

ADAM MAZEK

Diaries

06.2019 - p. 11



STREET LAMPS

The second part of the June 2019 "Diaries" begins with a post titled "Street lamps." Why do I like to take pictures of street lamps? I see them as a quirky, minimalist element of the urban landscape. That's why, when trying to take interesting photos, I mostly have fun, like a child taking pictures of these objects. Looking at lamp posts, I am often reminded of Stanislaw Lem's literary works. Well, in one of the Polish writer's science-fiction novels titled. "Eden," humans land on the title planet. The astronauts cannot understand and comprehend what surrounds them on a land unknown to mankind. They are under the impression that Eden is inhabited by a highly developed civilization. However, they are helpless to communicate with the planet's inhabitants. They try to learn as much as possible about everything around them. However, the perceptual abilities of the human mind are too limited to meet this challenge. This inability makes the titular planet one big mystery for them. Let's come down to Earth now. Walking through the streets of Warsaw, I imagine something different. In my vision, I see myself as an alien who has just landed on Earth. In my imagination, I sometimes see a separate order, or chaos, that has just reigned on Earth. This world is post-apocalyptic. There is no place for humans in it anymore. Virtually all buildings are destroyed.

The aliens who landed on our planet, among them myself, find the Earth an unearthly silent, destroyed landscape. I can imagine that the streetlights might be one of the peculiar elements of this post-apocalyptic landscape. Some unnaturally bent, others intact streetlights could be a minimalist element of the new urban landscape. That's why I often think of a Polish science-fiction writer when I see streetlights. The streetlights remind me of Lem's work. The vision of a destroyed human civilization with street lamps intact or destroyed is stuck in my mind. Aliens who have just landed on Earth could be surprised and confused by what they see as the characters in "Eden." Another reason I think of Lem when I take pictures of lamp posts is that when I take such images, I am necessarily looking at the sky.

- *Cover and picture on p. 3: post "Street lamps"*



STREET LAMPS

The mysterious and unfathomable firmament reminds me of imaginary journeys through the Universe. This is also the moment when I begin to wonder if we are alone in this world or if there may be life beyond Earth after all. Will the street lamps tell me the truth? Of course not. Nevertheless, they are also simply elegant, graceful, and minimalist objects to photograph.



DEBT

In the post titled "Debt," did I write about having a financial debt to anyone? No, because I do not have any debt. I also do not wish anyone any outstanding severe financial obligations. In the post, I wrote about the historical debt I have to all Poles who lived before I was born. I also feel that I am responsible to modern Polish citizens and future generations. Another obligation I have is to Warsaw and Poland as one living, powerful entity.

What historical debt are you writing about? Could you give me more details?

Undoubtedly, you could ask me, my Dear Friend. I am already rushing to explain. The truth is that I am living in a time of perhaps the greatest prosperity in Polish history.

DEBT

In 2018, my homeland became the first country from Central and Eastern Europe to be ranked as a developed economy by FTSE Russell. In short: Poland is no longer a developing country but a developed one, with one of the most advanced economies in the world. I feel that with a meager unemployment rate and substantial foreign investment, I can freely and safely practice street photography and run a website without worrying about what I will eat tomorrow. I realize that in the past, many Poles died in the struggle for today's freedom, stability, security, and prosperity. Therefore, I want to symbolically (through creativity in the broadest sense) pay tribute to them. Let my texts and images express gratitude to all those who fought for me to be able to do what I am doing today in peace. I also want my photographs to become a symbolic link between the past and the future, a versatile piece of Polish thought that travels through time and space, knowing no boundaries. I want to immortalize my city and homeland for posterity by taking pictures on the streets of Poland's capital. I hope that by doing so, I will repay my debt not only to the Poles but, in fact, to all of humanity. I also dream that my photographs will become something similar to what Eugene Atget did for Paris in the future. That is why I am not interested in current politics and current divisions in Polish society. Such divisions were, are, and will be. I have no intention of wasting my vitality, energy, and time on them. I want to pay a symbolic debt to past generations by creating. Thanks to my ancestors, I live in this and not another painfully beautiful world. I want to repay my obligation by inspiring multitudes of future generations.

