https://doi.org/10.18778/8331-397-9.12

Monika Kocot

On Spaces Within and Between: Dorota Filipczak's (Embodied) Visions of the Sacred[1]

The thing to be known grows with the knowing
Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*

No se puede vivir sin amar
Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano*

Cisza jest głosów zbieraniem
Cyprian Kamil Norwid, "Laur dojrzały"

Introduction

On the cover of her debut book of poems entitled *W cieniu doskonałej pomarańczy*, Dorota Filipczak shares an insight which might be treated not only as an important gateway to the realm of her poetry but also to her academic writing—"I'm passionate about the sacred in poetry and prose, and ways of its unconventional interpretation. Writing poetry and literary criticism is like looking at one and the same landscape through two separate windows" (translation mine). This essay will explore a number of unconventional interpretations of the sacred in Filipczak's poems, but it will also point to similar practices in her academic writing. The image of two windows and one landscape will serve as a metaphor describing the two modes of Filipczak's writing.

In order to show how the metaphor of two windows works in her poetry, I will look at selected poems from her book *W cieniu doskonałej pomarańczy*

[1] This chapter is a revised and expanded version of the article entitled "Ryty przejścia i przestrzenie pomiędzy w twórczości Doroty Filipczak," which was published in *Fraza* (vol. 114, no. 4, 2021, pp. 204–27).

[*In the Shadow of a Perfect Orange*], and then will move chronologically to *Trzecie skrzydło anioła* [*The Angel's Third Wing*] (1995), *Orfeusz na ginekologii* [*Orpheus in the Gynecological Ward*] (1997), *Ostrzyciel noży na jawie* [*The Knife Sharpener*] (2003), *K+M+B* (2009), and to her last book entitled *Wieloświat* [*Multiverse*] (2016). I will also make references to *Rozproszone gniazda czułości* [*Scattered Nests of Tenderness*], an anthology of Filipczak's poems published in 2017, accompanied by an insightful essay entitled "Mity ucieleśnione" ["The Embodied Myths"] by Wojciech Ligęza. Marek Czuku's review and his 2018 interview with Filipczak will provide additional points of reference. Both Czuku and Ligęza focus on the link between body, mind, landscape, and myth in Filipczak's poetry. My intention is to develop their insights and show how various metaphors of the body/body-mind are interconnected with the theme of spirituality, female empowerment, trauma and Polish history. I will accomplish this by foregrounding the importance of places and spaces in Filipczak's geopoetic writing.

"Spaces within and between" in the title of my essay might be called "emergent spaces," as they are usually not evident on a first reading. They emerge once readers activate the links skilfully hidden in (and sometimes between) the poems. The power of suggestion, with its game of hints, is coupled here with the technique of withdrawal, with its understatement and ellipsis. Once readers activate the latent links, they might enjoy palimpsestuous (and often rhizomatic) poetic imagery (or constellations of meaning) which open spaces of interbeing, interdependence, spaces of rites (of passage) and rituals. As Tomasz Cieślak aptly notices, quite often the sphere of the sacred is re-activated in the here-and-now; in other words the realm of the sacred is made visible in the world of everyday activities (38). Filipczak uses bodily metaphors to point to those moments in time where mythical spaces processually (re-) enter the here-and-now. This is how she writes about illness and suffering (especially in *Orfeusz na ginekologii*), about the joy of motherhood (in *K+M+B*), and about trauma and history (in *Wieloświat*). The wisdom of the body is one of the major themes in Filipczak's poetry and academic writing, which is why I will highlight some of her academic books and essays in which the focus is on the relationship between the body and the sacred.

In one of the poems from the book entitled *K+M+B*, Filipczak provides a list of different kinds of love "translated" into her poetry:[2]

[2] All the poems translated by Cathal McCabe.

Połączyła nas
miłość do mapy
magicznych
zawirowań
przeciwnych prądów
przepaści rozwartych
mimo uwagi
miejsc pozornie
zjednanych
i tak bardzo
obcych
(*K+M+B* 33)

It was love
for a map
of magical
turmoil
that brought us together
contrary currents
a gaping abyss
in spite of the warnings
of places
ostensibly united
and so very foreign

The poem foregrounds the importance of (loving) dialogue, a sort of communion between two partners who are eager to explore the mystery of being, who affirm the complexity of planes of existence, who willingly accept the limitations of knowledge, but who are constantly searching for meaning beyond the known. At the same time, Filipczak's imagery suggests that the map and the landscape are inextricably linked. As Marek Czuku notes, in *K+M+B* Filipczak's poems become less abstract and much more sensual and embodied (139). I agree with Czuku, and part of my essay explores the link between "embodied" spiritual epiphanies (especially in *K+M+B*) and embodied trauma healing (in *Wieloświat*). As I have already mentioned, these epiphanies usually emerge in the form of "blended" spaces: spaces in-between. That is why so much emphasis is given to the issue of the body and the landscape. In my opinion, by taking into account only one of these elements, we might miss a very important clue, usually given in subtle gestures.

Poetry, Body, Spirituality

In an interview with Marek Czuku in 2018, Filipczak answers a seemingly simple question which, as it turns out, opens a space of exploration. Czuku is interested in the relationship between major themes in Filipczak's poetry—love, family life, ancestral connections, journeying into the past, femininity and masculine culture(s)—and her conscious choice to dwell on these issues in poetic form. The question is tricky in the sense that in 2013 Filipczak published a play, *Ludzie z przeciwka*, and at the time of the interview she was working on her debut novel. It could be argued that the answer to Czuku's question is also tricky. Filipczak simultaneously reveals and conceals the reasons behind her choice

of form; to some extent, she discloses the mystery behind her artistic practices. She says that poetic form makes it possible for her to express her vision "in a succinct fashion" ("Duchowa transfuzja" 46, translation mine). Interestingly, Filipczak affirms the inextricable connection between two of her favorite themes—impermanence and interpersonal understanding—and the practice of using a whole variety of figures of speech in a condensed form, but she immediately adds that the way this connection operates still remains a mystery to her. What is certain is that the poetic form appeared of its own accord ("Duchowa transfuzja" 46; Kocot 217).

It should be noted here that the concepts of impermanence and interpersonal connection/understanding can, and often should, be seen as parts of the same dynamics, especially when viewed from the perspective of inter-being—for in Filipczak's vision of the world the meeting/union/encounter of two seemingly separate forms of being (be it human beings, animals, plants) is usually presented within the framework of a part-whole relationship and continuous transition/metamorphosis. By emphasizing the momentary, fleeting nature of such (often mysterious) encounters, by refusing to name what she witnesses, and by relying heavily on ellipsis, Filipczak embraces and affirms the natural law of interdependence. This is not to say, however, that the inability to find (stable) reference points and clear-cut distinctions is not a source of suffering and anxiety. On the contrary, Filipczak accepts the transitory nature of phenomena and the shifting contexts through which we interpret their meaning; she is able to stop and "gaze at" the liminal and fluid nature of our mental states in order to point to hidden individual/cultural/historical "narratives" behind our mental scripts. Her way of unraveling/deconstructing the "latent narrative" is often tinged with irony or sarcasm. In a trickster-like fashion, she uses riddles to play mind games with her readers. In some poems, the power of gentle (and often misleading) suggestion is so accentuated that readers might easily get lost without reference points given in latent form. Some of her poems never fully reveal their mysteries; some become clearer when compared with those published in her last book.

