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## Marian Kisiel's poetic reflections on anxiety and death

**Abstract:** This article deals with the lyricism of the contemporary poet Marian Kisiel. Kisiel's work is centred around the themes of death and passing. The author reads and interprets selected texts of Kisiel through the meaning of death in the Middle Ages. The article uses the previous findings of researchers Krzysztof Kłosiński and Katarzyna Niesporek-Klanowska. It shows a different type of religiosity from that of the Middle Ages. The lyrical protagonist in Kisiel's poems is no longer certain that the world follows a divine order and plan, which is illustrated by an analysis of two poems from Kisiel's volume *C'est la vie (wiersze)* [poems], published in 2014.

**Keywords:** Marian Kisiel, lyric, death, anxiety

The oeuvre of Marian Kisiel, a poet who made his debut in 1983, currently consists of fifteen volumes of poetry. Kisiel consistently builds his own vision of the world, centred around the themes of death and passing. The very titles of several collections of poems published in the twenty-first century confirm that death has become the main character of his lyric. Of course, human mortality is one of the most important issues of contemporary culture. Restricting ourselves to the times closest to us – the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – it is almost impossible to point to an artist who has not touched upon the subject of the end of human life. There are poets who have taken a special interest in death and, in their own artistic rights, made a “reckoning” with it. Certainly, Stanisław Grochowiak, Miron Białoszewski, Halina Poświatowska,

and – rather like Kisiel, who has been interested in the fragility of all existence since his youth – Ewa Lipska<sup>1</sup> belong to this group. By citing only a few names of poets, I risk simplifying the existential analyses carried out in Polish lyric poetry (literature!), and not only the most recent ones. I have limited myself only to those artists who remain particularly important to Marian Kisiel, becoming an artistic point of reference in his lyric poetry, which strongly dialogues with tradition.<sup>2</sup>

It is enough to recall the titles of Kisiel's collections of poetry: *Wypominki* [Prayer for the Dead] (2009), *Martwa natura* [Still Life] (2015), *Łazarz* [Lazarus] (2016), *Wieniec dla zmarłych* [Wreath for the Dead] (2017), published in the twenty-first century, to confirm the characteristic reality created by the poet, in which the main character, death, remains alongside the rituals associated with the passing of a person – including forms of memory, recollection and commemoration. Kisiel's vantage point has definitely always been, to use a title again – this time that of a youthful volume – *Bliżej zimy niż lata* [Closer to Winter than Summer] (1995).<sup>3</sup> Kisiel's fascination with death, or rather, his premonition of it, has certainly made him a very distinct and even solitary poet who, against all the odds and certainly against malicious criticism, has perfected his private treatise on passing and dying, as many interpreters of his lyricism have already emphasised.<sup>4</sup> Anna Legeżyńska writes that the essential and great theme of his poetry is, as she aptly puts it, the contemplation of death "in the second person".<sup>5</sup> Here, she takes a cue from the poet himself, who in one of his essays writes about the passing of someone close to him, citing Vladimir Jankélévitch's reflections.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Marian Kisiel, *Vita brevis, mors longa. O jednym wierszu Ewy Lipskiej* [Vita brevis, mors longa. On one poem by Ewa Lipska], in „Stoję i patrzę na czym ten świat stoi”. *O twórczości Ewy Lipskiej* [“I stand and look at what this world stands for”. On the works of Ewa Lipska], eds. Wojciech. Ligeza, and Aneta Piech-Klikowicz (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2018), 91–95.

<sup>2</sup> The most complete discussion of Marian Kisiel's lyrical work is contained in the publication *Pergamin wspomnień. Szkice o poezji Mariana Kisiela* [Parchment of memories. Sketches on Marian Kisiel's poetry], eds. Ewa Bartos, Paweł Majerski, and Katarzyna Niesporek [Niesporek-Klanowska] (Gdańsk: wydawnictwo słowo/obraz terytoria, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> See Marian Kisiel, *Bliżej zimy niż lata. Wiersze, przekłady, imitacje* [Closer to Winter than Summer. Poems, translations, imitations] (Katowice: Towarzystwo Zachęty Kultury, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> See *Pergamin wspomnień. Szkice o poezji Mariana Kisiela* [Parchment of Memories. Sketches on the poetry of Marian Kisiel].