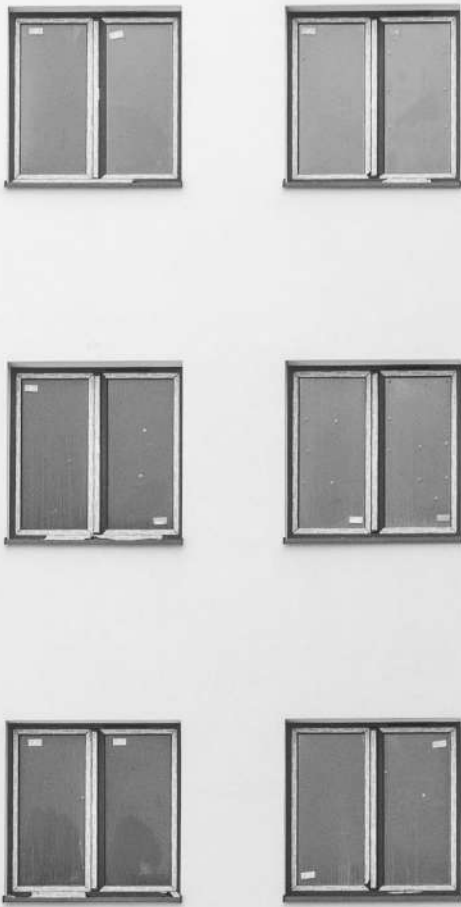


• Post: "Debt"

Last time I had one thought about the places I want to visit. The fact is that I love to explore new areas (post: "Exploring"). I like to photograph emerging places (such as construction sites). On the other hand, I also enjoy exploring old, abandoned buildings (e.g., ruined houses). As for ruins, I know that many photographers love to explore abandoned places. The truth is that we photographers are not the first to do so. One fantastic example of exploring urban ruins is Giovanni Battista Piranesi. The famous Italian architect loved to analyze the ruins of ancient Rome. We can admire in his works a mixture of his fantastic imagination and elements of many old ruined Roman buildings. I sincerely recommend you, My Dear Friend, to study and analyze all the drawings and sketches of the Italian master. Suppose you don't know how to do this. In that case, I suggest you reach for Luigi Ficaccia's title, "Piranesi. The Complete Etchings" (published by Taschen). This book may be the best way to do it.



EXPLORING



- Post „Exploring“

EXPLORING

Just as I like to walk around dilapidated and unoccupied buildings, I want to walk around construction sites and watch them being built, new buildings in the dust, pain, dust, stench, and dirt. I like to explore places located near my home. I already mentioned in a previous text ("Diaries" 08.2018 part I) that I feel that construction workers somewhat dislike it when someone with a camera in hand walks near their work sites. I am not at all surprised by this. If I were a construction worker, I would undoubtedly have similar feelings.

