Maciej Skowera, "Entry on: A Poem about King Picus [Poemat o królu Pikusie] by Franciszek Kobryńczuk", peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1522. Entry version as of November 15, 2026.

Franciszek Kobryńczuk

A Poem about King Picus [Poemat o królu Pikusie]

Poland (1994)

TAGS: Canens Circe Latium Metamorphosis Picus





Courtesy of the publisher.

General information	
Title of the work	A Poem about King Picus [Poemat o królu Pikusie]
Country of the First Edition	Poland
Country/countries of popularity	Poland
Original Language	Polish
First Edition Date	1994
First Edition Details	Franciszek Kobryńczuk, *Poemat o królu Pikusie*, ill. Wanda Skoniecka, Czytam i maluję 5/94. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Ostoja, 1994, 20 pp.
ISBN	ISSN 1231-1405
Available Onllne	*Poemat o królu Pikusie* at ewa.bicom.pl (accessed: September 21, 2022).
Genre	Narrative poetry, Poetry
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Maciej Skowera, University of Warsaw, mgskowera@uw.edu.pl
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Creators



Photograph courtesy of the Author.

Franciszek Kobryńczuk , 1929 - 2016
(Author)

A veterinarian, professor of veterinary sciences specializing in animal anatomy (an authority on the anatomy of the Polish bison), writer, and poet. 1948–1950: a member of a secret youth organization active within the post-WW2 underground connected to Armia Krajowa [Home Army], banned by the Communist regime; in 1950 he was sentenced to a 10-year prison term for this activity; fully exonerated after the fall of Communism. Graduated from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW); from 1994 to 2000 Head of the Department of Animal Anatomy at the same University. Debuted as an author for children in 1958 with a short poem *Sowa* [Owl], published in children's magazine "Miś"; contributor to several other magazines for children and young adults, such as "Świerszczyk," "Płomyk," "Płomyczek," and "Mały Apostoł"; author of about 30 books for children, young adults and adults; a former member of the Polish Writers' Union; now his poems can be found most of all online. The page ewa.bicom.pl/wierszedzieci run by a Kobryńczuk's admirer, Ewa Białek, functions as the official website for Kobryńczuk's poems for children.

Source:

Materials kindly provided by the Author.

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Additional information

Summary

Based on: Katarzyna Marciniak, Elżbieta Olechowska, Joanna Kłos, Michał Kucharski (eds.), *Polish Literature for Children & Young Adults Inspired by Classical Antiquity: A Catalogue* (accessed: June 11, 2021), Faculty of "Artes Liberales", Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2013, 444 pp.

Picus, son of Saturn, the first king of Latium, is very rich and likes to hunt. In a forest, he meets a nymph called Canens. They fall in love and marry. Later, the witch Circe watches Picus and falls in love with him but the king refuses to become her husband; scorned and furious Circe takes her revenge by turning him into a woodpecker. The poem is illustrated with black and white images that children can colour.

Analysis

Franciszek Kobryńczuk begins this poem with a parenetic description of Picus, emphasizing his courage, strength, hunting skills, and the wealth of his royal court, along with information about his semi-divine origins and the fondness with which the nymphs held him. For this, the author repeatedly uses enumerations, one of the most common literary devices utilized by this writer. In the second part of the poem, he devotes the most space to one of the themes he looks at particularly often in his lyrics: the metamorphosis of man into an animal (woodpecker) due to the actions of a divine being. Interestingly, the poem starts with the fairy-tale-like initial formula: "Beyond the mountains, beyond the forests,"* and the lyrics are directly referred to herein as a "fairy tale." Also interesting is the end of the poem, which expresses the belief that someday the woodpecker will again become the king of Latium. It also includes an ecological message: "Let's make sure that by then no one will have destroyed our forests, my friends!". In this way, the re-told mythological story becomes a call to care for nature, perhaps to be read in the context of the repeated hunting of Picus as an action that affects the ecosystem.

* All quotations translated by Maciej Skowera.

Canens Circe Latium Metamorphosis Picus

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Emotions Humanism Love Nature Relationships
Further Reading	Harris, Rendel, "The Woodpecker in Human Form", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 5.5 (1920): 480–496 (accessed September 13, 2022). Nosek, Anna, *W przestrzeniach universum i regio. Wiersze dla dzieci współczesnych pisarzy regionu podlaskiego – interpretacje* [In the Spaces of universum and regio: Poems for Children by Contemporary Writers of the Podlasie Region – Interpretations], Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2015.

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