Rozproszone gniazda czułości, a 2017 anthology of Filipczak's poems, foregrounds the idea of close emotional bonds. The title comes from one of Filipczak's early poems; in it, she tells the story of a hidden, mysterious land, and she clearly celebrates the joy of its discovery—she places emphasis on the importance of going beyond words and finding intimacy in those places where one can experience an embodied sense of peace and unity with the partner and the land. It is not surprising that, in the afterword to the anthology, tellingly entitled "Mity ucieleśnione" ("The

Embodied Myths"), Wojciech Ligęza speaks at length about the sensual aspect of knowing—and even more importantly—about getting to know oneself and the world. In his view, Filipczak's poetry emphasizes and celebrates the importance of "mind-body" and embodied wisdom, which can most clearly be seen in her sensuous metaphors, but the inextricable link between mind and body can be also traced in numerous poems in which Filipczak writes through cultural narratives and reinterprets their "messages" in relation to her biography, her relationships, her journeys through time and space (in particular, the Polish historical past and Christian and ancient Greek mythology) (157). It should be noted here that Filipczak makes (covert and overt) references to authors who embrace a similar view on the mind-body relationship and the interdependent nature of our being-in-the-world (Kocot 207).

One of the poems that speaks openly about (artistic) self-realization through the body appears in *K+M+B* and is entitled "Sezam" ("Sesame"). Quite surprisingly, even for the speaker, the magic formula from *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights* is given a new meaning:

Otworzyłeś mnie	With your body
ciałem	you opened me
wydobyłeś	releasing
przestrzenie	space
owoce i wiersze	fruit and poems
wszystko co chciałeś	whatever you wished
Nie wiedziałam	How much within me
że tyle tego	I had not known
we mnie	
(*K+M+B* 67)	

The poem is a peculiar testimony—"With your body / you opened me," the speaker declares—and offers an insight which brings us to the mystery of interdependence in a relationship. The speaker slowly reveals how surprised she is to discover that her inside contained so many things—new spaces, fruits, and poems—she had been unconscious/unaware of, and that all of these things have been brought to light by means of the body of her partner. The mystery, but also a peculiar openness to welcome whatever it might bring, seems crucial here.

The theme of mystery, secrecy, and the hidden agenda behind silencing the female body(-mind) appears in many forms in Filipczak's poetry (and academic writing) (Kocot 207–09), but I would like to mention one that introduces the importance of giving testimony, of voicing the uncomfortable truth of gender inequality. The title "Mysterium tremendum" immediately brings to mind Rudolf Otto's concept of the *numinous*.

In Filipczak's poem, negation and paradox, two aspects leading to mystical experience, are re-read/re-written through the prism of the role of women's suffering throughout the ages:

Na koniec	At the end
pozostała jeszcze kwestia ciała	there remained
kobiecego	the issue of a woman's body
zbyt dużo w nim	so many centres sources of pleasure
ośrodków przyjemności	lightness posing as heaviness
lotność nazwano ciężkością	each weight a lightness of being
ciężar lekkością bytu	but still it grew towards the light
ale i tak pięło się do góry	crucified
krzyżowane	by the wild whims
wyobraźnią katów	the imaginations
nie	of executioners
me	struck
mówiło	dumb
dawało świadectwo	it spoke
(*K+M+B* 27)	to bear witness

At the center of the poem's attention is "the issue of a woman's body," full of sources of pleasure, "crucified / by the wild whims / the imaginations of executioners," but still able to speak the truth. Even mute (or mutilated), silenced, and deprived of a voice, or languageless, the female body prevailed ("struck / dumb / it spoke / to bear witness"). Giving testimony to truth after so many centuries of the practice of silencing women in patriarchal cultures is difficult, and it is often interrelated with women's empowerment, which finds expression through the body. Filipczak's imagery connects the issue of the crucified body of Christ with the spiritual dimension of the female body in all sorts of trauma narratives (Kocot 210). As a scholar writing on post-colonial literatures, Filipczak was well aware that the memory of suffering dwells in the body; in her monograph *"Unheroic Heroines": The Portrayal of Women in the Writings of Margaret Laurence*, she writes at length on the links between history, trauma, and the role of artistic expression in the process of giving testimony, and thus subverting the established oppressive cultural patterns. Interestingly enough, Filipczak's interest in textual and bodily ways of overcoming trauma is evident not only in her academic texts, but also in her poems, particularly in the last two books, *K+M+B* and *Wieloświat*. When she writes about reclaiming the spiritual dimension of the female body, what immediately comes into focus is the repressed, traumatized part of the body that "keeps the score," to use Bessel van der Kolk's phrase.[3]

[3] In my opinion, van der Kolk's seminal book *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing* and Resmaa Menakem's *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* could be successfully applied in the

Woman Artist and the Holy Scripture

Before we get to the interconnected themes of the female body, memory, and trauma, let us look at how Filipczak approaches the image and role of women in the Holy Scripture (especially the first woman in the Old Testament, and women in relation to Jesus in the New Testament). I will focus mainly on her debut book *W cieniu doskonałej pomarańczy*, as it brilliantly captures the idea of questioning established cultural and religious hierarchies from a feminist perspective. Filipczak decides to foreground the notion of female emancipation, focusing primarily on female agency; the need for female self-realization is often connected with the need for reaching out for the territory (landscape) of the unknown. At the same time, she touches upon the controversial issue of the spirituality of the female body.

Female revisioning of traditional, patriarchal Christian (and patriarchal Polish) culture is often realized by tracing and filling in the gaps left in the Scripture, especially in the book of Genesis/Bereshit. I mention the Hebrew tradition because references to the Jewish philosophical tradition are found throughout Filipczak's work, especially in her monograph *"The Valley of the Shadow of Death": Biblical Intertext in Malcolm Lowry's Fiction*. In my opinion, in the first three poetry collections Filipczak is more focused on openly questioning the established cultural paradigm, and, to use a phrase from one of the poems in *Wieloświat*, on finding "her own landscape." But the technique of filling in the gaps in the Word is often complemented by the technique of textual latency—leaving empty spaces, white text—in the poems which on the face of it do not necessarily open the space of the mythical narrative. These games with readers will become much more pronounced and sophisticated in *K+M+B* and *Wieloświat*.

Przemysław Dakowicz aptly notes that Filipczak practices "mythical thinking," which, in his opinion, is as natural for her as breathing (144). I have decided to discuss a few poems that best exemplify Dakowicz's insight, but before doing so, I would like to add that we can speak of a number of modes of "mythical thinking," because with each book of poems Filipczak changes her perspective of looking at reality (Kocot 211–12). And even within one book, one can find poems belonging to different groups of "mythical thinking," as it were. In many of the poems included in *W cieniu doskonałej pomarańczy*, for instance, the (Christian) myth functions as a sort of mirror; in a playful, ironic manner, Filipczak refers to carefully selected passages from the Bible (both the Old and the New Testament) in order

analysis of Filipczak "trauma" poems, but the scope of this essay does not allow me to develop this issue in detail.

to confront and (possibly) deconstruct the mainstream reading(s) of these passages, and/or the role assigned to women. However, there are also poems which explore the issue of physical and mental suffering where references to the Old Testament metaphorically open up a space of safety and comfort, which in turn brings consolation and freedom from suffering. By looking at these poems from today's perspective, one should be able to recognize the subtly introduced, and equally subtly executed, dynamic of female independence vs. interdependence, with *Wieloświat*, Filipczak's last book, as its most elaborate and nuanced manifestation.