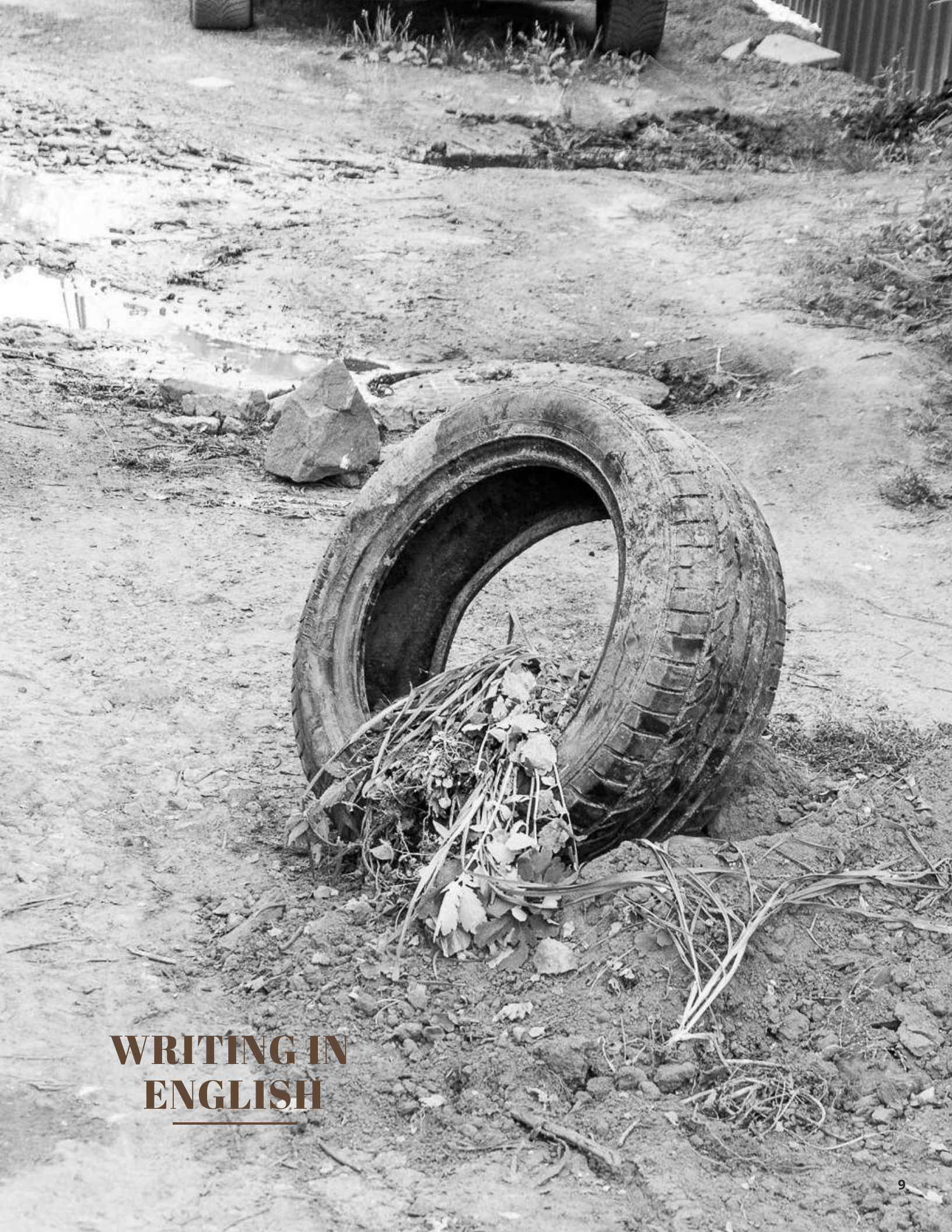
Nevertheless, discovering new places that are being built is an excellent thing for me. Suppose you have the opportunity to photograph a building under construction. In that case, I suggest you do so, if only for documentary purposes. Finally, I would like to add that we don't have to travel the world to explore new and unusual places. I suggest focusing on the mundane neighborhood first.



WRITING IN ENGLISH

I prepared one of my first sets of photos called "Negation of the End" ("Diaries" 02.2019 - p. II) in two language versions: English and Polish. In the current text entitled. "Writing in English" I wanted to emphasize that the English version of the text appeared first. In short: I feel that writing in English is easier for me and goes more smoothly. When preparing the description for the work above, I thought in English. The Polish version of the text is a translation of Shakespeare's version of the language. I consider it my personal and great success to write and read in English. The fact is that reading and writing in English are becoming more and more comfortable for me.

To put it in a nutshell: Today, I am more proficient in writing in English than in my native language. I have already experienced a similar feeling once in my life. It happened during my four-month stay in the US in 2006. Being in the United States of America, I spoke English a lot. In the last days of my stay overseas, I felt that Shakespeare's language was slowly becoming my first language.



