

Summary

EDYTA CHLEBOWSKA (Institute for the Study of Cyprian Norwid's Literature, Catholic University of Lublin) / "All the spectres here they come" – a painterly vision of *Before the Dawn* by Witold Pruszkowski

The work of Zygmunt Krasiński has not been approached with a greater interest by Polish artists, what may be judged both by a little number of works having been inspired by his output and the lack of illustrated editions of works by the author of *The None-Divine Comedy*. The most interesting painterly interpretation of the poet's work is *Vision*, dated at 1890 – a picture by Witold Pruszkowski (1846-1896), Polish painter and draughtsman, regarded as one of the most interesting artists active in the last quarter of the 19th century. Pruszkowski – a Neo-Romantic and Symbolism precursor, who did not stop in his quest for new forms of artistic expression relevant to his poetic sensibility – included in his work an illustration of one of the plots created on the pages of the poem *Before the Dawn*. Thanks to Pruszkowski's paintbrush a poetic image became a misty, vibrating with colour and light vision in which a crowd of ancestors' spirits melt away in an indefinite space right above the surface of dark waters. "Spirits of fathers", endowed by the painter with attributes of their power and dignity, arms and symbols of national and religious identity, follow Mother of God, Queen of Poland. According to the poem's text the painterly presentation of the Holy Virgin combines two images: Our Lady of Częstochowa and Our Lady of Ostrabrama. What attracts our attention is the fact that Pruszkowski's somnambulant train is not only an exact illustration of a vision derived from the poem but also it corresponds with the way of poetic visualisation. The procession from the painting dazzles our eyes, and with hot tones, meaningful with symbols, the artist brings the figures bearing ideas of Polish character out of the darkness; they evoke both the image of suffering and memories of the passed-away glory of the homeland, and certify topicality of the values Krasiński referred to. *Vision* constitutes on the one hand a completion of martyrdom strand in Pruszkowski's painting, while on the other it wins the status of a general reflection over the issues of national identity and symbolic metaphor which generalises the nation's fate in the context of Messianic idea.