inspirations, we must not forget how widespread was the respect for German culture, especially Romanticism, in Russian intellectual circles at this time. Many of the poets discussed here were familiar with German literature and music long before they traveled westwards.

As different as the poets and their attitudes are, one common factor emerges: despite the outrage felt at Germany's warlike posturing, especially after 1914, there is almost universal feeling of "love-in-spite-of," a deep attachment to German culture which cannot be destroyed by the aberrations of war or politics. This collection makes an interesting reading on a timely subject; one looks forward to other volumes in the series.

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Reading Stanisław Barańczak's collection of essays is something of a busman's holiday for a Slavist: one delights in a free range of insights and analyses without the encumbrances of an academic apparatus. Most of the essays were originally book reviews; with the exception of two important updates on post-1989 independent culture publishing in Poland and the emergence of an alternative writers' organization (Association of Polish Writers), the endnotes refer to the publication of the books discussed.

The rewards of Breathing Under Water are great, for it gathers together significant literary studies and political observations from 1978 to 1989 by one of the finest interpreters of contemporary East Central Europe. All but one essay (on Tadeusz Konwicki's Polish Complex, written in 1978) were composed with the English-speaking audience in mind. While the collection is shaped perforce by the vagaries of translation, many writers covered (Miłosz, Brodsky, Herbert; Gombrowicz, Wat, and Schulz) are important both for the decade of the 1980s and for the century. Breathing Under Water also makes available in English passages from Stanisław Barańczak's earlier Polish essays on Czesław Miłosz and Joseph Brodsky (from Etyka i poetyka, 1979) and on Wioletta Symborska, Miron Białoszewski, Adam Zagajewski, and Ewa Lipska (from Przed i po, 1988). Updated and re-cast for the non-Polish audience, parts of Breathing Under Water now complement Barańczak's Polish criticism.

Born in 1946, Stanisław Barańczak is one of the extraordinary talented post-war generation of Polish poets and writers. Emerging in the late 1960s and active in the 1970s and 1980s, many of these writers were associated with poetic groups in Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, Toruń, and Kraków. By 1972 Barańczak had published three volumes of poetry. In pre-Solidarity Poland poetry increasingly collided with politics; independent publication became a hallmark of literary groups. Their works were among the prose, poetry, and
essays banned by official censorship and published—along with émigré writers—by NOWa. From 1974 to 1981 Barańczak published several volumes of poetry, essays, and translations. He was a founding member of KOR and the underground literary quarterly Zapis. In 1981 he emigrated to America and at present is Alfred Jurzykowski Professor of Polish Language and Literature at Harvard University. He continues to write poetry and criticism in Polish; a selection of his poems, The Weight of the Body, is now available in English. His many translations include the works of Mandel'shtam, Brodsky, e. e. cummings, and English metaphysical poets. Barańczak is editor-in-chief of the Polish Review (New York) and co-editor of Zycie Literackie (Paris).

Stanisław Barańczak occupies an important position in the Polish literary tradition where his predecessors and perhaps mentors include Czesław Miłosz and Zbigniew Herbert. Two essays in Breathing Under Water are devoted to Miłosz and one to Herbert (about whom Barańczak has written a full-length study entitled, A Fugitive from Utopia: The Poetry of Zbigniew Herbert, 1987).

Stanisław Barańczak's assessments of the Polish and East European situation of the last tumultuous decade are made with the accuracy of the poet's political radar, the night-vision of the writer schooled in totalitarian reality. Literature, politics, philosophy, and ethics converge in Breathing Under Water as Barańczak discusses approximately forty titles, grouped into seven sections. Polish writers predominate (some belonging to earlier decades), but a second group of contemporary Russian authors includes Zinov'ev, Aksyonov, Kuznetsov, Grossman, Trifonov, Dovlatov, Aleshkovskii, and of course, Joseph Brodsky. Czech literature is represented not only by Václav Havel and Joseph Skvorecky, but also writer and theorist Antonín Liehm. The Hungarian contribution is an expose of state-supported writing by Miklós Haraszti that ought to be required reading in political science classes.

Throughout the collection Barańczak demonstrates the premise of his opening essays (“Breathing Under Water” and “E. E.: the Extraterritorial”): the literary artist speaks most authentically about Eastern Europe, for poets and writers demonstrate that human beings are not meant to “breathe under water.” The volume closes with a section (“Distance and Dialogue”) that complements the opening essays, for it develops the problem of communication between East and West and the plight of the exiled writer. Thus, Breathing Under Water is shaped by the vantage point of the critic who belongs to an illustrious line of East Europeans straddling two realities. Barańczak cites Nabokov’s hero Pnin; Nabokov himself belonged to the generation of Czesław Miłosz and Antoni Słonimski. Today this distinguished company has been joined by Joseph Brodsky, Joseph Skvorecky, Vassily Aksyonov, and Barańczak himself.

At the heart of Breathing Under Water are five sections dealing with literature and politics. The Polish writers discussed include both those already known (such as Miłosz, Lem, Gombrowicz, Herbert, and Szymborska and those who are becoming better known (Bruno Schulz, Aleksander Wat, Miron Białoszewski, Adam Zagajewski, and Ewa Lipska). While Barańczak