**WRITING IN
ENGLISH**

The most exciting thing is that history knows one Pole who wrote in English and masterfully. I am referring to Joseph Conrad (actually: Joseph Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski). The famous writer is considered one of the greatest novelists writing in English. Incredibly, a foreigner can master a foreign language at the highest level. In this respect, Joseph Conrad is undoubtedly a guiding light for me. Do I plan to continue writing in English? The answer is obvious: yes. I plan to do so for the rest of my life. Do I want to become a famous writer like Joseph Conrad? No, this is not my goal. There was only one Joseph Conrad. My name is Adam Mazek, and I plan to become one of the world's most prolific artists/bloggers/photographers. Do I believe that I will succeed? The answer is clear: yes! Writing in English is one way to reach as many readers as possible.



WRITING IN ENGLISH

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXERCISE



ĆWICZENIE FOTOGRAFICZNE

In the following text, I described a photographic exercise my photography school teachers gave me. When I attended classes, I often came to them with a vast number of photos. I often brought them in printed form, sometimes as a digital file. The truth is that I often got my photographs too much. When such a situation occurred, teachers asked me to make a selection at home beforehand. I always did this, but even this home selection was insufficient.

Nevertheless, since the beginning of my photographic adventure (that is, since October 2015), I have taken many photos. I can barely control this amount. This situation continues to this day. Back to the main thread: when I brought too many images to class, my teachers (Bartek Mokrzycki and Tom Grzyb) often gave me an additional photographic exercise:

- a) making an additional selection of photos in a short period;
- b) arranging photographs into different patterns, designs, collages, and sets, suggesting that I play with my photos like a puzzle!

I loved this task. Doing it, I felt like a child playing with blocks from which something should be built. It was great fun and pure pleasure for me. Thanks to these exercises, I now have no problems selecting photos and making unique collages. My ongoing work with images has become very efficient, thanks to the photography school. Again, I would like to thank my teachers and friends from the school for the two years of learning together! Those were fun times! First of all, I would like to thank the two gentlemen mentioned above, thanks to whom I learned a lot about photography and art. Taking classes together has brought me a lot of inspiration and wisdom. Thanks to their imparted knowledge, I am a passionate photographer and wouldn't want to be anyone else. Keeping in mind that the "good old days" are nowadays (I wrote more about this in "Diaries" 10.2018 part II), I would like to emphasize that for me, the two years of shared learning and experience (including in the photographic darkroom, in the studio, as well as on the streets of various cities) were a truly inspiring experience.



PHOTOGRAPHIC EXERCISE



**ORDINARY
PEOPLE**

ORDINARY PEOPLE

I wrote about how we can learn many new things from the lives of ordinary people in the subsequent post. I am convinced that the history of every human being is a fascinating story and journey. I also believe that the history of each of us is one vast and unexplained mystery. However, why do we read and learn mainly about the stories of famous people, i.e., artists, scientists, politicians, athletes, etc.? Why do we not have the opportunity to learn about the average person, a no-name, who had no spectacular success, lived in Poland, and died, for example, in 1971? I am no exception. I love reading about the lives of great artists and their artistic legacies. Caravaggio, Johannes Vermeer, Hiroshige, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Claude Monet, Salvador Dali, Stanley Kubrick, Zdzislaw Beksinski, and Stanislaw Lem are geniuses about whom I have read books. I constantly draw inspiration from them. But why don't I draw motivation from ordinary people like the example mentioned above from 1971? The answer is simple: 99% of ordinary people have not left behind any written history of their lives. In general, people do not write about themselves, about their lives, and do not write down their thoughts. Ok, we can try to find people's medical history, for example, in health centers (leaving aside the questions of the legality of such a practice). In Poland, we can learn a lot from parish registers. However, I don't think these types of stories are inspiring. Somewhat, it lacks the element of human thought. There are only dry data, facts, and figures.