Let us return to the first book to see how the woman artist introduces the interlinking themes of female independence, unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and freedom from cultural oppression. The first two poems I have chosen—"Grzech" ("Two Sins") and "Para" ("The Couple")—take us to the Garden of Eden, and show how Filipczak inverts traditional myth, challenges cultural preconceptions and female stereotypes regarding knowledge (seeking) and self-realization (Kocot 212–13).

In "Grzech," it is Eve who "has the soul of the discoverer" and "reaches for another world":

Z nich dwojga Ewa	Of the two Eve
ma duszę odkrywcy	has the soul of the discoverer
znudzona mową węża	bored with the snake's tongue
wyciąga rękę po inny świat	she reaches for another world
kiedy Adam śpi	when Adam sleeps
leżąc brzuchem na trawie	face-down in the grass
i śni mu się wielka pustka	dreaming the desert
nieba	of the sky
(*W cieniu* 27)	

Eve's husband, the one who, theoretically at least, embodies agency, action, and discovery, sleeps face-down from the great emptiness of the sky. In Cathal McCabe's translation, "wielka pustka / nieba" (literally "great emptiness / of the sky," or "great empty / sky") is rendered as "the desert / of the sky"; whether we call it a desert or emptiness, it still evokes nothingness/no-thing-ness, withdrawal from action, passivity. Eve, on the other hand, is active and receptive, inquisitive, ready to transcend the world she is given. Perhaps this is why McCabe decides to change the title from "Sin" to "Two Sins." Eve's conversation with the snake, and following of its advice, can be interpreted as the first sin. Filipczak does not mention eating or sharing any fruit of wisdom, so Eve's gesture of reaching out for another world—a metaphor for eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—without

Adam on her side might count as the second, much more serious sin; Eve does not act as a subjugated wife, she is presented as an independent agent exercising her own will.

Many critics have noticed that feminist interrogations and critiques of Christian culture characterize much of Filipczak's poetry.[4] Issues of forbidden knowledge, sin and its consequences for the entire human race, and, more importantly, textual latency concerning the role of women in the Holy Scripture, are also explored in her academic writing, particularly in two monographs (*"The Valley of the Shadow of Death": Biblical Intertext in Malcolm Lowry's Fiction* and *"Unheroic Heroines": The Portrayal of Women in the Writings of Margaret Laurence*), and a number of essays. In the context of the poem in question, we might recall her essay "Paradise Revisited: Images of the First Woman in the Poetry of Joy Kogawa and the Fiction of Thomas King," which explores playful and revolutionary de-constructions of femininity in selected texts by King and Kogawa. *Green Grass, Running Water* (published in 1993) works as an ideal reference here, especially the scenes where King subversively writes through the Old Testament narrative from the point of view of oral indigenous traditions (Kocot 212). His depiction of First Woman bears striking resemblance to Filipczak's image of Eve; if King's Old-Testament Ahdamn (pun intended) is presented as hilariously passive, lazy, incompetent and lacking in charisma—as opposed to First Woman's independence and graceful bravado—Filipczak expands on Adam's disappointing lack of vision and disinterestedness in "heavenly" matters.

In the poem "Para" ("The Couple"), Filipczak emphasizes one more time the link between the roles assigned to Adam and Eve in the process of creation. The scene of naming animals might also call to mind King's *Green Grass, Running Water*:

W twórczości Adama
Ewa nie jest nawet muzą
przychodzi na końcu
długiej kolejki lisów
kaczek i jeżozwierzy
kiedy zaschło mu w gardle
od używania nowych słów
i dar poezji jest wyczerpany
(*W cieniu* 26)

In Adam's Creation
Eve is not even a Muse
she walks at the end
of a long line of foxes
ducks and porcupines
when his throat went dry
from the use of new words
and the gift of poetry is exhausted

[4] See Pustkowski,"Kobieta, którą jestem (Dorota Filipczak)" (233–34) and "Kobiety z szuflady [z tego cyklu:] Dorota Filipczak—'Orfeusz na ginekologii'" (195); Dakowicz (143–45); Ligęza (157–67); Jakubowska-Ożóg (71–75).

In King's hybridized version of the creation narrative, First Woman falls down from the Sky World into the Water World, and together with Grandmother Turtle creates what comes to be Turtle Island (an indigenous name for North America). When First Woman enters the scene of Ahdamn naming animals, she notices that he is totally unable to perform his task due to problems with identifying animals ("You are a microwave oven, Ahdamn tells the Elk. Nope, says that Elk. Try again. You are a garage sale, Ahdamn tells the Bear. We got to get you some glasses, says the Bear" 26). King's trickster narration foregrounds First Woman's wisdom, enthusiasm, creativity and readiness to respond to constantly changing (narrative) circumstances. When we compare his witty mythical "blend" to Filipczak's poem, we will notice Eve's drama—her wisdom, enthusiasm, creativity is not wanted/desired; she has nothing to do, she is not even Adam's muse (Kocot 213). As Filipczak puts it, Eve comes as the last in line, after many foxes, ducks and porcupines, when Adam—and the gift of poetry—is exhausted. The underlying mood of the poem is a peculiar mixture of disillusionment and sadness, with a tinge of irony and sarcasm.

But why does Filipczak repeatedly evoke the Holy Scripture in a revolutionist-revisionist tone, one might ask? In an interview with Czuku, she admits that she is interested in constructions of femininity in literature created by women, and that she likes to juxtapose these constructions with the images of women created by men; she is particularly interested in how male perceptions of women are limited by patriarchal—and often openly sexist—clichés (Filipczak, "Duchowa transfuzja" 46; Kocot 213). She sees the root cause of the problem in the Biblical creation story in the Book of Genesis. When asked whether she reinterprets the Bible or reads it totally anew, she says: "both" (Filipczak, "Duchowa transfuzja" 47), and she adds that one thing does not exclude the other, because in Polish culture there is a very strong inclination to sustain the established interpretations. In Filipczak's view, the mindset of traditional readings cannot be described as belonging to the twentieth century; it comes from the time when women's exclusion (and unfavorable inclusion) was part of the cultural landscape (47). She emphasizes that her revisionist readings have been inspired by the research conducted in many theological institutions, where other female scholars have investigated the constructions of femininity in various books of the Holy Scripture (47).

It is not surprising, then, that Filipczak's first three poetry collections contain so many texts in which irony, self-irony, and sarcasm dominate; these literary devices are used in order to ridicule and mock the culturally oppressive circumstances of being a woman and/or a female artist (Kocot 213). In the poem "Pigmalion" from *Trzecie skrzydło anioła*, we witness the scene of creation of the first couple, but the narrative perspective is once again slightly different from the one in the Book of Genesis. In Filipczak's

poem, when God creates the first woman out of earth, rose petals and swan's-down, he is so delighted with her that he whistles in awe ("When God created woman / petals rose from the earth / the down of a swan / he stood up wiped his hands / and whistled well-pleased / regarding his work / Something perfect[5] at last he said" [Filipczak, *Rozproszone* 41]). And God focuses his attention on Adam, his first "less successful / creation" (41); in order to make up for Adam's evident inferiority, God endows him with a hawk's strength and a mule's endurance (41). This is where Filipczak's version of the myth completely departs from the one in the Bible. We learn that God falls in love with Eve, but his plans to make her his lover fall short. He leaves Eve for a moment and when he comes back, he finds Adam and Eve exploring each other's bodies ("When he returned / the couple were getting acquainted / touching each other / in the places / where they differed" [41]). God the Creator is devastated and decides to come up with a wicked plan of revenge: in the middle of the garden he plants the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because, as Filipczak puts it, "he knew that Eve / would one day be drawn to its perfect beauty" (42); he also puts a curse upon Eve, as a result of which Eve will "give birth in pain / suffer because of Adam / and lose her beauty / in loneliness" (42).

