue, between the rows of ancient trees. I looked back at the dried-up pond, the waterfall that didn't spout a single drop of water, and the nettles where objects of obscure or forgotten purpose lay concealed. Mrs. Hoffmann's house grew smaller and smaller in the distance, until it vanished among the trees, a small brown speck with a red dot for a roof. Hooves clattered on the flagstones; Mr. Bieszke's horses snorted merrily, and he sang a Kashubian song that must have been running through his head ever since the christening: "*I fancy me a tiny drop, from this my darling little flask!*" We passed the bridge and the tram depot. The chestnut trees began at the top of St. Hubert's Street. The new house, still unplastered, was not far away. Entering my room, I smelled fresh paint, lime, and parquet flooring. Just then that tune came back to me; Madam Greta had not got around to playing it. It must have been a love song, but was it by Richard Wagner? On the other side of the wall, in the other room, they were moving furniture around. I realized that I'd never find out now, nor would I ever know who Mrs. Hoffmann was talking to on the day of the Geburtstag, when I spied on her through the French windows of the Great Room.

Translated from the Polish by Michael Kandel

## PAWEL HUELLE BIOGRAPHY

A novelist and author of a volume of verse, born in Gdańsk in 1957, Huelle is a graduate in Polish of the Gdańsk University, and has also worked in that city as an employee of the "Solidarity" press office, university lecturer, journalist, director of the Gdańsk Polish Television Center and, most recently, as a columnist for *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Huelle has found enormous success as a writer and been honoured with many prestigious awards.



His work, rich in themes and form, is always connected with Gdańsk – a "small homeland". The distinguishing features of this prose include, on the one hand, the epic panache and attention to detail, and, on the other hand, the erudite nature, the tendency to pastiche and play with conventions, to enter into dialogue with the works of other writers. This can already be seen in the first novel, **Who Was David Weiser?** (1987) – a book that refers to Günter Grass's **Cat and Mouse**, but is also an original creation of the Polish author. **Who Was David Weiser?**, hailed as the most important debut of the decade and awarded the Kościelski Prize (1988), is still considered Huelle's greatest achievement so far. The book has been translated into many languages, and has also been screened – in 2000, Wojciech Marczewski directed the film **Weiser**.

In the 1990s, Huelle published **Moving House and Other Stories** (1991), **Wiersze** (Poems; 1994) and **Pierwsza Miłość i Inne Opowiadania** (First Love and Other Stories; 1996; for this book he was nominated for the Nike Award) and **Other Stories** (1999; a collection of editorials and essays published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*).

In his short stories, as in **Who Was David Weiser?**, the writer mythologises his homeland – Gdańsk and the Baltic Coast. And just like in his debut novel, the world of boyish experiences, recalled in the memories of an adult, plays an important role. The book is covered with overlapping time perspectives, the accompanying oneirism and the aura of understatement.

In 2001, Huelle's second novel was published – **Mercedes-Benz: from Letters to Hrabal**. The book is a tribute to the Czech master, Bohumil Hrabal – firstly, as the title suggests, it takes the form of a letter to "beloved Mr Bohumil". Secondly, both the plot and the language are Hrabalean. The story takes place in Gdańsk at the beginning of the 1990s. The protagonist, a writer, takes a driving licence course, not doing very well behind the wheel. To divert the attention of the beautiful instructor, Miss Ciwle, from his mistakes, he tells her about the cars of his grandparents – inspired, as he openly admits, by an idea from Hrabal's novel.

Similarly, "inspired by an automotive daimon", in dizzyingly long, often complex, truly Hrabal-like sentences, Huelle tells amusing anecdotes in **Mercedes-Benz** – about his grandmother's Citroën crushed by a hasty Vilnius–Baranovichi–Lviv train, or about his grandfather's Mercedes-Benz, seized by the Red Army for Nikita Khrushchev. As it turns out, telling these sparkling

humorous stories from the past has a therapeutic meaning: neither the student's nor his instructor's life is happy (they both have seriously ill siblings, and she lives in poverty). **Mercedes-Benz** was awarded the "Polityka" Passport (2001). However, the book divided critics and readers. The mastery of form, lightness and wit were admired, but there were doubts as to the imitative character of the work.

His novel **Castorp** (2004) is a part of Borges' "idea of a great library". Like **Mercedes-Benz**, it is literature made of literature, a tribute paid this time to Tomasz Mann's **The Magic Mountain**. Mann's book contains laconic information about the fact that the hero, Hans Castorp, before he came to the sanatorium in Davos, studied at the Gdańsk University of Technology for four semesters. This inspired Huelle to create a kind of prequel of the German masterpiece. We get to know the story of young Hans, who at the beginning of the twentieth century sailed from Hamburg to Gdańsk by ship. Here, he falls in love with the beautiful Polish woman Wanda Pilecka (a prefiguration of the Russian Madame Chauchat from *The Magic Mountain*) and experiences a spiritual crisis in the fight backed by Schopenhauer's philosophy. The background to the story, perhaps more important than its protagonists, is Gdańsk, Wrzeszcz and Sopot, described with care and tenderness.

Castorp can be read as a variation on the theme of **The Magic Mountain**, addressing some of its themes and problems (such as the attitude of the Germans towards the East). Huelle's book can also be regarded as the next link in the chain of works creating the mythology of Gdańsk. For the writer, the work on this novel was an exercise in his imagination, a composition on a theme he had set himself as he said in an interview with Sebastian Łupak (**Gazeta Trójmiasto**, 17.05.2004).

If, however, some feared that Huelle would stop at such composition exercises, the next novel proved that he could still do much better. A sharp satire on contemporary Poland and at the same time a work with philosophical ambitions, **The Last Supper** (2007) aroused heated discussions among critics. The plot of the novel refers to the idea of Maciej Świeszewski, professor at the Gdańsk Academy of Fine Arts, who became famous a few years ago when he painted a large-format painting entitled "The Last Supper", portraying well-known figures of the Tri-City as apostles. In Huelle's book, Mateusz, an artist belonging to the "metaphysicians" trend, realises the same concept by asking his old friends to become Christ's disciples during a photoshoot in the theatre.

After the **Last Supper**, nominated for the Nike Award, Huelle published the **Cold Sea Stories** (2008). In this collection of short stories, the author looks back to the past, following the human fate associated with Pomerania; he also returns to a calm, elegant narrative and focuses on existential and metaphysical issues. The question has arisen as to what Huelle's next book will be like. Some asked if a melancholic, nostalgic tone will prevail, as in his short stories, or rather a satirical twist visible in the last novel? Or maybe the writer will surprise his readers with something radically new? Certainly, his talent, supported by erudition, always raises high expectations.

These expectations were faced in his next novel, **Śpiewaj Ogrody** (Sing Gardens; 2014), the title of which was taken from a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke, the beloved poet of Paweł Huelle. The book is another tribute to Gdańsk, to music and to a woman. It is a multi-faceted story permeated

with autobiographical motifs, a memory of Gdańsk as a melting pot of cultures, a fascination with Wagner and a legend about a flautist from Hameln.

Two years after the publication of the novel **Sing Gardens**, Huelle returned with the collection of essays and columns **Ulica Świętego Ducha i Inne Historie** (The Street of the Holy Spirit and Other Stories; 2016). Although they were previously published in **Other Stories** published in 1999, or even earlier when they were first published in **Gazeta Wyborcza** and **Przegląd Polityczny**, the erudite reflections of the writer did not lose their value. Many of his texts deal with literature and Huelle turns out to be not only a skilled author but also a very attentive reader.