<sup>5</sup> Anna Legeżyńska, „„Żyję jak umiem.” Aura psycho-egzystencjalna w twórczości Mariana Kisiela” [“I live as I know how.” Psycho-existential aura in the works of Marian Kisiel], in *Pergamin wspomnień. Szkice o poezji Mariana Kisiela* [Parchment of Memories. Sketches on the poetry of Marian Kisiel], 23.

<sup>6</sup> See Marian Kisiel, *Śmierć w drugiej osobie* [Death in the second Person], in Marian Kisiel, *Nieuchronnie zbliżam się do was. Wiersze z lat 1980–2015* [Inevitably I'm getting closer to

In turn, Krzysztof Kłosiński, discussing, among other things, the formal attributes of Kisiel's lyricism, juxtaposes his poems with *Master Polikarp's Dialog with Death* (trans. Alex Kurczaba, 1997, original: *Rozmowa Mistrza Polikarpa ze Śmiercią*), setting the contemporary poet's work in the medieval tradition.<sup>7</sup> Katarzyna Niesporek-Klanowska also follows this path, analyzing Kisiel's thanatic imagination.<sup>8</sup>

Using the above hints, let us once again try to look at Marian Kisiel's poems through the prism of a period when culture focused on the "adoration of death". This famous memento mori could certainly be a perfect opening motto for practically every volume of Kisiel's, as he constantly reminds us of man's journey towards death. Many of the lyrical situations in his poems seem to have a strong aesthetic affinity with both the grotesque and the realism of the famous *danse macabre*. Collections of poems form these medieval processions of the living and the dead; the casus of the volume *Czułość* [Tenderness] (2011) with its title poem at the forefront. It is no mere coincidence that Kisiel's favourite painter is Zdzisław Beksiński, whose work can perhaps be read as a 20<sup>th</sup>-century dance with death, growing out of the conviction that everything that surrounds us is imbued with the presence of death – our most faithful companion. Hans Holbein once depicted life similarly.

However, when trying to read Kisiel as a "poet of the Middle Ages" – perhaps rather, as an heir of that era – one must not forget that in the Middle Ages the attitude to death, as well as its "image" in art, remained an integral part of the overall vision of the world with its moral and, above all, divine, New Testament order. With the help of allegory, a man, from his human perspective, "saw" death, but it did not change the main eschatological assumption that he remained a part of the higher – divine – order. A man is to live in such a way as to merit heavenly immortality, and this became the basis of all Christian ethics. The Polish readers can remember from school that Master Policarp – after having prayed fervently – made Death appear to him. The

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you. Poems from 1980-2015], selected by Andrzej Szuba (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Miniatura, Kraków 2012); see Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Tajemnica śmierci i zjawisko śmierci* [The Mystery of Death and the Phenomenon of Death], trans. Stanisław Cichowicz, and Jakub M. Godzimirski, in *Antropologia śmierci. Myśl francuska* [The Anthropology of Death. French Thought], selected by Stanisław Cichowicz, and Jakub M. Godzimirski, introduction by Stanisław Cichowicz (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993), 43–76.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Krzysztof Kłosiński, *Przymierze soli. O poezji Mariana Kisiela* [The Covenant of Salt. On the poetry of Marian Kisiel], in *Pergamin wspomnień. Szkice o poezji Mariana Kisiela* [Parchment of Memories. Sketches on the poetry of Marian Kisiel], 152.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Katarzyna Niesporek [Niesporek-Klanowska], „Ona. O tanatycznej wyobraźni Mariana Kisiela” [She. On the Thanatic Imagination of Marian Kisiel], in *Pergamin wspomnień. Szkice o poezji Mariana Kisiela* [Parchment of Memories. Sketches on the poetry of Marian Kisiel], 282.

