

## ONCE AGAIN DIFFERENCES ARE ERASED

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*Zbigniew Machej*

Once again differences are erased.  
Differences between a knife and  
a corkscrew, an orange  
and a brick, a cutlet and a board,  
a one-time Wehrmacht soldier,  
who delivers milk in the streets of Katowice,  
and a woman once in a Soviet camp,  
who runs a "Ruch" stand.  
Differences between a January  
morning and a June night,  
a flag and a dishrag, a poet  
and a snitch, a plinth  
and a shit.

## WINDOWS

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*Zbigniew Machej*

Under a peeling wall  
lies a dead dog, a mutt  
with blood-stuck  
fur. A broken pane  
gleams in the grass. Nettles  
bloom. It's stifling  
and the windows are wide  
open.

## THE COCK

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*Zbigniew Machej*

Since when  
has the coffee mill  
been a tower  
where  
the protestant cock crows?  
Since when  
have dead flies  
smelled  
like peony petals,  
and sunflower  
seeds  
been sweeter  
than prunes?  
Since when  
has the girl  
who burned  
her pink bra  
been my  
wife?

## THE COYPU BREEDER'S DAUGHTER

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*Zbigniew Machej*

Mr. Szlauer is a coypu breeder. Since he's been a widower you see him less often. But his Tyrolese hat and the square mustache under his nose are still amusing. And the way he walks makes you laugh too. It's reminiscent of a wading heron or the high step of an exotic army officer. After all, during the war Mr. Szlauer served in the Wehrmacht and even won an iron medal at the front, which delighted his wife. His daughter Truda, almost forty now, but still unmarried, resembles her mother. Lovely, though some spiteful types say she's hunchbacked.

## POET

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*Zbigniew Machej*

Our most outstanding poet usually eats dinner at “The Stag Inn.” Today’s dinner was excellent, the soup’s name was Solferino. The spoon sparkled like a soldier’s trumpet, and the macaroni resembled the emperor’s epaulettes. Unfortunately, after dinner our poet had to play chess with the lawyer Gałuszko, his future father-in-law, though he would’ve been happier lying on a couch with Bożenka, the daughter. But Bożenka’s away on an excursion to Budapest and probably won’t be back till Wednesday.

## SUNRISES, SUNSETS, ESCAPES...

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*Zbigniew Machej*

Sunrises, sunsets, escapes  
and returns. Strange cities, cold  
stations, shallow sleep  
in rushing railway cars.  
And crowds, everywhere crowds  
storming  
the needle's eye.

## TEN WORDS FOR SAPPHO

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*Zbigniew Machej*

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and again to someone's cheek  
someone's hand prays half-alive

## CIESZYN, CENTRAL EUROPE

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*Zbigniew Machej*

Chamomile grows in the market  
between the stones of Austrian pavement.  
Beyond the border, in the western part of town.  
There, where senile voices howl "Poland's  
not dead yet...," children's voices hum  
"Kde domov muj..."