One might argue that Eve's perfect body and God's desire to possess her create a surprising dynamic, not explored in the Book of Genesis. We could treat this poem as yet one instance of entering the gap in the Scripture in order to cast light on the hidden/invisible potentialities of the text. The suffering of the human race which comes as a result of God's failure to win Eve's love—unfulfilled lust leads to anger (and the need for revenge)—is directly linked here with the motif of male jealousy, more elaborately explored in other books, particularly in *Wieloświat*. It should be noted that the theme of male jealousy appears in a number of Filipczak's poems, in the context of women artists—independent, self-realized agents of their destiny in the field of poetry and/or science (Kocot 214). In the poem "List św. Pawła z Aten" ("St. Paul's Epistle from Athens"), she tellingly writes "Do not disregard the word / that becomes a beautiful body" (Filipczak, *Rozproszone* 70). In "Męski strip-tease" ("Male strip-tease"), a poem on the difference between male and female artistic sensibilities (including sensitivity to criticism), Filipczak bitterly concludes that captivity and nothingness must be wonderful if their bodiless womb makes a male poet experience true orgasm ("how beautiful captivity / and loneliness must be / since it is in their bodiless wombs / that the poet's one true orgasm occurs" [Filipczak, *Rozproszone* 74]).

[5] Sylvia Plath's "Edge" ("The woman is perfected") and W. B. Yeats's "What Then?" ("Something to perfection brought") come to mind.

It seems that the connection between the female body, spirituality, and the freedom to choose one's own path, one's own (cultural) "landscape," is one of the major motifs in Filipczak's poetry. In some poems, she openly expresses her freedom, but in others, including the untitled poem below, she decides to dwell on the difficulties of questioning the established cultural patterns; it seems that even if the behavior of the speaking persona is innocent and pure, it might be interpreted as having serious, negative consequences. The poem in question subtly evokes the garden of Eden, and the speaker makes us think of Eve before "the Fall" (given Filipczak's own mythical narrative, I am not sure if using such a derogatory term is justified, hence the quotation marks), but the reference to Jesus and the rosary immediately opens up the context of the veneration of Mary in the Catholic Church. In a truly trickster-like fashion, Filipczak juxtaposes the importance of the naturally felt/experienced freedom from cultural and religious oppression in the spirit of Rousseau, with the culturally-imposed obligation of submission/subjugation/obedience (one could think of a long list of nouns here), metaphorically embodied in the image of Granny shaking the rosary:

Swego czasu	There was a time
kiedy chodziłam nago po ogrodzie	when I'd run naked round the garden
a był czerwiec	it was June
babcia wróciła z sumy	Granny would come back from the mass
w czarno żółtej bluzce	in her yellow and black
pachnącej naftaliną	blouse smelling of mothballs
Co ty robisz, zawołała	What are you doing, she'd call
wygrażając różańcem	shaking the rosary
lato takie zimne	a summer so cold
laryngolog wyjechał	the doctor left
a Pan Jezus już nigdy	and the Lord will never now
na ciebie nie spojrzy	look at you again
(*W cieniu* 29)	

"What are you doing, she'd call / shaking the rosary"—these two lines sound like a warning before what she sees as "the Fall." We might also interpret her vision as "the fall," written with a lower-case initial letter, signifying the fall from grace—"the Lord will never now / look at you again." Whatever term we use, the message remains the same: female nakedness is seen as a major sin, and this is something Filipczak decides to mock.

The best example of the defense of nakedness in the context of spirituality, and the affirmation of religious ecstasy can be found in "Erotic Psalm" which could count as Psalm 151. What I find astonishing about this poem is that it makes use of anaphora with variation:

Idę w Ciebie Boże jak ryba w wodę
jak kochanek w kochankę
jak kret w nieskończony korytarz
(*W cieniu* 17)

Now I enter you God like a fish water
lover lover
a mole his endless corridor

The imagery of these three opening lines, overflowing with bodily metaphors and similes, could easily shock any traditional Christian; even the title does not leave room for metaphorical readings. The poem clearly and unabashedly affirms the union with God, and even those who might associate that with the sacrament of Eucharist will be puzzled by how the imagery develops. The context of having sexual intercourse with the Divine is so explicitly foregrounded—the speaker states that she enters God just as a man enters a woman—that we might lose track of an equally important theme, that of an unquenchable thirst or insatiable appetite for knowledge (Kocot 211):

Zjadam Cię i wypijam całego
bez wstydu i zaspokojenia
jeszcze Cię nie poznałam

I eat You and drink you whole
without shame and unsatiated
I had yet to know you

Krążysz po mnie płynem i oddechem
. . .
Spotykam Cię na dnie duszy i brzucha
w orgazmie otwierasz drzwi do raju
nie straszy już obłaskawiony wąż
(*W cieniu* 17).

Through me you move a liquid a breath
. . .
I meet You at the bottom of my soul and belly
in an orgasm You open the gates of heaven
no fear now of the tamed serpent

The knower and the known seem to be one inseparable body, or better still, God's presence fills the speaker so intensely from within that she feels him in her breath and her fluids ("Through me you move a liquid a breath"). She states that she meets him "at the bottom of her soul and belly"; and, in orgasm, it is God who opens the door of paradise. There is no need for an intermediary figure here. This mystical ecstasy operating in the body-mind is an act of "forgetting oneself" in God, and, at the same time, it is the only way to know God, Filipczak suggests. In *K+M+B* and *Wieloświat*, her visions of union with the divine will become more painterly (in "The Sistine Chapel") and scientific (the context of the multiverse and transpersonal psychology in "Wieloświat").

In Filipczak's poetry, the sacred and the profane are often presented as interdependent, interlinking levels of existence. This is why her focus on a seemingly insignificant detail may actually be a gateway to an alternative reading, not hinted at explicitly, but communicated with the subtlest of gestures. Przemysław Dakowicz is one of the first critics to notice

how this dynamic operates, and in his review of *Ostrzyciel noży na jawie*, he writes about "Odpowiedź klasykom" ("A Response to the Authors of Antiquity"), which he sees as Filipczak's poetic *credo*:

Wbrew pozorom wielkości	Contrary to appearances
tematem sztuki jest rozbity dzbanek	the theme of art is a broken jug
lub dzbanek cały	or just a jug
z kwiatem tamaryszku	with a tamarisk flower
ból zęba	a toothache
kropla potu	a drop of sweat
w studni oceanu	in the ocean's well
bruk	a pavement
nie ideał	not an ideal
(*Rozproszone* 80)	

In Dakowicz's view, Filipczak is not very fond of the grand themes in literature, as she often finds poetry in the mundane, in the seemingly commonplace, in things that are easily disregarded or overlooked (143). In the poem in question, she mentions a jug, toothache, "a drop of sweat / in the ocean's well" (*Rozproszone* 80). Dakowicz notes that it is not a coincidence that in the last two lines Filipczak subtly refers to one of the most cherished and evocative poems of the Polish Romantic period, Norwid's "Fortepian Szopena" ("Chopin's Grand Piano"). This gesture might be interpreted as a way of sharing her poetic affinity. Norwid was incredibly sensitive to detail—seemingly insignificant features that become major carriers of poetic meaning, but also operating at the intersection of ethics and aesthetics—which refers to that which is beyond them (Dakowicz 143; Kocot 216). Attention to detail is only one of the elements that Filipczak and Norwid share. One could add that in their emotionally charged poems they both relied on understatement and ellipsis, on finding refuge in silence(s).