work is strictly didactic in nature. The author of the dialogue warns people against sinning, standing in the way of their salvation and immortality.<sup>9</sup> In turn, Death, talking to the learned master, only repeats the fundamental message of Christian ethics, namely, that only sinful people, violators of divine commandments, should fear it. The aforementioned *danse macabre* also possesses an educational and moralising character. Here, death was supposed to emphasise the equality of man, although paradoxically it then functioned in the most hierarchical and autocratic social order, which was feudalism. Death always remained a partner of purely human “justice” as well.

It is impossible, for reasons that are quite obvious, to require a poet of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – having already repeatedly proclaimed the death of God himself<sup>10</sup> – to build a lyrical reflection on man based on an unshakable faith in the existence of the Supreme. Or at least Marian Kisiel does not. His work seems to spring from the existential dilemmas of a man who has lost that theocentric certainty – or has had it taken away from him – that God exists, which has, after all, become such a common experience of modern times. In his poems we find various possibilities of communing with the Absolute, as if the poet wanted to emphasise that relations with God can no longer be limited to adopting only one specific attitude. The rituals associated with the passing of a person, so often depicted in Kisiel’s poems, definitely have Christian, not to say Catholic, roots (especially the poems in the volumes *Wypominki* [Prayer for the Dead], *Łazarz* [Lazarus], *Wieniec dla zmarłych* [Wreath for the Dead], and his “dead” are presented more through the prism of a believer’s worldview. There are also frequent poems whose confessions are addressed directly to God (the poems *Tomasz* [Thomas], *Modlitwa* [Prayer], *Saint-Cirq-Lapopie* from the volume *Było i się zmyło* [It was and is gone]).<sup>11</sup> The attitude to God, quite ambiguous in Kisiel’s poetry, is also derived from defining his own work as an opportunity to note individual emotions, which, after all, are not something constant; they are subject to fluctuations and various influences,<sup>12</sup> hence so many shades in his literary conversations with God.

<sup>9</sup> See *Polska poezja świecka XV wieku* [Polish secular poetry of the 15th century], compiled by Maciej Włodarski (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo Ossolineum, 1997), 33–34.

<sup>10</sup> See T. Eagleton, *Kultura a śmierć Boga*, trans. Bogdan Baran (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Aletheia, Warszawa 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Marian Kisiel, *Było i się zmyło. Wiersze* [It was and is gone. Poems] (Katowice: „Śląsk” Sp. z o. o. Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> See „Polonistą zostaje się w tramwaju. Z profesorem Marianem Kisielom rozmawia Bogdan Widera” [One becomes a teacher of Polish on the streetcar. Professor Marian Kisiel is interviewed by Bogdan Widera], *Śląsk* no 12 (2011): 54.

Siedzę w pokoju,  
za oknem deszcz,  
zbliża się północ.

To niemożliwe,  
żebyś tu był,

Boże.<sup>13</sup>

[I'm sitting in the room,  
rain outside the window,  
it's almost midnight.

Oh Lord,  
You cannot be here.]

This intimate confession, however, is not the declaration of an atheist. The title *Wiersz dla Ciebie* [Poem for You] even suggests a kind of closeness in the relationship, linking the lyrical hero with God. Rather, it is a record of the “sigh” of a man who would like to have indisputable proof of God’s existence and presence, which seems impossible. We do not know what provoked the complaint that appears in the poem, which grows out of the unspecified anxiety of a man who is just here, in a particular place and time. The lyrical protagonist speaks only on his own behalf. Questioning the existence of God is motivated solely by subjective feeling and mood. The poem, paradoxically, becomes a cry – not against God, but rather for His presence. A lonely man, left solely in the power of death – whose existence is definitely more “visible” and “tangible than the presence of the Most High, which resounded particularly strongly and pessimistically in Kisiel’s youthful tomes<sup>14</sup> – has also become an important character in his collections published after 2000.

