

TO THE MOST HONORABLE LADY, MRS. ANNA NEUMANN:

On Your Name Day

I would like to extend my sincere wishes...

That every hour, Saint Anne,

Who is the patron of your Name,

May not withhold from you Her holy protection ---

That in robust health... you may live a hundred years!

Although the fate of your life now is loneliness –
And who could scroll back – your quiet distress?
Yet you have gained an aura of respect among us,
Because of the crystal heart you have given us.

You were always ready for action, a good deed!
Speeding to help others in need,
Long ago you already won – a laurel branch,
And God will grant you this reward in heaven.

Your quiet personality is full of simplicity –
You never desired the éclat of honors,
Your smile is sincere, like a golden ray,
Your soul is like a sunny day – like blue heavens.

I salute you with honor on your Name Day!
I bow my head to your upright virtue,
Zephyrus, the west wind, will bend the trees to you –
The bird will sing... the flower will send its scent...
And God will bless you with health... and with joy!

By Bernice Wolnik (Bronisława Wolnikowa), 1938

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CZCIGODNA PANI:

Na Imieniny
Pragnę Ci złożyć sincere życzenia...
By święta Anna każdej godziny,
Która patronką Twego Imienia,
Opieki świętej Ci nie skąpiła —
Byś w czerstwym zdrowiu... sto lat dożyła!

Choć Twój los życia osamotnienie —
A któż odgarnie — ciche cierpienie?
Lecz nimb szacunku wśród nas zyskałaś,
Boś kryształowe serce nam dała.

Gotowa byłaś zawsze do czynu!
Drugim z pomocą spiesząc w potrzebie,
Zdobyłaś dawno — gałąź wawrzynu,
Bóg Tobie odda nagrodę w niebie.

Chica Twa postać pełna prostoty —
Nie pragnęłaś nigdy blasku zaszczytów,
Twój uśmiech szczery, jak promień złoty,
W duszy pogoda — niebios błękitów.

Na Imieniny Cześć Ci oddaję!
Czoło pochylam przed Twą zacnością,
Zefir pochyli drzewa w ukłonie—
Ptaszę zanuci... kwiat prześle wonie...
Bóg błogostawi zdrowiem... radością!...

ANNOTATIONS

Imieniny: Name Day

It is a Polish tradition to celebrate the feast day of one's patron saint. For adults, this celebration is more important than celebrating one's birthday.

święta Anna: Saint Anne

A very important and much-venerated saint, Saint Anne was the mother of Virgin Mary, and hence the grandmother of Jesus. Also called "the just" (*Anna sprawiedliwa*), she is the patron of "marriage, mothers, widows, bakers and sailors" (<https://www.msze.info/patroni/swieta-anna>).

The invocation of this patron saint fits the theme of this poem. It is possible that the addressee of the poem has suffered a loss which has left her alone in life, perhaps the death of a spouse. Also, the virtues of the addressee are lauded in the poem.

osamotnienie: loneliness, solitude, "having been made alone"

The root of this Polish word is *sam* "self; alone". A more neutral word for solitude is *samotność*. The word *osamotnienie* implies that in the past, she was not alone, but something may have happened to bring about the state of being alone.

A któż odgarnie ciche cierpienie?: Literally, "And who will brush aside your quiet suffering?"

nimb: nimbus, aura, halo, aureole, radiance

do czynu: The word *czyn* means "act, action, deed". Here it is used in the genitive case, *czynu*.

Bóg Tobie odda nagrodę w niebie: Literally, "God will give you back reward in heaven."

postać: personage, person, personality, character

pragłaś: This is either a typographical error or a dialectal contraction of *pragnęłaś*, "you wished for, desired".

złty: This is certainly a typographical error for *złoty*, "golden".

Czoło: Literally, "forehead".

przed Twą zacnością: Literally, "before your virtue". The word *zacność*, here used in the instrumental case *zacnością*, has the same root as *cnota*, which means Christian virtue (as opposed to sin), e.g., saying the truth is a virtue, while lying is a sin; helping one's neighbor is a virtue, etc. The word *zacność* is a noun which describes character, while *cnota* refers to the sense of a particular virtue, e.g., "patience is a virtue".

Zefir: zephyr (a gentle breeze), Zephyrus (god of the west wind) – here used as a figure of speech personifying the wind. The words “the west wind” are not in the original Polish text.