



The Leon Wyczółkowski District Museum in Bydgoszcz. Photo by Piotr Kopciewicz

Poland
Wisława
Szymborska



Here are plates but no appetite.
And wedding rings, but the required love
has been gone now for some three hundred years

Here's a fan where is the maiden's blush?
Here are swords where is the ire?
Nor will the lute sound at the twilight hour.

Since eternity was out of stock,
ten thousand aging things have been amassed instead.
The moss-grown guard in golden slumber
props his moustache on the Exhibit Number...

Eight. Metals, clay and feathers celebrate
their silent triumphs over dates.
Only some Egyptian flapper's silly hairpin giggles.

The crown has outlasted the head.
The hand has lost out to the glove.
The right shoe has defeated the fool.

As for me, I am still alive, you see.
The battle with my dress still rages on.
It struggles, foolish thing, so stubbornly!
Determined to keep living when I'm.. gone



Translated by
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