

Acknowledgements

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I dedicate this book to my mother, whose rose garden, inhabited by hosts of mischievous thrushes, remains forever my 'first world', and to oN with gratitude for his commitment to the Word.

Gdańsk/Czersk, 2019

PS The book is going to print at a time when world history has taken a sudden and unprecedented turn. We went through a period of lockdown, when every day brought new information about the uncurbed spread of a pandemic disease; we heard of the lonely desolation of patients dying in isolation wards and of army convoys carrying coffins for speedy cremation. There were no public ceremonies, only a solitary anguished mourning. Church services were cancelled; houses of worship were closed, and believers were denied access to religious rituals. However, gestures of simple human kindness and community spirit sought to overcome a ubiquitous sense of anxiety and fretfulness. And once again, we were prompted to revise our interpretations of literary texts in the light of the world that was changing before our bewildered eyes. So, let us turn once again to poetry which helps us make sense of that which startles the mind, baffles the senses, and challenges reason.

Czersk, October 2021