By acknowledging and affirming the beauty of the seemingly commonplace, or, to use Dakowicz's phrase, by focusing on "seemingly insignificant detail," Filipczak creates whole poetic narratives, with subtle references to Polish history, and to the history of her family. In *K+M+B* and *Wieloświat*, the weave of the net of interlinking references is so dense that some poems remain obscure to those uninitiated in the field of Polish history of the 1940s. But, as Alicja Jakubowska-Ożóg notes in her afterword to *K+M+B*, in Filipczak's poetry there are no insignificant moments—every experience is important, and its importance may become further amplified by her childlike sensitivity (71). Jakubowska-Ożóg connects Filipczak's tireless effort not to lose her childlike openness and curiosity with the theme of rituals and rites. In my opinion, such

openness to welcoming the so-called "aha!-moments" in the here and now might be seen as one more gift of a Woman Artist (Kocot 216). The ability to see these wonderful moments is as important as being able to shape them into poetic form for us to read. Jakubowska-Ożóg's insight concerning Filipczak's sensitivity and ritual practices does not seem far-fetched, especially when we look at the poem "Obrzędy" ("Rites"), in which Filipczak celebrates the practice of reading texts, writing her own texts, "giving herself to" perverse words, "copulating" with concepts. The symbolic meaning behind sexual acts—already explored in the essay—is evoked here in the second conditional mode by a reference to the cult of Astarte: "If I were a priestess / of Astarte / I would give myself / to chosen / men / for tablets with scripture / parchment scrolls / and instruments / to watch / the sky" (*K+M+B* 16). Quite surprisingly, the speaker continues: "I am the priestess" (16). The pleasure of artistic creation and the joy of gaining knowledge is likened here to religious prostitution. By means of synchronization and intentional asynchronization of patterns of perception as well as axiological and ethical patterns, Filipczak creates a religious-sexual-literary blend. The "positions" she takes as a priestess, as a woman artist, are clearly pleasure-oriented, and the sense of fulfillment they offer transcends any sinful act (Kocot 217):

Gdybym była kapłanką
Asztarte
oddawałabym się
wybranym
mężczyznom
za tabliczki
z pismem
zwoje pergaminów
i przyrządy
do oglądania
nieba
Jestem kapłanką
oddaję się pokątnie
wyuzdanym słowom
spółkuję z pojęciami
i przebieram
w pozycjach
wobec tego spełnienia
nudny jest każdy
grzech
(*K+M+B* 16)

If I were a priestess
of Astarte
I would give myself
to chosen
men
for tablets
with scripture
parchment scrolls
and instruments
to watch
the sky
I am the priestess
illicitly uttering
lascivious words
I copulate with concepts
and assume
positions
next to which
each sin
is a bore

Place, Space, and History, or Landscapes-Mindscapes-Bodyscapes

In an interview with Czuku in 2018, Filipczak admits that in *Wieloświat* she felt ready to write about the history of her family and the impact of that history on her way of looking at the world, and how that in turn influenced her poetic imagery and her subversive vision of the sacred. But we can find many poems in *K+M+B* which explore the space of painful memories and trauma. It seems that in 2009 Filipczak places emphasis on the link between body, landscape and "feeling" history through bodily sensations.

In his review of *K+M+B*, Tomasz Cieślak offers an insightful comment on Filipczak's imagery: the here and the now is always steeped in the past, he writes (39). Indeed, in a number of poems, the reader might easily notice that the present is "activated," as it were, by the past, or that the past still permeates the present (Kocot 220). Alicja Jakubowska-Ożóg goes one step further and in her afterword to *K+M+B*, tellingly entitled "Historie uwiły gniazda we mnie"("Histories Have Built Nests within Me"), she writes that the past continues to live in the present as a point of reference, a sort of matrix, and a form of testimony of our existence (Filipczak *K+M+B* 73; Kocot 220).

In a poem entitled "Monaster w Jabłecznej" ("Monastery of St. Onuphrius"), Filipczak narrates the events that took place in one of the most important Orthodox sanctuaries in Poland (with a male monastery founded in the fifteenth century). Legend has it that the location for the foundation of the monastery was shown by the icon of St. Onuphrius which had been floating in the Bug River. In Filipczak's poem, the river and its active role in the process of founding the sanctuary is juxtaposed with the destruction of the valuable monastery library and archives (Pawluczuk 177–78) which were burnt down by the German border patrol units in 1942 (Kocot 220). The last stanza states that the waves of the river "rock" the cry of the Deacon who was trying to save the books. It is important to note that the poem is written in the present continuous tense, to remember the past in the here and now, as it were. When the speaker says that she is grieving, she immediately adds that it is not because of broken porcelain, or richly decorated vestments, but because of the books that turned into ash:

Nie żal mi porcelany
złoceń ani szat tylko ksiąg
rozpłakanych w popiół

It's not the porcelain
gilt or robes but the books
weeping in the ashes
that I miss

Nie mam dachu nad głową
ale wierzę że tworzą go
alfa i omega

I have no roof over my head
but still I believe
they'll make one
alpha and omega

Rzeka kolebie płacz
diakona który próbował
ocalić pisma
(*K+M+B* 45)

The river rocks the crying
of the deacon
trying
to save each tome

In Filipczak's poetry, (the memory of) somebody else's suffering is often depicted through deep contemplation of the landscape, or even embodying the landscape. In "Posterunek" ("Checkpoint") from *Trzecie skrzydło anioła* she confesses that she finds territories and poems living inside her ("There are territories that live in me / like poems and you" [*Rozproszone* 28]). For Wojciech Ligęza, these embodied landscapes of Filipczak's highly sensuous poetry speak volumes about human affairs, about delving into the past, about the hidden dimension of being, about forgotten destinies (157). One could only add that with each subsequent book Filipczak is increasingly drawn to the interlinking themes of border crossing, transgressing limits and alternative timespaces; she notices and embraces their transformative and healing power (Kocot 217). In *K+M+B* and particularly in *Wieloświat*, she consciously returns to her family trauma in order to let go of the past; she is aware of the therapeutic effect of poetry "written down the bones" (Natalie Goldberg's term).

One of the poems in which the themes of temporal liminality, frontier, place, memory, and body most clearly overlap is "Limes" (in Latin, frontier of a province). In it, Filipczak recalls a scene of crossing the border in eastern Poland:

Wyjmowałam stanik
spod koszulki
gdy zatrzymała nas
straż graniczna
myślałam
że odpowiem
za naruszenie
wartości
Zrobiło się
gorąco . . .
(*K+M+B* 38)

I took off my bra
under my blouse
when the border guards
stopped us
I thought
I would be charged
with breaking their rules
It started
to get heated . . .

