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**Forefather's Eve. By Adam Mickiewicz. Trans. Charles S. Kraszewski. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2016. 416 pp. Notes. Bibliography. €30.30, hard bound, \$23.50, paper.**

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*Forefather's Eve*. By Adam Mickiewicz. Translated by Charles S. Kraszewski. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2016. Introduction, 416 pp. Notes. Bibliography. PAPER.

The challenge of teaching Polish literature via translation has always been one of finding enough quality works in English that are in print, critically informed, and widely available. It is precisely for this reason that the recent publication of Charles S. Kraszewski's translation of Adam Mickiewicz's dramatic masterpiece, *Dziady* (Forefather's Eve), is such welcome news. Kraszewski's effort is a valuable addition to a series of fairly recent translations, including several works by Juliusz Słowacki (*Ballydna*, *Agamemnon's Tomb*, *Beniowski*, *Kordian*) and selected poetry by Cyprian Kamil Norwid (*Poems*). The picture is far from complete, but the addition of these recent works to long-standing translations of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* and Zygmunt Krasiński's *Un-Divine Comedy* makes it possible for teachers of Polish literature in English-speaking universities to present a somewhat representative picture of Polish Romantic literature to their students. Add to this the value that such translations offer to non-Polish scholars of world literature and the importance of new works such as this is magnified.

As a translation, Kraszewski's rendition of Mickiewicz's original text is remarkable for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, the decision to publish *Forefather's Eve* in its entirety, including all of its assorted sections, such as the *Widowisko* (The Spectacle), *Upiór* (The Specter), and the *Ustęp* (Fragments), presents as a whole what Mickiewicz originally produced as disjointed pieces over the period 1823-1832. This decision, too, represents one of the more curious and potentially problematic aspects of Kraszewski's translation. As he points out in his lengthy introduction to the text, the traditional order of *Forefather's Eve* is a counterintuitive one, beginning with

Part II, proceeding to Part IV, and concluding with Part III, followed by the various scenes of life in Russia that reflected Mickiewicz's own experience there as an exile in the 1820s. By altering this traditional order and presenting as whole what was originally disjointed and fragmentary, Kraszewski's translation risks giving English-speaking readers with a false impression of Mickiewicz's Romantic masterpiece. Part of what makes *Forefather's Eve* a compelling work is the challenge it presents both readers and directors of reconciling its confusion of space and time, captured most clearly in the changeable character of Gustaw-Konrad. The lack of unity in terms of space and time underscored the extent to which *Forefather's Eve* was, at heart, a work in progress. What is more, as Mickiewicz later explained in his lectures on Slavic literature at the Collège de France in the 1840s, Polish drama was not only one of the most powerful artistic realizations of poetry, but it was also transcendent, prophetic, and difficult to realize. In essence, Mickiewicz created an open work that eschewed the orderly and the rational in favor of the visionary and the miraculous. The two different publications of *Forefather's Eve*, moreover, provides some insight into the evolution of the Polish Romantic imagination, not to mention Mickiewicz's own creative development and personal experience. *Forefather's Eve*, in many respects, is a living document of the chief interests of the Polish Romantics in its combination of the irrational, the love of ruins (the play itself being a kind of a collection of fragments), the personal, and the collective.

With that said, Kraszewski's translation represents a continuation of the tradition of revisiting Mickiewicz's drama by his successors. As a work that Mickiewicz himself acknowledged had to wait until the future for its full realization, *Forefather's Eve* is a work that appears again and again in the Polish imagination in varying forms and for

different reasons. Kraszewski's reordering of Mickiewicz's original work represents a re-reading of Mickiewicz that is in keeping with the efforts of Polish directors and artists in the last few years to imagine Mickiewicz's *Forefather's Eve* anew, such as Michał Zadura's fourteen-hour staging of the play in its entirety, for the first time, at the Polish Theater in Wrocław, the *Dziady* Recycling Festival, which combined past and present productions of *Forefather's Eve* with Afro-Haitian voodoo ceremony, and Piotr "Pianohooligan" Orzechowski and the High Definition Quartet's jazz interpretation of Part II of *Dziady* in Kraków. Add to this the exporting of Mickiewicz to foreign audiences in the form of Zadura's staging of *Forefather's Eve* in Beijing in 2015 and the recent release of *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* with its "Forefather's Eve Quest," and it is clear that Kraszewski's translation is not only timely, but also a necessary part of the growing interest, in Poland and abroad, of realizing Mickiewicz's monumental vision in fresh ways for a new, global audience.