

**Czeslaw Milosz Award to Janusz Glowacki - Remarks
November 22, 2011**

Welcome. Thank you for being here tonight as we honor Janusz Głowacki, the 2011 recipient of the Czesław Miłosz Award for Contributions to U.S.-Polish Understanding.

I am especially pleased and honored to welcome two previous winners who need no further introduction, Andrzej Wajda, who was the first winner of the prize, and Julia Hartwig, last year's awardee.

The U.S. Embassy established the Czesław Miłosz Award as our way to recognize Poles whose work has promoted improved communication, closer cooperation, or greater understanding between the peoples of the United States and Poland. It's our way to update our connections, beyond the historical ties of Kosciuszko and Pulaski that we often discuss.

We are here tonight because of the things we share in common. Janusz and I don't know each other, and we didn't know each other when we both lived in New York in the 1980s. But one of the reasons I was compelled by this choice was because we shared a time and a place: New York City in the 1980s.

Łączy nas także czas i miejsce: Nowy Jork w latach 80-tych (osiemdziesiątych). Mniej więcej w tym samym czasie kiedy Janusz pisał, ja byłem świeżo po college'u i uczyłem angielskiego radzieckich uchodźców (OR: imigrantów) -- i kilku Polaków -- na Brooklinie. Mogłem się wtedy zapoznać ze środowiskiem imigrantów. Sztuki i książki Janusza Głowackiego przenoszą mnie w tamte czasy.

In the mid-1980s, when you were breaking into the U.S. theatre scene, I was fresh out of college, working as a reporter by night and a teacher of English as a second language by day.

My first summer I somehow managed to find a sublet in a basement sublet across the hall from Russian poet Joseph Brodsky.

I took the D train to Flatbush, where I taught Soviet refugees and the occasional Pole.

Janusz Glowacki's award winning play "Hunting Cockroaches," brings me back to those years, when New York was a more interesting if less safe place. It was a place being transformed by an influx of émigrés, including those pushed west by Martial Law.

Hunting Cockroaches is a more sophisticated 1980s version of Leo Rosten's famous story that traced an earlier wave of immigrants, "The Education of Hyman Kaplan." It tells the story of the promised land from the less romanticized view of a dim apartment in the Lower East Side.

The New York Times said of Glowacki's play: "We find a complex contrast between Eastern Europe and American literary esthetics. . . To succeed in America, [the protagonists] Jan and Anka may have to exchange their hard-won, historically rooted, fabulist view of existence and art for the new world's more practical imperatives of self-promotion, pest control, and the creation of salable work."

In giving the award to Janusz Glowacki, we honor the legacy of Czesław Miłosz. As a poet, novelist, translator, commentator, diplomat, and teacher, Miłosz was a powerful representative and interpreter of Polish character and culture for many Americans. Miłosz also trained his sites on his adoptive home and on the West. In *The Captive Mind*, which is well known in America, Miłosz gives us a scathing critique of intellectuals who gave themselves over to the false promise of Communist dictatorship.

And Glowacki's work too says as much about American life as it does about the life he left behind in Communist-era Poland. Again quoting *The New York Times*, Glowacki's lines "hit our homes, as well as theirs."

With great admiration, welcome and congratulations.

Before we present the award, I would like to invite Janusz's good friend, Lejb Fogelman, to tell us a little bit more about Janusz.

FOGELMAN DELIVERS REMARKS

Thank you, Lejb.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, For Contributions to U.S.-Polish Understanding, on behalf of the United States, I present the Czeslaw Milosz award to Janusz Glowacki.