



Slight Exaggeration: An Essay

Adam Zagajewski

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A new essay collection by the noted Polish poet

For Adam Zagajewski—one of Poland’s great poets—the project of writing, whether it be poetry or prose, is an occasion to advance what David Wojahn has characterized as his “restless and quizzical quest for self-knowledge.” *Slight Exaggeration* is an autobiographical portrait of the poet, arranged not chronologically but with that same luminous quality that distinguishes Zagajewski’s spellbinding poetry—an affinity for the invisible.

In a mosaic-like blend of criticism, reflections, European history, and aphoristic musings, Zagajewski tells the stories of his life in glimpses and reveries—from the Second World War and the occupation of Poland that left his family dispossessed to Joseph Brodsky’s funeral on the Venetian island of San Michele—interspersed with intellectual interrogations of the writers and poets (D. H. Lawrence, Giorgos Seferis, Zbigniew Herbert, Paul Valéry), composers and painters (Brahms, Rembrandt), and modern heroes (Helmuth James Graf von Moltke) who have influenced his work.

A wry and philosophical defense of mystery, *Slight Exaggeration* recalls Zagajewski’s poetry in its delicate negotiation between the earthbound and the ethereal, “between brief explosions of meaning and patient wandering through the plains of ordinary days.” With an enduring inclination to marvel, Zagajewski restores the world to us—necessarily incomplete and utterly astonishing.

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