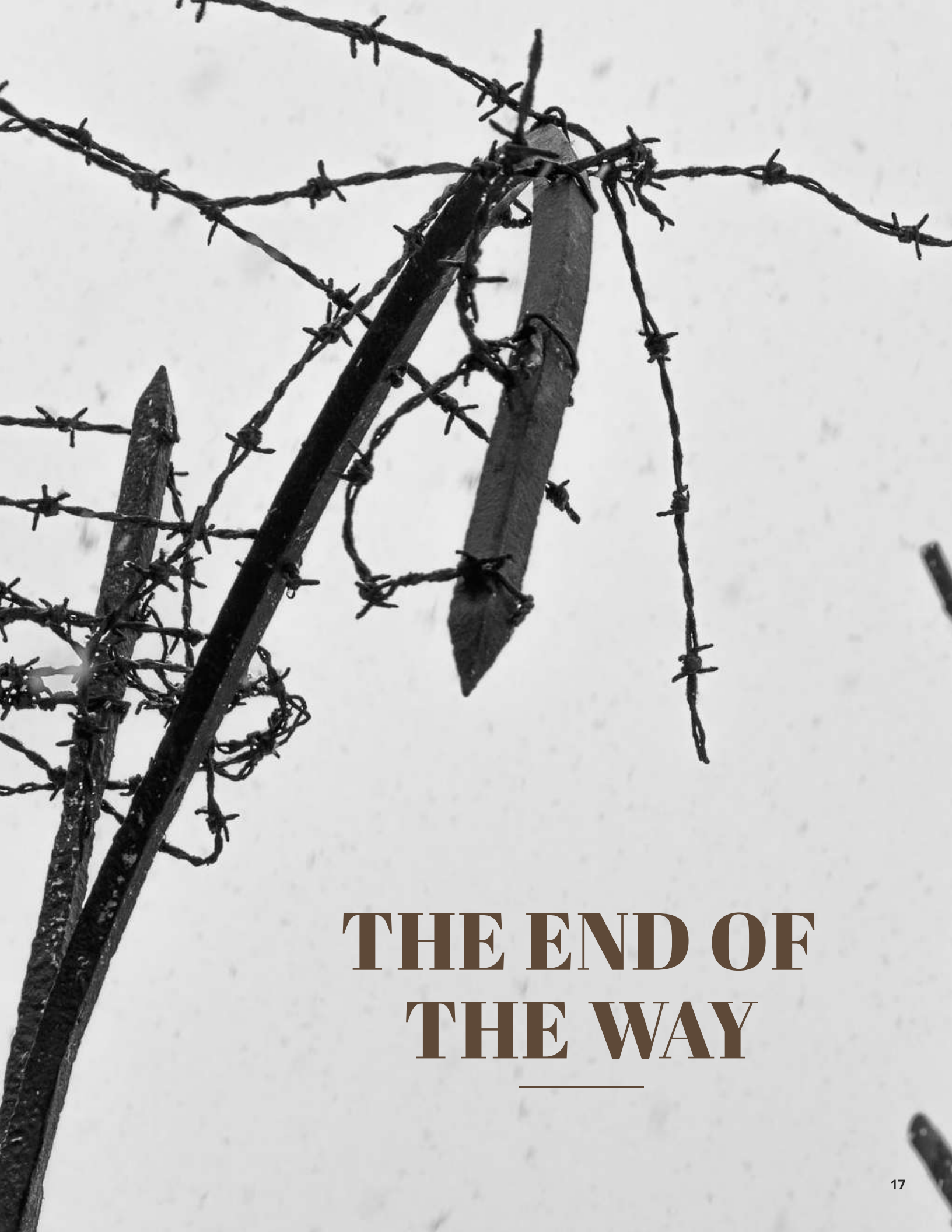
Nevertheless, as I wrote at the beginning of this text, I think that the story of practically any person can be inspiring and can teach us something. I also believe that most people don't feel their story could impact anything. I think most people feel that their story would not be exciting to others. Is that worth describing a quiet, average life of a no-name - without any spectacular ups and downs? I am convinced that it is. Fyodor Dostoevsky, among others, was the one who drew inspiration from the lives of ordinary people. He eagerly observed his surroundings, analyzed, and listened to others. Then, based on the facts, he created his inner, wonderful, fictional world. I think this blog will be a starting point for writing my biography. Who knows, maybe one day I will write an autobiography?



