

The Shriek of the Bird

Between the Second Aleja and the Third Aleja, from ul. Kilińskiego to ul. Dąbrowskiego, is *Plac Magistratcki* [Municipal Square], which is located the local Town Hall. It is from here that the Ruling Gods and the Mortal Rulers reign. The Ruling God lives in an edifice with tall cupules, surrounded by a peaceful and lovely garden. The Mortal Rulers - in a house with a tower and a dungeon nearby, without which no human existence on earth is possible.

The building, with its byzantine cupules, was actually built for the Russian Orthodox God who, in earlier times, played an important role here. But, of late, he has been ejected from his comfortable dwelling and in his place was brought in the God which the government now has. The former Mighty Ruler, the Russian Orthodox God, was not even granted the rights of the Tenants' Protection Law. His was the lot of a sub-tenant, whom one may evict on a whim.

The ruling humans have also been replaced, together with the God. Or perhaps it happened the other way around - the Gods were replaced together with the mortal rulers.

Military battalions come from time to time to the square between the two seats of power, displaying their weapons, to reassure each of the two rulers, on either side, that their reign is as secure and as permanent as the force upon which they rely.

Then arrive the city's simple burghers in their finest attires and stand on the pavement from both flanks and gush forth contentment and joy, hearing their military band playing their military marches in a parade.

A row of poplars also stood there, thick and tall, like ancient giants. There they had stood for generations, indifferent to all the changes happening before their eyes -whether children play with this plaything or that. To them, these are all but flitting games. Constant are only summer, autumn, winter and then the spring, when they blossom, and clamour and resound with the eternal Song of Life.

A multitude of birds would nest in these trees. The birds only live here during the summer. They migrate for the winter, without applying for passes or visas, consequently not paying the thousand-and-one duties. But the worst they allowed themselves to do was that, in the thick of the imposing parade, when the townspeople crowded round with foolish enthusiasm and open mouths, they would play a trick and soil someone's elegant hat or something even worse.

The Town Elders could not allow such an act go unpunished. They held a meeting and decided to cut down the thick, tall poplars where the birds, which were perpetrating such outrages, nested.

And early one fine morning, the birds, which were beginning to return from the warm lands, saw how men were cutting down the poplars in which their nests were. They raised an alarm, calling entire flocks together, entire armies, and swooped and swirled around their nests and, in one voice, incessantly shrieked:

Cheep-cheep-cheep - you are driving us away from our nests [and] destroying our dwellings, because we accidentally speckled someone's hat or his bare head! But you yourselves saturate, day in and day out, human minds, human hearts and human souls with falsehoods, hatred and jealousy, turning them into killers and murderers - you remain unpunished, yet you condemn others.

Cheep-cheep-cheep - in your midst murderers and killers roam about, who have attacked unarmed, innocent folk in broad daylight, robbed, murdered and stained their hands with innocent blood, and you, the Town Elders, were not even willing to assume a resolution of protest. And yet you condemn us to homelessness and exile without any trial.

Cheep-cheep-cheep - we demand honesty, we demand uprightness! The world is not without a Master. There is a God in this world and He shall take our wrongs up!