

# Dedication

by Czeslaw Milosz  
Translated by Czeslaw Milosz

You whom I could not save  
Listen to me.

Try to understand this simple speech as I would be ashamed of  
another.

I swear, there is in me no wizardry of words.  
I speak to you with silence like a cloud or a tree.

What strengthened me, for you was lethal.  
You mixed up farewell to an epoch with the beginning of a new one,  
Inspiration of hatred with lyrical beauty;  
Blind force with accomplished shape.

Here is a valley of shallow Polish rivers. And an immense bridge  
Going into white fog. Here is a broken city;  
And the wind throws the screams of gulls on your grave  
When I am talking with you.

What is poetry which does not save  
Nations or people?  
A connivance with official lies,  
A song of drunkards whose throats will be cut in a moment,  
Readings for sophomore girls.  
That I wanted good poetry without knowing it,  
That I discovered, late, its salutary aim,  
In this and only this I find salvation.

They used to pour millet on graves or poppy seeds  
To feed the dead who would come disguised as birds.  
I put this book here for you, who once lived  
So that you should visit us no more.