• Post: "Ordinary People"

ORDINARY PEOPLE

I sincerely encourage you, My Dear Friend, to do the same. Start blogging. Write down your thoughts, record them and externalize them. I am sure it is worth describing your life in such a way. This is how any ordinary person can become someone extraordinary and be remembered for years to come, despite the average life he leads. After all, my name is not Michael Jackson or Cristiano Ronaldo, either.



THE END OF THE WAY

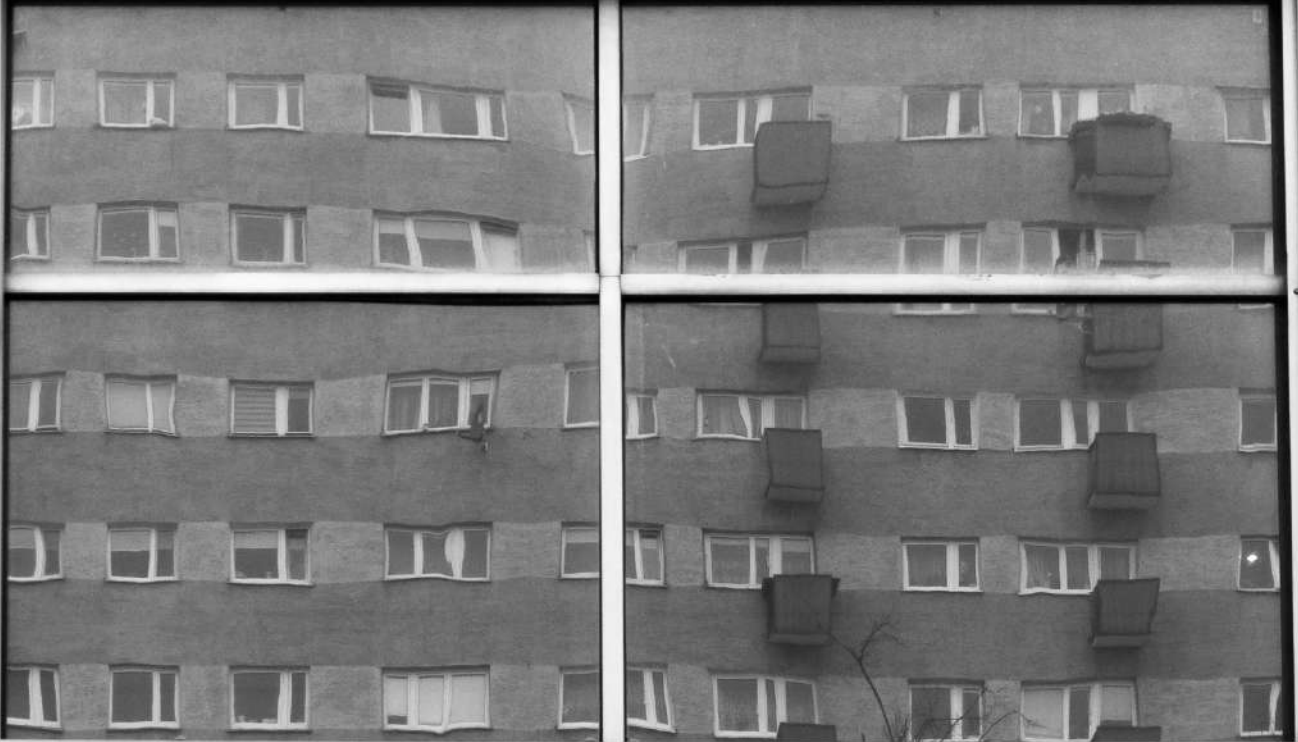
THE END OF THE WAY

Whichever life path you take, whether you become homeless or speed down the highway toward the millions of dollars in your bank account, remember that the end result, at the end of the day, will still be the same. The natural end of life is called death. It is the end of our way. As I mentioned in one of my previous texts ("Diaries" 04.2018 part I), the end of life is one of the justest things in this world. Why? Because it will reach each of us without exception. Whatever happens, however strange it may sound, I believe there is neither a happy nor a sad end. I hope that death is only the end of part of the path.

The way is part of a more meaningful, unknown (divine?) work. I believe our path throughout our lives is not a dead end. I would like to believe that we are part of a mysterious, inexplicable divine plan. We don't know exactly how life appeared on Earth. We have never received any message from our possible Creator, whether we call him God or an alien. Considering all of the above, that we will all die anyway, we can see that from this perspective, it matters little whether we become beggars or businessmen. Does this mean we can start drinking alcohol daily and having a good time without obligations to loved ones and society? Of course not! I believe (naively?) that everything we do in this world, which we can conventionally divide into good and bad deeds, will have meaning in the next part of our existence. I know that this way of thinking comes from Christianity. This part is instinctively understandable to me. It makes sense. Does it mean I try to help others because I fear going to hell? Not really. I treat others as I would like to be treated myself. We should help each other. Mankind discovered long ago that agreement builds and disagreement ruins. In conclusion, I want to emphasize that each of us faces the end of our life path. This end is called death. I believe we should behave kindly towards each other and help each other as much as possible, no matter what happens (if anything) after we die. Is all that I have written trivially? Yes. IMHO, there is a lot of truth in trite statements.



