

## RESTORATION OF A PAINTING

### *Summary*

The present collection of poetry by Vytautas P. Bložė (1930-2016) includes poetical texts from fifteen of his books. He made his debut in the 1960s and became one of the heralds of modern poetry in Soviet Lithuania, whose epic *vers libre* influenced several generations of younger poets (Sigitas Geda, Kornelijus Platelis, and others). Since his poetics differed from what was required by the artistic doctrine of socialist realism, Bložė became an unreliable author in the eyes of Soviet ideologists. The conflict culminated in 1972, when censorship suspended the publication of his collection *Preljudai* (Preludes). For a whole decade the poet was ousted from public literary life. He moved to Druskininkai, was writing for the drawer and was supported by his wife poetess Nijolė Miliauskaitė (1950-2002) and by some of his literary friends. It was only in the early 1980s, almost ten years later, that the collection *Polifonijos* (Polyphonies), which was based on the suspended collection, was eventually published. It can be considered a creative summit of the poet's work of the Soviet period. Complex modern poetical form (a polyphony of voices, kaleidoscopic shifts of space and time, de-centralisation of the lyrical subject) masked the content and the meaning of this poetry and enabled the poet to speak, in the Aesopian way, of what was declared taboo by Soviet censors: the statehood of Lithuania, Soviet occupation, the tragedy of the Holocaust, the partisan war – the nation's post-war resistance against Soviet invaders. The poet had a personal experience of these dramatic developments: his mother and sister were deported, his father died in a Soviet labour camp, while the poet and his brother spent a long time in hiding and in fear. When Lithuania regained its independence, Bložė recorded these experiences of his nation and his family in a language that was close to documentary. In his later books, which are

dominated by an oriental trend, a Buddhist perception of the individual and the world, history is overshadowed by the meditated world and nature: his poems became shorter and brighter, and often acquired the form of the haiku. Brighter and again filled with the meaning of everyday life is the world of one of his last books, *Metų laikai* (2010; The Seasons), dedicated to the 300th birth anniversary of Kristijonas Donelaitis. It is a kingdom of light and a higher sensible order to which the lyrical subject gratefully surrenders. 'Švendubrės šamanas' (The Shaman of Švendubrė, a 2001 documentary about Bložė by Vytautas V. Landsbergis) is akin to the 'boor' of Švendubrė, the landless Antėjas, the successor to Donelaitis' tradition.