The 2014 volume *C'est la vie (wiersze)* [poems] included an untitled piece, beginning with the words: „ręce ma z tyłu / szalony wzrok” [his hands are at his back / crazy eyes]. The structure of the text is based on Kisiel’s characteristic way of constructing lyrical situations.<sup>15</sup> The poet often refers to the well-known metaphorical depiction of human fate as a road we follow towards death, which is firmly established in culture; he even titled one of his volumes *Droga* [The Road] (2013). Once again, therefore, we have a “situation on the road”. The lyrical hero, speaking this time in the first-person

<sup>13</sup> Marian Kisiel, „Wiersz dla Ciebie”, in Marian Kisiel, *Łazarz* (Katowice: „Śląsk” Sp. z o. o. Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2016), 32.

<sup>14</sup> See Marian Kisiel, *Nie śnijcie mnie w waszych snach* [Do not dream me in your dreams] (Sosnowiec: Studenckie Centrum Kultury RU ZSP Uniwersytetu Śląskiego „Zameczek – Remedium”, 1983); Marian Kisiel, *Kronika nocy. Wiersze z lat 1982–1990* [Chronicle of the Night. Poems from 1982–1990] (Warszawa: Staromiejski Dom Kultury, 1992); Marian Kisiel, *Gdy stoję tak nieruchomo. Wiersze, przekłady, imitacje* [When I stand so still. Poems, translations, imitations] (Katowice: Towarzystwo Zachęty Kultury, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> See Elżbieta Wróbel, *Gospodarstwo pamięci Mariana Kisiela. Próba lektury kilku wierszy z minionego wieku* [Marian Kisiel’s Memory Farm. An attempt to read some poems from the past century], in *Między XX a XXI wiekiem. Z literaturoznawczych warsztatów badawczych* [Between the 20th and 21st Century. From literary research workshops], eds. Leszek Będkowski, and Grażyna Pietruszewska (Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo im. Stanisława Podobińskiego Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, 2014), 77.

plural, speaks for the broader collective, complaining about the peculiar company during this march through life:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| ręce ma z tyłu<br>szalony wzrok                    | [his hands are at his back<br>crazy eyes            |
| kto idzie z tyłu<br>i plącze krok                  | who is walking behind<br>and tangling the step      |
| jaki uśmiech<br>wykrzywia twarz                    | what smile<br>is twisting the face                  |
| kto komu śmie<br>plątać nasz marsz                 | who dares<br>to tangle our march                    |
| gdzie się zagubił<br>ten, który wie                | where is lost<br>he, who knows                      |
| gdzie się odnajdzie<br>i w jakim śnie              | where he will find himself<br>and in what dream     |
| ręce ma z tyłu<br>zmiłuj się, zmiłuj               | his hands are at his back<br>have mercy, have mercy |
| jakim językiem<br>przemówi on                      | in what language<br>he will speak                   |
| i jaki uśmiech<br>otworzy twarz                    | and what smile<br>will open his face                |
| i jaki strach nasz<br>czy tylko nasz <sup>16</sup> | and what fear of ours<br>or only ours]              |

This poem multiplies questions and doubts. There is a lack of explanation as to who this mysterious figure with crazy eyes and hands folded behind is, disturbing the marchers. The verb „śmie” [dare], which appears in the fourth distich, could be taken as a hint and a clue, since, in Polish, by phonetic association “śmie” [dare] sounds like “śmierć” [death] – only the last two consonants are missing. Equally dramatic in the text is the question of the existence of the One who knows everything, who can explain everything, and such powers seem to be possessed only by God, although this is not certain. Even the plea „zmiłuj, się zmiłuj” [have mercy, have mercy], a customary phrase in litanies, does not determine that the addressee of these words is God Himself. People marching/living experience fear first and foremost, and laughter easily turns into a grimace of terror. Fear is aroused both by the “mysterious” person/death following them, and by uncertainty about the ex-