The opening lines introduce a carefree mood—it is hot, and the speaker takes off her bra and pulls it out of her shirt, thinking she must be "breaking rules." When asked to show his ID, the speaker's partner leaves

the car and walks away with the border guards. And this is where the mood of the narrative changes within seconds:

Widziałam	I saw
jak odchodzisz	you walking
między nimi	away between them
jak zabierają mi	saw them taking
dziecko	my child
jak leżę	saw myself
na ziemi	on the ground
Pamięć przodków	Ancestral memory
obudziła się	awoke in me
we mnie	They vanished
Zniknęli	
(*K+M+B* 38–39).	

The speaker looks at the scene in the here-and-now but she actually sees/feels/experiences something that had happened in her family in the past. "Ancestral memory / awoke in me"—ellipsis and understatement are clearly in operation. She sees her partner walking away, being carried away, she sees her child being taken away from her; she sees herself lying on the ground. The last word in the poem offers an insight into how the mechanism of traumatic memories works: the narrative of the past vanishes as quickly as it entered the here-and-now. "They vanished," Filipczak writes. Did they?—one might ask. The answer is not obvious, as working with trauma is a complex process. In *Wieloświat*, Filipczak dwells on ways of dealing with the past, and the potential difficulties one might find on the path to emotional freedom.

The poem "Terytoria" ("Territories") speaks of painful and disturbing history permeating the space underground—rotten banners, decaying bodies layered one upon the other ("banners rot in the earth / layers of bodies / decompose / comfortably" [*K+M+B* 43])—and above the ground. History and dates are likened to annoying flies: "One cannot shoo away / history / dates sit down / on one's naked body" (43). There is a tinge of irony in the phrase "decompose / comfortably" as it might suggest that the decaying bodies are "resting comfortably" under the ground. The third stanza points to an important place of reference for Filipczak, the Bug River: "The Bug River / once a centre / like a taut bowstring / ready to shoot an arrow" (43).

In "Starorzecze Bugu" ("The Bug's Old River Bed"), Filipczak not only comes back to the river, but, more importantly, she discovers herself in the landscape. In my opinion, the poem might be treated as Filipczak's second poetic credo: "I discover myself / in the landscape / where the current / knows no borders":

Odkrywam się	I discover myself
w krajobrazie	in a landscape
gdzie nurt	where the current
nie przestrzega granic	knows no borders
płynie dokąd prowadzi	flows where the moon
księżyc deszcz instynkt	rain and instinct say
trawa śni cudze sny	the grass dreams
gliniane naczynia	strange dreams
z których spożywam	clay vessels
Boga przemiany	from which I eat
odkąd wody	the god of metamorphoses
zmieniły bieg	since when the waters
i pojawiłeś się	have changed their course
rzeką	and you have appeared
(*K+M+B* 44)	a river

The river current knows no boundaries, it metaphorically stands for liquid borders, thresholds and limina, transition and transmutation (Kocot 219). I go as a river, Filipczak seems to be saying, I explore the feminine side of the world. The river flows "driven" by the moon, rain and instinct; it flows out of the past and into the future; it does not stop, as the nature of the river is to keep on flowing. It is interesting to see that the lyrical "you" appears as the river as well. One might risk saying that the process of self-realization happens in the communion of two souls (the Holy communion is also hinted at in the image of "God of transmutation" ["Bóg przemiany"]).

Becoming one with the landscape is one of the central motifs in Filipczak's *Wieloświat*. In an interview with Czuku, Filipczak admits that her last collection of poems is special in the sense that she was finally able to express and confront her Łódź identity. Hence some poems explore the issue of cultural landscape, and some focus on cityscapes and their relationship with mindscapes. "Łódź is a strange and difficult city," says Filipczak ("Duchowa transfuzja" 46). When asked about her relationship with the city and its history, she says that she sees Łódź as a postcolonial space. This is obviously connected with the fact that in the past the city was inhabited by people of four different nationalities: Polish, German, Russian, and Jewish; it is also linked with what she recalls as "the gray period" of the 1970s and 1980s, and, last but not least, she discerns postcolonial elements in the city's post-communist legacy. Even though Łódź is her home city, she has always felt that she does not belong t/here (Kocot 224). In the interview, she speaks at length about not sensing certain places as her own and about a disturbing feeling of alienation. Filipczak admits that once she was able to identify with her city by acknowledging its positive legacy, she could

write poems about the liminal spaces within and without ("Duchowa transfuzja" 46).

Czuku is interested in Łódź's colonial past, which is why he asks whether it would be possible to apply postcolonial theory to this part of Europe, and to Łódź in particular. Filipczak responds by saying that one can easily apply postcolonial theories and methods, and she points to the fact that they provide great tools for exploring the issue of alienation, of sensing/feeling one's own space as foreign/strange/alien (Filipczak, "Duchowa transfuzja" 46). Strangely enough, the process of "coming to terms" with the city's places and non-places would never have been completed if it had not been for visiting academics from the West. Filipczak recalls that when walking around Łódź they would feel mentally at home—they would identify certain architectural elements they knew from Vienna or Paris—while she would "feel out of place" (Filipczak, "Duchowa transfuzja" 46; Kocot 224). She links these memories and the feelings of disturbing, intense, contradictory "otherness" with the category of "here" and "there": at some point she realized that for her the term "here" stood for the Borderlands, the land of her ancestors (Filipczak, "Duchowa transfuzja" 46)—the eastern part of the Second Polish Republic during the interwar period (1918–39).

In *Wieloświat*, Filipczak decides to touch upon the complex issue of facing the shadow and reconstructing one's sense of place. In the poems "Zwiedzanie" ("Sightseeing") and "Drogi" ("Ways"), she writes extensively about the difficulties of letting go of the past, and the challenge of dwelling in the present moment, without making projections based on traumatic experiences. One of the most moving poems is entitled "Ucieczka przed cieniem" ("Running Away from the Shadow"); the oppressive sound of loud music behind the wall in the here-and-now brings up the memory of the slaughter committed against her ancestors, of neighbors killing neighbors:

Muzyka promieniuje z mieszkania sąsiadów
mogę krzyczeć, usłyszą tylko rottweilery
. . . Czarne psy za ścianą, bezszelestne jak noc
w czterdziestym piątym roku w województwie lwowskim
Nie zdradziły sąsiada ani jego noża
Przystawionego do gardła nieznanych mi bliskich
(*Wieloświat* 24)

Music seeps from neighbours' flats
I could scream, only rottweilers would hear
. . . Black dogs on the other side of the wall,
noiseless as the night
in 1945 in the province of Lviv

They hid a neighbour and his knife
Pressed to the throats of my unknown relations

This memory is also evoked in "W rodzinnym albumie" ("In a Family Album"):

Czemu ma służyć poezja jeśli nie przywracaniu życia	What use is poetry if it brings no-one back
Po tym poznają Orfeusza, że ożywiać będzie	Then they see Orpheus doing just that
przyzywam więc ciotkę Karolę	And thus I invoke Aunt Karola
z przepastnej szafy rodzinnych szkieletów	from the bottomless wardrobe of family skeletons
wysypują się zakrwawione ubrania (*Wieloświat* 19)	bloodstained garments spill

The act of storytelling as such is healing (poetry is life-bringing, reviving), and the poetic confrontation with the repressed can be seen as a symbolic gesture of letting go of the past in order to focus on the present and, possibly, the future (Kocot 225). By recalling Orpheus, Filipczak introduces two themes: the land of the dead and going through a painful process of mourning. "I invoke Aunt Karola," she adds, and by means of a simple enjambment, she links the story of Orpheus with the "bloody" memory of the slaughter committed against her ancestors. She uses the idiom of the skeleton in the closet in order to show that her family closet is full of skeletons and blood-stained clothes. Filipczak also touches upon the workings of the unconscious, and quite naturally for her, she does so in minimalist gestures. Even though there is no single family photograph left, the speaker admits that she is filled with dread that she looks just like her aunt ("Not a single photo survives / and yet I am sure / that I look like her" [*Wieloświat* 19]).