**WHAT DO YOU KNOW
ABOUT DOSTOYEVSKY?**



- [Post „What do you know about Dostoyevsky?“](#)

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT DOSTOYEVSKY?

In my last post, published in June 2019, I wrote that most of the time, I thought I knew a lot about Dostoyevsky (post: "What do you know about Dostoyevsky?"). Why did I think that? Well, in 2013, I read almost all of his works translated into Polish. What's more, in early 2014, I read five books about Dostoyevsky and his works. So I was convinced that I knew practically everything about the Russian writer.

Nevertheless, I now know that I was completely wrong. Neither I nor anyone else can fully understand Dostoyevsky's heart, mind, and soul. In almost all the works of the Russian genius, one can find the information that the human soul is an impossible mystery to understand and unravel. Of course, the writer is correct. It is impossible to understand a person's soul, character, and behavior 100%. Therefore, although I got to know a large part of Dostoyevsky's mind and soul, not only through his novels but also through, among other things, his letters and diaries, I know that I absolutely cannot say that I know what was in his soul.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT DOSTOYEVSKY?

Moreover, I am convinced that, in fact, each of us does not really know himself well. We can write about ourselves in letters, diaries, essays, posts, novels, and journals. Still, there will always remain undiscovered parts of the human soul and character for us and others. It seems to me that the discovery of the human soul and mind is a process similar to the discovery of the Universe. We can make advances in exploration, and undoubtedly, as humanity, we are making them. However, with each discovery comes dozens of new questions and doubts. I am convinced it is an infinite process. Therefore, in the end, we cannot fully understand all the processes taking place in the cosmos and the human brain and soul (whatever the human soul is). Does this mean we should stop exploring the unfathomable recesses of the Universe and the human psyche? Of course not! I believe that exploring the vastness of the Universe and the human mind and body is one of the most exciting things we, as a civilization, can do. It is a process that will continue until the end of our days and will never be completed. Therefore, despite my many readings of Dostoevsky's works, I must conclude that what I have read is only a tiny fraction of the thoughts that were undoubtedly churning in the mind of the Russian genius.

THE END



- Post: "What do you know about Dostoyevsky?"