<sup>16</sup> Marian Kisiel, [incipit:] „ręce ma z tyłu” [his hands are at his back], in Marian Kisiel, *C'est la vie (wiersze)* [poems] (Katowice: „Śląsk” Sp. z. o. o. Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2014), 55.

istence of God, who gives, after all, a “meaningful sense” to human existence. Fear in Kisiel’s poetry is a sensation that is fundamental to man and permanently present in human life, and cannot be “tamed” at all. A deeper immersion into oneself is enough for it to appear, and such vivisection is often performed by the protagonist of Kisiel’s poems. A joke, truly Baroque-like concept, like those “corpse perspectives” showing the world from the other side – from underneath, “from the grave” – are not able to drown out this anxiety, although humour always has a soothing effect and diversifies the mood within the entire volume. At least a few poems are worth mentioning here: *Żałować nieboszczyka* [Grief of the Dead], *Głos z opuszczonego grobu* [Voice from the abandoned grave] (the volume *Wypominki* [Prayer for the Dead]), *Zaduszki* [All Souls’s Day], *Topiel* [Depth] (the volume *Było i się zmyło* [It was and is gone]), *Truchło* [Corpse] (the volume *Droga* [The Road]).

In the volume *C’est la vie (wiersze)* (poems), there is another work that can be taken and interpreted as a kind of manifesto of anxiety and fear of a man seeking the solace and reassurance that religion can offer. This is the poem *Do Anioła Stróża* [To the Guardian Angel]. It is significant that the poet used a child’s prayer. It is not necessary to refer to academic works on developmental psychology to conclude that children’s faith is specific and exceptionally strong. A child’s naivety and innocence allow him/her to believe in God without any doubt. Everyone has experienced, as a matter of course, that this way of faith is difficult to maintain in adulthood; we are too “smart” to trust God in the way a child does. The poet does the same, in a specific way updating this childish prayer and adapting it to his own adulthood and experience. A short rhythmic phrase is again at odds with the horror of the entire lyrical confession. The familiar phrases from the original version of the prayer appear, but the subject of the speech already completes them in his own way. Additionally, the guardian angel is someone else. The angelic guardian is compared to a black tomcat – alert and leaping – but more pre-occupied with watching the skies than with what is happening on the ground. Therefore, again – on behalf of many - a different version of the well-known prayer is uttered:

|                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| a my na ziemi          | [and we on earth  |
| stale skuleni          | always hunched    |
| i bardzo mroczni,      | and very dark,    |
| aniele boży,           | oh, Angel of God, |
| o, Archaniele,         | oh, Archangel,    |
| Michale, Rafale        | Michael, Raphael  |
| Gabrielu <sup>17</sup> | Gabriel]          |

<sup>17</sup> M. Kisiel, *Do Anioła Stróża* [To the Guardian Angel], in Kisiel, *C’est la vie (wiersze)*, 56.

The ground was covered with people huddled together from fear, frightened. The metaphorical terms used are surprisingly simple, although they suggest so much. It is worth recalling that Kisiel, a Polish scholar and literary scholar by profession, is extremely erudite, and is often referred to as a *poeta doctus*.<sup>18</sup> Fortunately, the zone of literary and cultural intertextual references does not dominate his poems and does not demolish their reception. The epithet “dark” in reference to people accommodates a whole mass of semantic associations, concerning the human condition and its sinful and flawed nature. It is no longer enough for people to have a “friendly angel” leading a little boy or girl by the hand, as the Guardian Angel is customarily depicted in “holy pictures” for children. The power and competence of a “serial” angel are too small to protect us. This is why the request is addressed to the archangels Michael, Raphael and Gabriel, who have the greatest power in the divine order of the world.<sup>19</sup> The extent of the help of each of the archangels can make it clear what people are experiencing and what makes them limp with fear and feel constant anxiety. But at the same time, there comes the change of the original words of the prayer „Ty zawsze przy mnie stój” [You always stand by me] into:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| stań u wezgłowia,<br>nad przepaścią,                       | [stand at the call,<br>over the abyss,                                  |
| podnieś powiekę,<br>bo dzień się rodzi,<br>i nas błędnych, | lift an eyelid,<br>for the Day is born,<br>and leads us, the misguided, |
| prowadzi ku ciemności <sup>20</sup>                        | towards the darkness]   |