In "Świat alternatywny" ("The Alternative World") Filipczak confesses that throughout the years she had "rented" other people's poems because she did not have a place of her own, that she had not "entered her landscape" because landscapes were very expensive ("For years I rented others' poems / not having my own address . . . I had no landscape of my own / for landscapes like flats / are all but unaffordable" [*Wieloświat* 14]). Having read *Wieloświat* in the context of Filipczak's statement about the act of writing as looking at the landscape from *W cieniu doskonałej pomarańczy*, one may come to the conclusion that her need to find and be part of the landscape is to some extent fulfilled (Kocot 225). Like Woolf's room of her own, Filipczak's search for a landscape of her own is inextricably linked with writing, but also with discovering self beyond self, simultaneously independent and interdependent, singular and multiple, separate and connected.

No se puede vivir sin amar—We Are All Continuations

The title of this part of the essay comes from Filipczak's favorite novel, Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano*. It could be argued that the main message of the novel and Filipczak's writing is a peculiar interplay of the unfathomable mystery of being, the healing power of love, and the affirmation of impermanence (Kocot 220). All of these three issues form a triangle of themes in *K+M+B* and *Wieloświat*. Another triangle is formed by the interlinking themes of self-realization, independence and interdependence. By constant reconfigurations of these motifs, Filipczak weaves her palimpsestuous stories on the links between the past and the present, and on the mythical/sacred space re-activated in the here-and-now.

K+M+B opens with a poem which features an old doorway with a mysterious inscription, its letters/characters are worn away and vague, and perhaps this is what makes the writing so fascinating: "illegible letters / worn away / is it the inscription / or its erasure / that so fascinates? (Filipczak, *K+M+B* 7). It seems that the motifs of (time) gateways, liminality, transformation, (un)written stories permeate this book from beginning to end.

The second poem, entitled tellingly "Kaplica Sykstyńska" ("The Sistine Chapel"), presents an alternative creation story, and affirms the presence of the sacred in the here and now. Quite surprisingly, the key role is played not by God, the creator, but by a little boy, Filipczak's son, the most important person in the whole book (Czuku 139). His importance in the narrative of what it means to create is partly introduced in the book's dedication "Radzikowi, który raduje" ("To Radzik, the one who gladdens"), and partly in the poem "Zwiastowanie" ("Annunciation"):

Nie siedzieliśmy	We were not sitting
pod dębami Mamre	under the oak trees of Mamre
Gdy spomiędzy ksiąg	When from between the books
w otchłani torby	in the void of my bag
wydobyłeś anioła	you produced an angel
i położyłeś	and placed it
przede mną	before me
To był chłopiec	It was a boy
Ukryłam go głęboko	I hid him deep
i odrodził się	and he was born
To jest chłopiec	It's a boy
(*K+M+B* 35)	

The first two lines refer us to the Old Testament story of Abraham's and Sara's generous hospitality to three strangers who came to them by the oaks of Mamre. Even though Filipczak writes "we did not sit / under the Oaks of Mamre," the imagery of the poem clearly suggests that the boy is a transfigured angel from the scripture. He is transfigured in a double sense: he is taken "from between the books" and "out of the void of the bag" by the speaker's partner, and hidden by the speaker. We are not given the full picture of the scene, we can only guess that the angel in question was a small angel made of wood or clay, but the fact that he was "in the bag" may suggest that he had been promised (Kocot 221). One might risk saying that the mystery of forms and shapes, their transmutation, is all we can be certain of. The story of the strange boy-angel, and the joy he brings—interestingly, the name Isaac means "one who laughs" or "one who rejoices"—continues, as it were, in "Kaplica Sykstyńska":

Najważniejsze miejsce	The most important place
w moim domu	in my house
istnieje tylko nocą	only exists at night
zawiera się	contained
w zespoleniu	in the fusion
twojej i mojej	of your hand and mine
dłoni	when I feel for the cot
gdy dosięgam łóżeczka	after a day among clothes
po dniu wśród ubranek	toys
zabaweczek	other small things
innych zdrobnień	Your hand
stwarza mnie	creates me
i podnosi ku niebu	and lifts me heavenward
Twoja rączka	
(*K+M+B* 8)	

"The most important place / in my house / only exists at night," this is how the nocturnal scene of creation begins. Let us recall the fresco paintings evoked in the title of the poem. The complex iconography on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo has been explained by some scholars as a Neoplatonic interpretation of the Bible, representing the essential phases of the spiritual development of humankind. The poem refers to one particular fresco painting, "The Creation of Adam," in which God's arm is outstretched to impart the spark of life from his own finger into that of Adam. As I have mentioned, Filipczak's poem does not feature the biblical scene. At the center of the image, we see the union of hands, but instead of God and Adam we find the mother and the child: "Your hand / creates me and lifts me heavenward." It is the hand of the little boy which creates the mother and raises her to heaven. Marek Czuku interprets the scene as a "sacralization of mother-

hood" (139). Given the setting of the scene and the reversed perspective of viewing the one who (symbolically?) creates, I would argue that what is being sacralized here is rather the connection/communication/exchange of energy in this embodied dialogue between the mother and the son (Kocot 222).

In the poem "Kosmologia" ("Cosmology"), a sense of awe and wonder at the little boy's world permeates the whole scene: "You open up worlds / the moon eats / a pancake / with meteorites" (*K+M+B* 9). Both parents enter "his planet" as "two moons," and each day they learn a new lesson:

Przyciągasz nas	You pull me towards
na swoją planetę	your planet
i jak księżyce	and like the moons
w szkole	in school
uczymy się	we learn
obracać	to turn
raz szybciej	now faster
raz wolniej	now slower
(*K+M+B* 9)	

Wieloświat, published in 2016, seven years after *K+M+B*, opens with another family scene poem in which the past inter-is with the here-and-now; this time the space of the child's room is metaphorically occupied by three generations. It should be noted here that the speaker's father, one of the major figures in *Wieloświat*, also appears in *Ostrzyciel noży na jawie* (2003) in a poem entitled "Tato" ("Daddy"), but his manifestation in a dream is ambivalent, to say the least. "The dead live within us / feed on our dreams / come at night / for alms of time" (*Rozproszone* 89), Filipczak writes, and she adds that according to her grandmother, it is a bad omen when the dead come to you in a dream. However, she is happy to see her father and she creates a healing vision of meeting him again in the future:

Blisko jest uzdrowienie	Recovery is near
zmartwychwstanie	Resurrection
usłyszę twoje kroki	I hear
zgrzyt klucza w zamku	your steps
rozrośnie się na mnie	the key in the door
falbaniasta sukienka	on me there blooms
zmaleję i stanę się jak dziecko	a dress of frills
przytulę się do ciebie	I'll grow small
i uwierzę	become a child
(*Rozproszone* 89)	hug you
	and believe

In "Wieloświat," the memory of Filipczak's father is, quite surprisingly, a sign of his presence in the here and now:

Tata ważył się na wiele	Daddy
za przywiązanie do prawdy	for his preference for the truth
nie otrzymał nic	was rewarded
oprócz śmierci	with nothing but death
Nocami zawieszał planety	At night he'd hang planets
na suficie dziecinnego pokoju	on the ceiling of a child's bedroom
stwarzał świat bez pomocy	create a world without the help
internetu	of the internet
Jego wnuk zna właściwości ciał niebieskich	His grandson knows
urządza szkołę księżyców i mówi	the physical properties of heavenly bodies
że w czarnych dziurach są przejścia	sets out a school of moons and says
do światów alternatywnych	that in black holes are pathways
Tata, który nie widział zdjęć Neptuna	to alternative worlds
jego wnuk, który poznaje planety po kolorze	Daddy, who never saw photos of Neptune
spotykają się we mnie	his grandson, who knows each planet by its colour
(*Wieloświat* 5)	meet together in me

Even though the speaker's father no longer dwells in the world of the living, his passion for astronomy and cosmology lives on in his grandson, who "knows the physical properties of heavenly bodies." In the two stanzas—one on the past, and one on the past in the present—Filipczak "moves through" time and space, making subtle references to the science of alternative universes, and finally arriving at an embodied form of the multiverse: her father, who had never seen the pictures of Neptune, and his grandson, who recognizes planets by their color, meet within her (Kocot 223).

The interdependence of causes and conditions is so vivid here that one could venture the hypothesis that both "Wieloświat" and *Wieloświat* "embody," as it were, the teaching of "this is because that is." In quite rational terms Filipczak speaks about the mystery of being, about a subtle, net-like energy of inter-being; from one poem to another she weaves her story on the nature of true encounter with the other in a fully connected multiverse. The issue of separate worlds is linked with the notion of place, seen and felt as one's own.

Conclusion

When Marek Czuku asks Filipczak about the importance of language and what it means to communicate, she replies that as far as the artistic dimension is concerned, language is a perfect and mysterious material, but it is

also an amazing means of communication; she adds that it amazes her how much we can express in language on a purely human or artistic level, and how they interpenetrate one another (Filipczak, "Duchowa transfuzja" 47). Perfection, mystery, and amazement—three features of good poetry which transforms the here and now into visions that stay with us forever.

Filipczak chooses to search for answers to her metaphysical questions in and through literature as well as other texts of culture. Her visions of the sacred undergo deep transformations over time: purely conceptual visions become more embodied, mindscapes are more and more inextricably linked with landscapes, the activity of viewing the landscape transforms into "feeling" the landscape, and, most importantly, becoming one with the landscape. In *K+M+B* and especially in *Wieloświat*, these landscapes turn into "interpenetrating dimensions" or "dimensional planes"; in a trickster-like fashion, they resist one-dimensional reading, and remain open to interpretation.

Works Cited

Cieślak, Tomasz. "Dobry czas." Review of *K+M+B*, by Dorota Filipczak. *Kalejdoskop*, vol. 3, 2010, pp. 38–39.

Czuku, Marek. "Labirynt z ukrytym sensem." Review of *K+M+B*, by Dorota Filipczak. *Topos*, vol. 4, 2010, pp. 139–40.

Dakowicz, Przemysław. "W stronę transcendencji." Review of *Ostrzyciel noży na jawie*, by Dorota Filipczak. *Tygiel Kultury*, vol. 10–12, 2004, pp. 143–45.

Filipczak, Dorota. "Duchowa transfuzja." Interview by Marek Czuku. *Kalejdoskop*, vol. 11, 2018, pp. 44–46.

Filipczak, Dorota. *K+M+B*. Biblioteka *Frazy*, 2009.

Filipczak, Dorota. *Orfeusz na ginekologii*. Biblioteka, 1997.

Filipczak, Dorota. *Ostrzyciel noży na jawie*. Fundacja Anima *Tygiel Kultury*, 2003.

Filipczak, Dorota. "Paradise Revisited: Images of the First Woman in the Poetry of Joy Kogawa and the Fiction of Thomas King." *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, vol. 43, 2007, pp. 291–303. *Repozytorium AMU*, 2007, https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/items/cb5167e7-6fd6-454f-a0e6-5244d7b97160. Accessed 20 Nov. 2023.

Filipczak, Dorota. *Rozproszone gniazda czułości. Wybór wierszy 1994–2016*. Stowarzyszenie Pisarzy Polskich, 2017.

Filipczak, Dorota. *"The Valley of the Shadow of Death": Biblical Intertext in Malcolm Lowry's Fiction*. Edited by Paul Tiessen, *Malcolm Lowry Review*, vol. 43–44, Fall 1998–Spring 1999.

Filipczak, Dorota. *Trzecie skrzydło anioła*. Biblioteka, 1995.

Filipczak, Dorota. *"Unheroic Heroines": The Portrayal of Women in the Writings of Margaret Laurence*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2007.

Filipczak, Dorota. *W cieniu doskonałej pomarańczy*. Stowarzyszenie Literackie im. K. K. Baczyńskiego, 1994.
Filipczak, Dorota. *Wieloświat*. Biblioteka *Toposu*, vol. 131, 2016.
Goldberg, Natalie. *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*. 1986. Shambhala, 2016.
Jakubowska-Ożóg, Alicja. Afterword. "Historie uwiły gniazda we mnie." *K+M+B*, by Dorota Filipczak, Biblioteka *Frazy*, 2009, pp. 71–75.
King, Thomas. *Green Grass, Running Water*. Bantam, 1994.
Kocot, Monika. "Ryty przejścia i przestrzenie pomiędzy w twórczości Doroty Filipczak." *Fraza*, vol. 114, no. 4, 2021, pp. 204–27.
Ligęza, Wojciech. Afterword. "Mity ucieleśnione." *Rozproszone gniazda czułości. Wybór wierszy 1994–2016*, by Dorota Filipczak, Stowarzyszenie Pisarzy Polskich, 2017, pp. 157–67.
Lowry, Malcolm. *Under the Volcano*. 1947. Harper Perennial, 2007.
Menakem, Resmaa. *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*. Penguin, 2021.
Norwid, Cyprian Kamil. "Laur dojrzały." *Poezja.org*, https://poezja.org/wz/Cyprian_Kamil_Norwid/29097/Laur_dojrzaly. Accessed 20 Nov. 2023.
Plath, Sylvia. "Edge." *Poetry Foundation*, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49009/edge-56d22ab50bbc1. Accessed 20 Nov. 2023.
Pawluczuk, Urszula Anna. *Życie monastyczne w II Rzeczypospolitej*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2007.
Pustkowski, Henryk. "Kobieta, którą jestem (Dorota Filipczak)." Review of *Trzecie skrzydło anioła*, by Dorota Filipczak. *Fraza*, vol. 17, 1997, pp. 233–34.
Pustkowski, Henryk. "Kobiety z szuflady [z tego cyklu:] Dorota Filipczak—'Orfeusz na ginekologii.'" *Fraza*, vol. 1, 1999, p. 195.
Shepherd, Nan. *The Living Mountain*. Introduction by Robert Macfarlane, Canongate, 2011.
van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing*. Penguin Random, 2014.
Yeats, William Butler. "What Then." *Poetry Verse*, https://www.poetryverse.com/william-butler-yeats-poems/what-then. Accessed 20 Nov. 2023.