The request for the presence of divine guardians at the moment of death, occurring peacefully in bed, or unexpectedly – in more dramatic circumstances, as suggested by the word “abyss” – resounds here. It seems that it is extremely dangerous for people to approach the “abyss” itself, which happens, paradoxically, during the day – the time of life. “Ciemność” [darkness] is also an ambiguous term. Darkness opens and accommodates all the dangers lurking for people. It evokes the horror of eternal damnation. The lyrical subject is one of many of these misguided, lost and frightened people. The presence of the Absolute definitely gives hope, and this is already a great deal, although at the same time there is no certainty that the prayer will be answered.

<sup>18</sup> Ewa Bartos, Paweł Majerski, and Katarzyna Niesporek [Niesporek-Klanowska], „Wstęp” [Introduction], in *Pergamin wspomnień. Szkice o poezji Mariana Kisiele* [Parchment of Memories. Sketches on the poetry of Marian Kisiel], 15.

<sup>19</sup> See ks. Wiesław Al., Niewęglowski, and Janusz Rosikoń, *Anioły* [Angels] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Diecezji Pelplińskiej „Bernardinum”, 2003), 48–55.

<sup>20</sup> Marian Kisiel, „Do Anioła Stróża” [To the Guardian Angel], in Kisiel, *C'est la vie (wiersze)*, 56–57.



A peculiar vision of the world, also very characteristic of the entire poetic philosophy of Marian Kisiel, can be found in the poem *Pani od polskiego* [The Teacher of Polish] from the volume *Uniesie nas wiatr* [We will be Carried by the Wind] (2018), which thematically focuses around the fragility and transience of human life. According to Tomasz Pyzik, a mature poet already seems to accept this fragility, but this acceptance of the existence of death does not at all lead to liberation from fear.<sup>21</sup> The Polish lesson in Kisiel's artistic approach reveals the peculiar power of death, which remains part of nature and biology, and in addition is deprived of belonging to any divine plan. The teacher, teaching the children diminutives, reveals the peculiar order and rhythm of the world:

|                                 |                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| nad rzeczką jest domek          | [there is a cottage by the river |
| rzeczka żywi stawek             | the river feeds the pond         |
| stawek żywi rybki               | the pond feeds the fish          |
| rybki żywią misie <sup>22</sup> | the fish feed the bears]         |

Once again, the poem resembles the speech of a naive child. However, it reveals a peculiar, albeit common and obvious, food chain in which diminutives are meant to “neutralize” the presence of death and suffering, necessary in nature for life to take place. The poet has stripped death of any eschatological dimension. Paradoxically, it is also part of the life/survival of every being. The cruelty of nature, of which humans remain an integral part, is a horrifying fact that people do not want to remember or cannot even remember any more. It is also a poem about language as a tool of peculiar manipulation, as we are able to sugar-coat reality so that we can more easily accept a rather banal and horrifying truth. After all, showing the pictures, the teacher of Polish – even though she knows that they are not real, as they include landscapes created by the artist – cannot tell the children the truth:

|                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| pani od polskiego                  | [the teacher of Polish            |
| patrzy przez okienko               | is looking through the window     |
| jak mięciutki chmurki              | how softly the clouds             |
| muskając się płyną                 | touching each other are flowing   |
| dzisiaj uczy zdrobnień             | today she is teaching diminutives |
| rozkłada obrazki                   | unfolding the pictures            |
| lecz spoza obrazków                | but from behind the pictures      |
| wie – skrada się lęk <sup>23</sup> | she knows – fear creeps in]       |

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Tomasz Pyzik, *Teraz i zawsze. O „Uniesie nas wiatr” Mariana Kisiela* [Now and Always. About “We will be Carried by the Wind” by Marian Kisiel, in *Pergamin wspomnień. Szkice o poezji Mariana Kisiela* [Parchment of Memories. Sketches on the poetry of Marian Kisiel], 231.

<sup>22</sup> Marian Kisiel, „Pani od polskiego” [The Teacher of Polish], in Marian Kisiel, *Uniesie nas wiatr* [We will be Carried by the Wind] (Katowice: „Śląsk” Sp. z o. o. Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2018), 18.

<sup>23</sup> Kisiel, „Pani od polskiego” [The Teacher of Polish], 19.

There is no world without fear, ugliness and death, which I do not think we can “diminish”... Marian Kisiel looks at it and the passing of time in various literary ways, reveals the sources of human fear and maybe that is why he appreciates life so much, in spite of everything, and his simple prescription acquires a unique, not only artistic, credibility:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>żyj,<br/>Trzymaj się łąpczywie tej ostatniej gałązki,<br/>jakby od tego zależał los świata.<sup>24</sup></p> | <p>[live,<br/>Hold on greedily to the last twig,<br/>as if the fate of the world depended on it.]</p> |
|---|---|

An insightful analysis of man’s existential fears also leads the poet to affirm life, for this is the only way to try to overcome all that frightens people. But these issues are already calling for a new reading of this Silesian poet’s poems.

*Translated by Anna Wylężałek*

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## Marian Kisiels poetische Reflexionen über die Angst und den Tod

**Abstract:** Der Beitrag befasst sich mit der Lyrik des zeitgenössischen Dichters Marian Kisiel. Im Mittelpunkt des poetischen Werks stehen die Themen Tod und Vergänglichkeit. Die Autorin liest und interpretiert ausgewählte Texte Kisiels im Kontext der Tradition des mittelalterlichen Interesses an der Frage des Todes. Der Text stützt sich auf die früheren Erkenntnisse der Forscher Krzysztof Kłosiński und Katarzyna Niesporek-Klanowska. Er zeigt eine andere Art von Religiosität des zeitgenössischen Dichters als die des Mittelalters, die auf Theozentrismus beruht. Der lyrische Protagonist in Kisiels Gedichten hat nicht die Gewissheit, dass die Welt einer göttlichen Ordnung und einem göttlichen Plan folgt, was durch eine Analyse von zwei Gedichten aus dem 2014 erschienenen Band *C'est la vie (wiersze)* [Gedichte] veranschaulicht wird. Die Autorin hebt hervor, dass der Mensch, der permanente Angst empfindet, der wichtigste Protagonist in Marian Kisiels Gedichten ist.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Marian Kisiel, Lyrik, Tod, menschliche Angst

## Mariana Kisiela poetyckie rozważania o lęku i śmierci

**Abstrakt:** Artykuł dotyczy liryki współczesnego poety Mariana Kisiela. Twórczość poety ogniskuje się wokół tematyki śmierci i przemijania. Autorka odczytuje i interpretuje wybrane teksty Kisiela w kontekście tradycji średniowiecznego zainteresowania problematyką śmierci. W tekście wykorzystano wcześniejsze ustalenia badaczy – Krzysztofa Kłosińskiego i Katarzyny Niesporek-Klanowskiej. Ukazano inny typ religijności współczesnego poety niż ten, który obowiązywał w średniowieczu, oparty na teocentryzmie. Bohater liryczny w wierszach Kisiela nie ma pewności, że świat realizuje boski porządek i plan, co zostaje zilustrowane analizą dwóch wierszy z tomu *C'est la vie (wiersze)* wydanego w 2014 roku. Autorka podkreśla, że człowiek odczuwający permanentny lęk to najważniejszy bohater wierszy Mariana Kisiela.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Marian Kisiel, liryka, śmierć, lęk